



Marr College

Standards and Quality Report

Session 2023-24

Community

Ambition

Respect

Equality

Head Teacher's Introduction



Welcome to the Marr College Standards and Quality report for session 2023-24. This report aims to provide an overview of our achievements and outline the areas we will focus on in the coming academic year.

I am extremely proud of our school and the opportunities that are provided for all our young people to help develop and showcase their knowledge, skills and talents. We greatly appreciate the strong partnerships that exist with our parents and community partners and have captured the many ways in which the school community support our continued journey of improvement.

The evaluations in the document are based on a range of evidence including:

- Progress and evaluation of our School Improvement Plan
- Analysis of pupil performance in SQA courses and other forms of accreditation, along with data on young people's achievements
- Annual surveys of the views of pupils, parents, staff and partners, at whole school and departmental levels
- Self-evaluation using Education Scotland's evaluation tool 'How Good is Our School? 4' and other Education Scotland publications to support self-evaluation

Our Vision, Values and School Context

We strive to make Marr College a caring school and a centre of excellence for learning in our community. We are proud of our heritage and together we nurture and encourage all learners to be ambitious and develop the knowledge, skills and attributes to thrive and achieve in our every changing world.

Proud of our past, ambitious for our future. Together, we are Marr

This has been our vision since August 2020 and was developed in partnership with students, staff, parents and the wider school community. Our vision is based on our core values of **Community, Ambition, Respect and Equality**. Our learning, our leadership and our improvements are focused on bringing this vision and our values to life in all that we do at Marr College.

Marr College is a 6-year, non-denominational comprehensive school serving Troon, Barassie, Dundonald and the surrounding areas. Its associated primary schools are Barassie Primary, Dundonald Primary, Muirhead Primary, Struthers Primary and Troon Primary. Marr College is a well-known school with a unique history, founded in 1935 through funds bequeathed by Charles Kerr Marr. Extensive restoration and the addition of new facilities in 2017 provide a vibrant, well-resourced learning environment for all our young people. The school is led by a Head Teacher, who took up his substantive post in November 2018, and five Depute Head Teachers. Our middle leaders include Principal Teachers of curricular and pastoral support, and our school is supported by a School Nurse, Campus Police Officer, Thriving Communities Officer, two School Counsellors, a Wellbeing Officer, an Outdoor Learning worker and the Small Steps to Wellbeing team of family support staff.

At the start of session 2023-24, the roll was 1127 and 13.5% of our students are in receipt of free school meals. Within the context of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 9% of our students live in the 20% most deprived areas and 46% are deemed to be living in the 20% most affluent areas. Overall attendance was around 89% and whilst this remains above the local authority average, overall attendance is down from a pre-pandemic average of 92%. Positive and sustained destinations stood at 98.8% for session 2022-23, which is above the South Ayrshire and national average.

Success and Achievements

This session our staff and young people have worked hard to provide opportunities to engage in wider achievement and successes including:

- Maintaining our status as a Microsoft Showcase school, one of only 3 across Scotland
- Achieving the LGBT Youth Scotland Charter at Silver level and SCQF Gold Ambassador School award
- S3 Barista Elective running an enterprising café and donating all profits to the Night Before Children Campaign
- S6 Leadership Groups organising a number of events including our annual Sponsored Walk, Children in Need activities and other fundraising activities
- 119 S2 students achieved the Bronze IDEA Award and 9 achieved Silver. We won the #DigilInventors Challenge for a 3rd year, with two groups reaching the international final
- S3 students participating in the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) securing £3000 of funding for their chosen charity, 28th Ayrshire Troon Scouts
- Our School Colours programme that recognises academic, sporting, musical and wider achievement
- Volunteering within our local community through our S1 Community Day, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and senior volunteering
- A successful S1 Community Volunteering Day and Girls Inspire Sports Day
- Enhancing our Outdoor Learning programme through the appointment of a full-time Outdoor Worker
- S6 students organising the first Legacy Day, raising £2000 for the Ayrshire Hospice

Our success and achievements are regularly celebrated via twitter, the school website, newsletters and celebrating success assemblies.

