



16th November 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

Education Scotland's Inspection of Marr College, 2014

In January 2014, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. In that letter, parents were told that the inspectors were confident that the school's self-evaluation was leading to improvements and that parents would be informed of the extent to which the school had improved in due course. I am now writing to tell you about the school's progress since the publication of Education Scotland's letter.

The school has worked very well on areas for improvement identified by Education Scotland and has made progress in a number of areas. Since the inspection report in 2014, young people's attainment at Marr College has improved. The percentage of young people achieving passes in numeracy at what is now National 5 by the end of S4 has increased annually from 37% in 2011 to 70% in 2016. In the same period, the percentage of young people achieving passes at National 5 in literacy by the end of S4 has increased from 44% to 76%. The percentage of all young people leaving school achieving Level 4 in literacy and numeracy has also improved over the last three years from 80% to 92% and the percentage of leavers who achieve Level 5 in literacy and numeracy has risen over the same period from 50% to 72%. There have also been improvements over the last three years in the percentage of young people who achieve 1 or more Highers, increasing from 52% to 67%. Those achieving 3 or more Highers has increased from 36% to 45% while those gaining five or more Highers has gone from 15% to 26%. The school now performs better in almost all measures than schools serving young people with similar needs and backgrounds. In addition, the percentage of young people who have gone on to further learning or work on leaving school has also improved annually from 88% in 2012 to 96% in 2015. This includes an increasing percentage of school leavers going to university over the last three years improving from 41% to 49%.

Since the inspection report was published, the school has continued to improve the curriculum by reviewing the Broad General Education for S1 to S3 pupils. The school has also enhanced opportunities for all young people to develop skills for learning, life and work by working more closely with a range of partners in the wider community. In particular the school is developing very positive links with local employers and businesses. Over the last four years there has been an increase in the percentage of pupils going into employment when they leave school.

Young people's learning experiences have also improved. In particular, young people now take a more active part in their learning. They are now more motivated to learn and have a clearer understanding of how well they are progressing. The school is engaged with the Harvard University 'Making Thinking Visible' programme which, even at this early stage in developments, is helping to develop the higher order thinking skills of young people.

There has been a reduction in the number of young people receiving indiscipline referrals or being excluded. Indeed exclusions have reduced annually from 55 per thousand in 2010/11 to 2 in 2015/16. Expectations have increased across the school community through the introduction of systems to monitor the progress of all young people based on their prior achievements. Staff intervene at an earlier stage where underachievement is identified. The school is also continuing to develop strategies to improve relationships and reduce bullying.

Young people benefit from more focused personal support. Tutor time allows young people to have regular opportunities to discuss their learning and progress with their tutor or guidance teacher. This includes support in planning their progress through S4 to S6 and beyond.

Under the effective leadership of the head teacher, the school has shown continuous improvement. Staff, young people, parents and partners at Marr College are working well together to secure improvement. The school is very well placed to make a step change when the newly refurbished school opens in 2017.

Yours faithfully

Eileen Brown
Quality Improvement Manager