



May 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

FOLLOW-THROUGH VISIT TO BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

In February 2017, Aberdeen City Council Quality Improvement Officers visited your child's school. This was to review the progress the school had been making since the original inspection of the school by HM Inspectors in November 2015. Recently a Quality Improvement Officer from Aberdeen City Council carried out a further visit to the school to review its progress. There were discussions with the head teacher, the senior leadership team, staff, young people and visits to classrooms. This letter sets out what was found.

Under the strong leadership of the head teacher and the senior leadership team, everyone has been working hard to continue to improve the work of the school. Building on the positive ethos in the school, there are very mutually respectful relationships between staff and young people. Young people felt that staff had high aspirations for and high expectations of them and valued the 'extra mile' staff went to help them achieve their very best. There is now greater collaboration across the staff team and almost all are more regularly reflecting and evaluating their work. This, coupled with a more strategic approach taken by the senior leadership team, is helping the school to drive improvements forward more effectively.

There continues to be important improvements in young people's attainment. The number of young people leaving school with literacy and numeracy qualifications has improved and is now greater than those young people in other similar schools. The number of young people achieving at least five passes in National 5 courses has risen steadily over the last five years and overall, young people's attainment is more in line with that of those young people in other similar schools.

There have been some important changes to the curriculum for young people. In the broad, general education (S1 – S3), there is more breadth and depth in learning. Young people now benefit from being able to make choices within curricular areas basing their decisions following discussions with staff about appropriate pathways. This is helping to ensure that young people are better prepared for the transition into the senior phase (S4 - S6). In the senior phase, there is now a wider range of courses for young people to study. This means that there are now more appropriate pathways for young people and they are developing more skills essential for learning, life and work. There has

been some more effective work with a range of partners and young people are making more informed choices about their next steps in their learning.

Young people have benefitted from work placements under the direction of staff from the oil and gas industry to gain experience of the sector through research work and support, with a view to offering future employment.

One of the school's partners from industry has offered insight and support for young people to pursue a range of career opportunities through apprenticeships, including HR and accountancy. Next steps are for a greater number of young people to benefit from employment opportunities as part of a personalised curriculum.

Young people are benefitting from quality discussions with staff regarding their pathway progressions through school and beyond. The mentoring programme led by staff volunteers is highly valued by young people and they feel that the regular conversations with their mentor are helping them to have higher aspirations and set more focussed goals for progress their learning.

Staff across the school have been implementing a wider range of more appropriate learning and teaching approaches. Lessons are more active with relevant, real-life contexts for learning and this is leading to young people understanding the importance of the skills they are developing and why. Young people value the quality of feedback they are given on their learning and this is effective in helping them to identify their next steps. A range of digital technologies is being used well to enhance learning and teaching both within and beyond the classroom, help with homework and to engage parents to support their child's learning.

Overall, the school has made very good progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection. There are clear plans in place and we are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to ensure the best possible outcomes for all young people.

Anne Darling

Quality Improvement Officer