All S4 students choose up to seven subjects to study in order to gain qualifications and are supported to plan the best progression pathway for them. S5 and S6 students choose five learning options. Almost all S4 students will be presented for course awards at SCQF Level 4 (National 4) or SCQF Level 5 (National 5) and progress accordingly through S5 and S6 on to SCQF Level 6 and 7 awards. A small number of pupils undertake Higher level learning in S4.

We have high aspirations of all our young people and encourage a culture of ambition which is shared across our whole school community.

Progress in secondary schools in Scotland is measured using four National Benchmarking Measures and is based on information related to school leavers rather than year groups of learners. SQA Insight data provides effective evaluative information on our performance in national examinations - the end product of learning and teaching within the senior phase. These four measures are:

- 1. Improving attainment in literacy and numeracy**
- 2. Leaver initial destinations: Increasing post-school participation**
- 3. Improving attainment for all: The Average Tariff Score**
- 4. Attainment versus deprivation: Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of low, compared to high attainers**

The results achieved by students in Marr College are compared to the results of a virtual comparator, which enables a fair comparison with similar pupils nationally.



We are also interested in how well we improve the quality of our work and what we will focus on in the session ahead. This is evaluated under key headings from last session's Improvement Plan, which focused on:

- **To ensure high quality learning, teaching and assessment, with a particular focus on effective feedback and retrieval practice to support learning.**
- **To continue to develop our capacity for improvement through practitioner enquiry and effective leadership at all levels.**
- **To raise attainment and continue to improve the wellbeing of young people and staff.**

Below is an overview of our progress and next steps in these improvement areas.

Priority 1: Ensuring high quality learning, teaching and assessment, with a particular focus on effective feedback and retrieval practice to support learning

A series of professional learning workshops were delivered by our PT Pedagogy and members of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) group, focusing on effective feedback, learner conversations and retrieval practices as part of a 3-year plan for improvement. Teachers shared practice through learning carousels and identified areas of personal focus. In May, the LTA group assigned staff to learning triads and teachers observed colleagues using our Excellent Learning, Teaching and Assessment framework. In almost all lessons, teachers displayed a skilful use of questioning to support and challenge pupils. In the majority of lessons, activities were designed and planned to promote thinking routines and retrieval practice.

Building on our success in achieving the Digital Schools Award (2022) and Cyber Security Bronze award (2023) we are proud to have been chosen as Microsoft Showcase School for the third consecutive year. As one of only three Showcase schools in Scotland, we are committed to **improving our use of digital technologies to support learning and teaching**. In our ongoing commitment to enhance and integrate digital technology to support teaching and learning, we effectively offer professional development opportunities to all staff. Additionally, we actively engage with digital education communities at local, national, and global levels. We have increased our number of staff achieving Microsoft Advanced Educator (MAE) status from under 20% to 38% this year. We have 4 trained Microsoft Certified Educators (MCE) and 6 Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts (MIEE). This year we have provided staff training in the use of AI and virtual reality as emerging digital technologies to promote innovation and creativity in learning. The use of MS Teams is well-embedded across the school with pupils clearly able to articulate the benefits of this approach allowing them easy access to support for their learning.



Staff offer feedback to young people in a variety of ways, including digitally through the use of MS Teams. There is evidence in the classwork of pupils that written feedback is being provided. As a result, young people particularly in the senior phase, are able to identify their strengths and next steps in learning. Learner conversations further support young people to have a clear idea of their strengths and what they need to do to improve. Pupils understand the importance and purpose of assessment and can use this to measure progress within curricular areas.

School Improvement Visit, November 2023

All subject departments have contributed to developing an S3 Assessment Calendar, detailing both formative and summative strategies and approaches to assessing learning. This has been collated into an overview document for students and parents to support planning and assessment of learning.

Priority 2: Continue to develop our capacity for improvement through practitioner enquiry and build leadership capacity at all levels

Through establishing a framework and commitment to collaborative practitioner enquiry, **we have continued to enhance the quality of learning, teaching and assessment.** This work was led by our LTA group, supported by our Educational Psychologist, and provided training and support for staff to lead their own professional learning. Collaborative teams identified enquiry themes and engaged with professional reading and research, class observations and professional dialogue focusing on feedback and learner conversations. A showcase event was held in May 2024 and a Skillshare channel was established to enable access to enquiries and enable staff to share practice. As a result of this work, learners talk positively about what is expected of them and their next steps in learning.



