
Meldrum Academy

Standards and Quality
Report 2013-14 &
Improvement Plan for
2014-15

September 2014

Meldrum Academy Standards and Quality Report 2013-14 & Improvement Plan 2014-15

Our improvement priorities for 2014-15 are:

- **Raise the standard of achievement for all young people in the school**
- **Improve learning and teaching**
- **Improve literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing of all**

These improvements will be delivered through the following areas:

- **Support and challenge**
- **Course development**
- **Professional learning**

Support and challenge	Course development	Professional learning
<p>Over the next session faculties will:</p> <p>Through use of open ended tasks, setting success criteria, dialogue around L&T and feedback raise the standard of achievement for all.</p> <p>Develop tracking and monitoring of the BGE at class and faculty level of both attainment and achievement.</p>	<p>Over the next session faculties will:</p> <p>Review and revise Nat 3/4/5 courses</p> <p>Undertake H course development and introduction.</p> <p>Undertake AH course planning.</p>	<p>Over the next session faculties will:</p> <p>Use revised Aberdeenshire, GTCS Standards and Professional Update procedures to support professional learning.</p> <p>Use professional learning opportunities from within the faculty, school, authority in addition to nationally organised events (e.g. SQA).</p>
<p>Over the next session the school will:</p> <p>Develop the tutor time programme</p> <p>Introduce Restorative Practice</p>	<p>Over the next session the school will:</p> <p>Engage with the Career Academy programme.</p> <p>Develop an S3 CBC course</p> <p>Develop an S1 Health & Wellbeing course</p> <p>Develop a DoE Leadership Award</p>	<p>Over the next session the school will:</p> <p>Introduce all staff to coaching and mentoring with a view to supporting professional learning.</p> <p>Provide and support opportunities for professional learning at all levels.</p> <p>Support staff in the use of new GTCS and Aberdeenshire procedures.</p>

Seven CfE design principles:

Challenge & enjoyment choice Breadth Progression Depth Personalisation & Coherence Relevance

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In arriving at these evaluations, we considered the following evidence.

- Visit learning activities. Observe learning experiences and teaching, talk to staff and young people about learning and achievement, and other aspects as appropriate.
- Evaluate young people's achievements in different aspects of the curriculum, using direct observation, sampling of learners' work, and additional data as appropriate to the sector.
- A range of professional discussions with staff who have responsibility for managing the educational provision, and other staff as appropriate.
- Take account of stakeholders' views, including those gathered through questionnaires and discussions with parents and other members of the community, as appropriate.

1. How well do our young people learn and achieve?

Improvements in Performance
Learners' Experience

good
very good

Our key strengths in this area are

Ethos

- Across the school, young people are motivated and engaged in their learning. They are proud of their school.
- Young people describe very positive, supportive relationships with teachers and other members of staff and value the support they get from staff to achieve in their learning.
- Young people are very appreciative of the commitment and dedication of staff and take up the many opportunities for supported study, lunchtime clubs and activities during and after the school day. They know that they will get help from staff when they need it.
- All young people have adults in school who they can speak to if they are upset or worried about something. Young people learn in an inclusive environment which is of high importance to the school. They respect each other's opinions and are supportive of each other's needs within the classroom.
- There is a calm and purposeful ethos for learning in almost all classes.

Pupil voice/involvement

- In almost all classes, young people participate very well in lessons and their viewpoint and questions are sought and valued.
- Young people are highly active contributors to the life of the school and the wider community.

Learning

- Almost all young people feel that they are getting on well with their work. They feel that staff encourage them to do their best and they get help when needed. Almost all feel that they are encouraged to take responsibility for their work.
- Young people have benefitted from the improvements in learning and teaching across the school.

- Young people respond very well to a variety of approaches to learning within their classrooms, including working independently and collaborating with others in pairs and small groups. Many young people are able to work independently and collaboratively without direct supervision.

Overall quality of achievement

- Young people recognise how their involvement in a range of activities including the many school clubs, sports and musical activities is developing their confidence and supporting them in achieving personal success.

Citizenship

- Young people are developing their understanding about the needs of others and responsible citizenship through their charity fundraising work.
- There are high levels of participation in an impressively wide range of pupil committees and groups. The broad range of groups and clubs includes groups focused on meeting the needs of more vulnerable learners and those with additional support needs.
- Over 100 young people benefit from their active participation in working toward the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Many young people, as part of this activity, spend time in voluntary school and community-based activities. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is delivered on a voluntary basis by 13 teachers and pupil support assistants.

Leadership

- Young people, particularly those at S6, contribute effectively to school life and show leadership skills through their work as number and book buddies, sports leaders, pupil peer supporters, health and wellbeing leaders, prefects, lunchtime monitors and by the participation of all pupils at S6 in a range of committees.

Environment

- The school has made significant progress in raising awareness of environmental issues and the efforts of young people have been recognised with the achievement of a third Eco Schools Scotland green flag.

Cultural

- The talents of young people in music and drama are demonstrated effectively through regular school shows and concerts enjoyed by both school and community audiences. In the summer term, exhibitions successfully showcased the talents and achievements of young people in design
- Residential trips help young people to develop a better awareness of other environments, cultures and countries.

Sport

- Young people benefit from a range of sporting activities which improve their fitness levels and develop team working skills. Individuals and groups achieve some notable successes at local, national and international level.

Overall quality of attainment

- Attainment at S4 is, overall, above national averages.
- By the end of S6, young people's attainment is above national averages.
- There are some important trends of improvement in the numbers of young people attaining Highers and Advanced Highers.
- The proportion of young people leaving school for a positive destination increased from 2010 to 2012 and is consistently above national averages. The proportion moving on to higher education is well above both national and other Aberdeenshire schools' averages.

Aspects for improvement

- The school will gather and collate information about young people's progress and standards of attainment across all curriculum areas at S1-S3.
- Measures to raise attainment in S4-6 through monitoring tracking and targeted intervention will continue, and be further developed.
- The school will continue with plans to build an effective school wide system to collate information on progress from S1 to S6. This information is needed to track progress, including through the broad general education, and intervene effectively to further improve attainment and achievement for all young people.

2. How well does our school support young people to develop and learn?

The Curriculum **very good**
Meeting Learning Needs **very good**

Our key strengths in this area are

Rationale and design

- The curriculum is based on a clear rationale of continuous development of the curriculum improving learning and teaching, raising the standard of achievement for all and improving literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing of all. The S1-S3 curriculum is designed very well to improve young people's skills, with a focus on skills for learning, life and work. The senior phase provides an appropriately broad range of options that flexibly meet the needs of almost all young people.

Development of the curriculum

- Staff have undertaken a large curricular development programme with enthusiasm and clear planning. They have taken opportunities to work with neighbouring schools and colleagues in subject networks to share ideas, resources and look for solutions to problems. The curriculum is kept under constant review
- Staff are working very hard to develop the new qualifications. Subjects have been moderated successfully

Programmes and courses

- There is well-planned and well-paced progression through the curriculum. Staff are confident in their use of the experiences and outcomes to plan learning and the planning is consistently effective across faculties.
- Across the school, teachers are developing an appropriate range of assessment approaches.
- The development of enterprising attitudes is supported in various effective ways
- Supported study programmes are delivered for students in the senior phase.
- All young people undertake work experience in the session before they leave school.
- The current S5 and 6 study a broad range of courses in school, colleges and through the YASS programme. A rural skills programme is run on a local estate. There is a high uptake and success in Advanced Higher. There are consortia arrangements with local schools to increase options for young people.

Literacy across learning

- Staff are very clear about their responsibilities and roles in developing literacy skills.
- Notable features impacting on literacy include the school's focus on subject specific vocabulary, reading for understanding and writing (including handwriting and presentation skills).

Numeracy across learning

- The active Numeracy Committee has led several important initiatives to develop numeracy across the school. A helpful Preferred Methods booklet has been prepared with very active involvement of primary colleagues from across the ASG. Young people at S5/S6 act as Number Buddies across the school to help younger learners develop strong numeracy skills.

Health and Wellbeing

- Staff are very aware of and understand the health needs of young people .
- Workshops, assemblies and the awareness raising activities of pupil groups such as the Diversity and the LGBT group complement class based learning.