"I feel lots of work has been done to support and signpost staff to professional learning opportunities, such as the reading group and undertaking the practitioner enquiry."

"This year's Practitioner Enquiry has given departments a focus. We discuss our practice as well as whole school practitioner enquiry presentations, which has been nice to be involved with."

Staff Survey, May 2024

All S2 students at Marr College embarked on an innovative curriculum project entitled Solarpunk Island, an off-timetable challenge providing hands-on, project-based learning activities. Students designed and created a sustainable island neighbourhood, emphasising harmony with nature, self-sufficiency and sustainability. **Young people reported that they were developing teamwork, communication, creativity, and decision-making skills** and enjoyed having more choice over their own learning. This project will form part of our curriculum offer and our aim is to expand project-based learning opportunities.

The Marr cluster planned a joint family learning event in May 2024, designed to offer advice, information and support for parents and carers from P4-S3. Workshops included Numeracy and literacy, digital literacy, using digital technology, supporting neurodiversity, managing screentime and online safety. A market stall allowed attendees to engage with local partners who provide support for young people and families.

Our students play a key role leading change and improvement, which has a positive impact on our ethos and culture across the school. The Student Council lead a Student Improvement plan, working with staff to establish a whole school House Points system that celebrates success and achievement and promotes a sense of belonging. Students undertake many roles, including Student Ambassadors, Junior Captains, Prefects, Sports Leaders and STEM Leaders, organising activities within school and in the wider community. STEM Leaders created and delivered Science lessons in our cluster primaries and ran a successful S1 STEM club. All S6 students participated in a Legacy Day, organising a sponsored walk around Cumbrae in aid of Ayrshire Hospice.

The Marr Leadership Academy was launched in 2022 with 14 staff embarking on an aspiring Principal Teacher programme. In 2024, the programme had 18 members and was expanded to include an aspiring DHT course and a Pastoral Pathway into Guidance. 14 participants have gone on to secure internal or external acting or permanent leadership posts and the programme is now led by a DHT and 4 experienced Principal Teachers.

Senior leaders create opportunities for staff to initiate change, with most staff reporting that they are involved in a leadership role within the school. This is **building our capacity and capability to lead change and improvement** for the benefit of our learners.

Priority 3: To raise attainment and continue to improve the wellbeing of young people and staff

We believe that positive relationships are key to ensuring a positive ethos and culture. We have worked hard to establish a strong nurturing approach, where all children are well known and respected, underpinned by 'The Marr Way', which supports young people's readiness for learning. We promote young people's rights through **valuing and respecting all members of our school community.** The Marr Allies group lead the promotion of

equality and diversity and planned lessons for our S1 IDL project on 'Activism' as well as refreshing three whole school policies. Almost all staff completed LGBT Youth Scotland training. As a result of this work, we achieved the Silver LGBT Youth Scotland award. Global events, including Black History Month and Purple Friday are well established and celebrated within our school calendar.

Staff engage well with **data to inform their planning and to support raising attainment**. PTs Raising Attainment provide training for all staff to understand the context of the school and to use analysis of data inform how best to support learners. Our S5 'Aiming High' mentoring programme is well established and has been successful in contributing to raising attainment with most learners.

Through implementing our attendance strategy, **we have increased attendance since last session session by 2%** to an overall figure of 89%. Senior Leaders and PTs Guidance attended a conference focused on improving attendance and systems and practices were reviewed. The Hive is now a well-established space, supporting young people in S3-S5 with barriers to learning to succeed and achieve. Almost all S4 learners accessing the Hive achieved at least 5 qualifications at SCQF level 4 or above and all young people moved on to a positive destination.



We have continued to support all learners to achieve their full potential and **reduce the gap between most and least deprived learners**. S2 Numeracy classes were regrouped, providing greater challenge for more able learners and a smaller focussed class who benefit from increased support. We worked with primary colleagues to develop a Numeracy Common Language and Methodology booklet to be implemented across the cluster in November 2024. Our S1 Literacy programme is fully project based and is providing greater levels of challenge and enjoyment for learners. Levels of Literacy and Numeracy by the end of S3 have increased and are above our virtual comparator schools in the senior phase. Our focused work on promoting a reading culture resulted in achievement of the Silver Reading Schools Award.

Over the 2023-24 session, we have **increased participation** in sports with over 50% of students participating in at least one sport or extra-curricular sports club throughout the session. Our highly successful Rugby, Hockey and Handball pathways continue to grow, and we have established new partnerships with South Ayrshire Table Tennis and Troon Hockey. We hosted the first Marr Sports Awards to celebrate success and promote the wellbeing of our young people. We have over 70 young leaders in sport who run events aimed at promoting health and wellbeing and our school values. Staff wellbeing has been supported through opportunities for collegiate working, promoting national campaigns, the Marr Running Club, fitness suite and the Reading Group. All staff play a role in our annual Day of Sport and Sponsored Walk.

Almost all staff have completed Child Poverty Action Group's course on Cost of the School Day, ensuring an awareness of the impact poverty can have on our families. We have used our PEF funding to employ a Welfare Officer and Outdoor Learning Worker and have also expanded our **partnership working to increase interventions** to support wellbeing. Activities have been led by our Welfare Officer, Outdoor Worker, Armed Services, Thriving Communities, Park Ranger Service, LetsLOOC, Barnardos, ConneXion, Little Acorns, Active Schools and Above Adventure climbing. Through these activities, some students have achieved the Dynamic Youth Award, Scottish Junior Forester Award and High Five Award.

Evaluation Summary

Quality Indicator	1.3 Leadership of change
<p>Our shared vision and values underpin the life and work of the school. Across the school community we set high expectations for learners and nurture a sense of ambition and belonging. A team of experienced senior and middle leader provide strong leadership and support across the school community.</p> <p>Improvement priorities are identified through our own self-evaluation and local and national divers. Our School Improvement Plan has a manageable number of priorities and sets the direction for the work of the school. Young people have a voice in school improvement, and we seek opportunities to involve the wider community. There is a collective responsibility amongst all staff for leading change and improvement, both within departments and the wider school. There is a clear link between our Improvement Plan targets and our professional learning. We continue to increase opportunities for staff and students to lead change and improvement and have systems in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of change on our young people.</p> <p>Our Marr Leadership Academy and student leadership opportunities are well established and builds capacity across the learning community.</p> <p><i>Overall, leadership of change at Marr College is very good.</i></p>	
Quality Indicator	2.3 Learning and teaching
<p>Almost all young people are engaged, motivated and enthusiastic participants in their learning. Learners benefit from a range of strategies teachers use to support them in class. In the majority of lessons learning intentions and success criteria are embedded and are shared during the lesson. We are making more effective use our Future Fit strategy to embed skills development in learning and teaching. Learners contribute positively to the wider life of the school and their success and achievements are recognised in a number of ways. Their views are sought, valued and acted upon by staff.</p> <p>In May 2024 teachers were grouped in triads and observed colleagues with a focus on the lesson end and retrieval practice. In almost all lessons, teachers displayed skilful use of questioning to support and challenge learners. In almost all lessons, creative and effective plenaries were delivered using retrieval practice strategies.</p> <p>Staff effectively use assessment data to monitor and track young people’s progress. All departments contribute to SEEMiS reporting in the BGE and Senior Phase and engage with whole school data to plan next steps in learning. A ‘reporting to parents’ section of the school website is helping to develop parents’ understanding of progress within the BGE. Staff provide feedback to young people in a variety of ways, including digitally through the use of MS Teams. As a result, young people particularly in the senior phase, are able to identify their strengths and next steps in learning.</p> <p>The use of MS Teams is well-embedded across the school with pupils clearly able to articulate the benefits of this approach allowing them easy access to support for their learning. Almost all staff use MS Teams to share the content of lessons and homework, as well as give feedback. Young people access resources independently and are positive about how these digital media platforms support their learning.</p> <p><i>Overall, learning, teaching and assessment at Marr College is very good.</i></p>	

Quality Indicator

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion

There is a positive atmosphere around the school and a shared understanding of children's rights, which has been recognised through achieving the Silver Rights Respecting Schools Award. Almost all stakeholders promote a climate where young people feel safe and secure. Positive relationships are central to our work, underpinned by 'The Marr Way' and all staff have a clear understanding of their responsibility to support wellbeing. We promote equality and diversity through our school values, our curriculum and through many school events and activities. Young people play a key role in leading this work through the Marr Allies, Inclusion Ambassadors, Eco-group and the Student Council.