Transitions

- The school works very well with the primary schools in the Associated Schools Group to provide an effective pastoral transition programme to support young people in moving from primary to secondary school.
- There are a number of established and developing curricular links between faculties and primary schools to help young people to build on their prior learning.
- Post-school transitions are well organised and provide almost all young people with effective pathways into higher education, further education, work or training. The schools organises what it calls a 'blend' of vocational and academic programmes where appropriate, using partnerships with college and the learning community.
- Young people are very well supported to make informed choices about their future careers.
- There is very effective planning for vulnerable young people to ensure they make a successful transition out of the school and into a sustained destination

Partnerships

- The school works well with a very wide range of partner organisations to widen the curricular experience for young people. This work is very effectively supported by the school senior management team which has established a rich network of organisations businesses and individuals.
- College partnerships provide a range of appropriate courses including Skills for Work, Energy and HN/NC Engineering.
- The school works well with the Riding Disability Association to provide weekly riding lessons for young people with Additional Support needs.
- There is particularly effective partnership working with the Parent Council. They fundraise very well through events such as Dragons' Den and music concerts.
- A strong emphasis on tolerance and understanding has been supported by work of the school chaplains.
- Voluntary organisations including Meldrum Rotary Club make a good contribution to supporting school activities and volunteering.

Aspects for development

- Planned co-delivery of Curriculum for Excellence in partnership should be made more systematic with more effective approaches to shared skills assessment and use of experiences and outcomes.
- While there are P7 profiles, the school needs to work with the ASG to develop consistency in their use and quality.

Tasks activities and resources

- Overall staff pitch tasks at the right level of difficulty to ensure that young people can engage in their learning. They support and encourage young people in class to learn and achieve. In most classes there is an appropriate range of activities and

resources. Lessons are generally well-paced. There is evidence of personalised learning approaches being used well to support young.

- The school offers a range of appropriate courses to meet the needs of learners and works very well in partnership to provide a range of learning opportunities.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and respond positively to their needs, offering encouragement and support. Young people feel confident in seeking advice and clarification.
- Almost all staff have a clear understanding of the needs of learners and the support required to enable them to make progress. A range of additional activities and approaches enhance learning opportunities. This includes supported study classes. These are well-attended and valued by learners.
- Young people requiring additional support are benefitting from using a range of assistive technologies, for example, laptops, digital cameras, and ipods.
- In a few examples of observed best practice higher attaining young people move between levels within elements of courses.

Identification of learning needs

- The process of identifying children's needs begins in primary school and the information is shared with the Academy. By entry to secondary school specialist staff have a knowledge of the needs of young people.
- Staff access detailed and helpful information on young people's difficulties. A range of effective strategies and supports are included and almost all staff use the information to support young people in lessons.
- The Pastoral Care team work very effectively as a team to nurture and support young people in their house groups. Across the school, young people are aware of their pastoral care teacher and are comfortable in approaching them for support or advice.
- The school work very effectively with a range of partners to improve wellbeing outcomes for young people including: Skills Development Scotland, Educational Psychologist, school nurse, young carers, social work, lesbian gay bisexual, and transgender adviser.
- A number of young people including those with additional support needs are benefitting from being supported by a coaching and mentoring programme (PASS). The programme is successfully improving young people's attainment.

The roles of teachers and specialist staff

- Positive relationships exist between young people with additional support needs and specialist staff. Staff are very caring and committed.
- Pupil support assistants (PSA) are very highly valued members of the school community.
- Young people with autistic spectrum disorders receive very good support from the support for learning department. .
- Targeted young people are well supported in class by peer supporters from the senior years including book and number buddies.
- The pupil and family worker, often working in collaboration with CLD staff, delivers a range of well evaluated courses to support development of social skills.

Meeting requirements of legislation

- The support for learning team efficiently organise alternative exam arrangements for young people including digitalising exam papers, extra time and scribes.

Aspects for development:

Tasks, activities and resources

- The school recognises that although there have been improvements in personalisation of the curriculum to better meet individual needs; there is still scope for improvement to ensure that the needs of all learners are met.
- The school should continue with its discussions to ensure consistency in terms of the regularity, purpose and nature of homework.
- The school should continue to develop the role of assistive technology in supporting young people access the curriculum.

Identification of learning needs

- The school should plan to use its developing approaches in restorative practice as a strategy.

The roles of teachers and specialist staff

- The extended pupil support team should continue to plan and develop strategies for further integration of support for learning, pastoral care and pupil and family support.

Meeting requirements of legislation

- The IEPs could be further refined to link targets more directly with the curriculum planning in the class.