Our staff engage in annual Child Protection training and are aware of the expectations in fulfilling statutory duties to support young people. Team With the Family (TwF) meetings are held regularly to support young people and their families and key staff have well-established and effective partnerships with a wide range of partners that contribute to supporting our young people. Our Wellbeing Team have worked together to develop resources and provide direct support to young people. The Family First team are fully integrated within the school and provide effective targeted support for young people and their families.

We make very effective use of pupil equity funding to address the challenges faced by young people and their families, focusing on literacy, numeracy and participation. Groups of young people are benefitting from a range of accredited outdoor learning opportunities to promote wellbeing and engagement in school. We effectively track and monitor groups of learners, including care experienced and young carers, to ensure effective interventions are in place to increase their attainment and achievement.

Overall, Marr College is very good at ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

Quality Indicator

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

In S1-S3, our learners make very good progress in literacy and numeracy, with almost all achieving level 3 by and most achieving Level 4 by the end of S3. Almost all leavers achieve at least SCQF Level 4 literacy and numeracy and most achieve SCQF Level 5 literacy and numeracy. This is higher than young people with similar needs and backgrounds across Scotland. By the end of S3, almost all young people achieve third level in their chosen subjects, and most are making good or very good progress at CfE level 4.

Senior Phase attainment continues to be strong and by the end of S6, also known as exit qualifications, young people's attainment has increased over the last 5 years. The majority of young people leave with at least 5 qualifications at SCQF level 5 and just under half leave with at least 5 qualifications at SCQF level 6. Over half of our learners who stay on for S6 leave with 5 or more Highers.

Young people continue to benefit from wider achievement opportunities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's award, Young Enterprise, STEM Leader, Sports Leader, the Wellbeing Award, Saltire Award, Youth Achievement and Junior Park Ranger. A key strength of the school is the significant range of leadership opportunities for our young people, including School Captains and Prefects, Junior Captains, S6 Leadership Groups, YPI, Young Enterprise, Micro-Tyco, Digi Inventors, Ambassadors and Sports Leaders.

Almost all young people move on to a positive and sustained post-school destination, which is consistently above local and national comparators.

Overall, Marr College is very good at raising attainment and achievement.

As we look to build on our success and achievements, our improvement priorities for 2024 – 2025 are:

- **To support and empower all staff to deliver high quality learning and teaching that best meets the needs of all learners.**
- **To ensure effective approaches to self-evaluation at all levels is supporting and informing school improvement.**
- **To raise attainment and continue to improve the wellbeing of young people and staff.**

More details on each of these priorities can be found in our improvement plan for session 2024-25, which can be found on our website at <http://www.marr.sayr.sch.uk/improvement.html>. The key principles of our improvement journey continue to be based on effective collaboration with parents, young people and partners and ensuring high quality career-long professional learning for staff. Young people will take forward identified areas through their own dedicated Student Improvement Plan.

We are increasing capacity of staff across the school to lead effective change through our focus on collaborative practitioner enquiry, developing leadership at all levels and increasing opportunities for whole-school leadership. Together with a strong focus on student voice and student leadership, these approaches are strengthening our ability to lead effective change and improvement.

Wellbeing and nurture continue to be important features of our approaches to support young people and their families. All staff have participated in further training in strategies to promote collaboration, adopt restorative approaches and promote positive behaviour within the classroom. Our aim is to ensure that we all have a shared understanding of wellbeing, a strong sense of community and that we value each and every one of our young people.

We are very proud of our school and the success and achievements of all our young people. I am confident that by continuing to work in partnership with our young people, parents and the wider community, we will continue to improve our school and the attainment and wellbeing of all our young people.

George Docherty
Head Teacher
August 2024