COMMENTS ON TEACHING FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

Strengths:

- Across the school, teachers plan very well for lessons which have clear purposes and goals and use a range of approaches to develop learning. Staff use a range of approaches to engage learners. These include some very effective use of ICT.
- There are examples of teachers setting open-ended tasks which provide for greater levels of challenge and promote creativity.
- Teachers ensure that there is a positive ethos and work ethic amongst the young people in their classes. In classes, young people and teachers interact well with each other creating a positive learning environment where young people feel cared for and respected.
- Young people value highly teachers' commitment to support and enhance their learning.

Aspects for development:

- There is scope to make lesson endings more focused on learning, with young people having a more central role in identifying their progress.
- Build on good practice to ensure that teachers have a shared understanding of high quality learning and teaching; for example around effective questioning.

3. How well does our school improve the quality of its work?

Improvement through self-evaluation.

Very good

Our key strengths in this area are

Strengths:

Commitment to self-evaluation

- There is a strong culture of self-evaluation across the school. The school has a comprehensive and systematic approach to self-evaluation, professional learning and leadership development which supports a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff across the school are highly committed to improving outcomes for learners.
- Staff are highly reflective and use the self-evaluation calendar alongside a range of other activities to gather information about the quality of their work.

- There is strong support for continuous professional learning across the school. Staff undertake a wide range of learning activities to improve their professional practice.
- Partners working with the school have very strong informal networks and communicate regularly on progress made on a wide range of initiatives.
- DHT and CLD managers meet on a regular basis to review and plan a range of interventions. The network librarian is very well informed of developments across the school and in the community.

Management of self-evaluation.

- Self-evaluation activities include rigorous quality assurance approaches that focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching and raising attainment
- Performance management meetings continue throughout the year and the depute headteacher (performance) reviews progress of young people in S4 – S6 on a regular basis with principal teachers. This thorough and detailed SQA attainment analysis leads to effective action being taken leading to improvements in attainment.

Monitoring and Tracking

- Faculties have developed systems for tracking young people's progress in subjects across S1 to S3 in the broad general education to inform learner progression and support review of the curriculum.
- The school is further developing the system for tracking young people's progress from S4 – S6. Evidence from MIDYS and class teachers are used to form target grades. Tracking of progress against target grades provides evidence used for interventions such as mentoring which has led to improvements in attainment for young people.

School Improvement

- Staff use the evidence of self-evaluation activities to inform improvements to learning and teaching and to raise attainment.
- The school has a systematic approach to the process of self-evaluation and improvement planning. Faculty improvement plans link effectively to the whole school improvement plan. Link SMT attend faculty meetings where reviewing progress on the improvement plan is a regular feature on the agenda. A range of evidence is used to inform the standards and quality report which is a feature of the improvement planning cycle. Annual standards and quality reports give a clear and comprehensive report on improvements in the work of the school over the previous session.

CPD

- Staff highly value the range of professional learning opportunities including in house, in the education authority and in the wider national context. The uptake of these and other development programmes is actively encouraged and supported by the school. This is providing the school with good capacity for continuous improvement.

Aspects for development:

- In further developing the tracking systems the school should continue with work to collate evidence from faculties and build towards effective monitoring and tracking of progress in learning across the BGE at a whole school level.
- Further improve the consistency of high quality learning experiences by continuing with learning observations across faculties.
- Continue to provide more opportunities for young people to inform improvements to learning and teaching. Young people could be more involved in aspects of improvement planning which relate to learning and teaching.

COMMENTS ON LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE SCHOOL TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT

Strengths:

Leadership

- Leadership at all levels is highly effective with staff across the school confidently and enthusiastically taking leadership roles in a range of school developments and activities.
- The headteacher is very well supported by the DHTs and they work very effectively together to provide leadership for taking the school forward.
- Principal Teachers of Faculties are leaders of learning in their faculties providing support to staff and ensuring the quality and consistency of practice within their faculties.
- Teachers across the school take on a range of leadership roles.
- Young people are provided with opportunities for developing their leadership skills within the schools and in the wider community.

Aspects for development:

- Staff are enthusiastic and willing to take forward innovative approaches to improve learning and teaching. However, this would benefit from a greater focus on those innovations and improvements which will have the greatest impact on raising attainment and achievement.