

Educational Services

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Dear Parent/Guardian

On the 4 October, 8 staff from South Ayrshire Council visited the school to follow up on the inspection by Education Scotland in January 2015. I, along with my management team, delivered a presentation to them on the progress the school has made over the past 18 months; our young people also presented the role they play in 'Pupil Voice' and the improvements that they have made to the school. The authority staff then visited every teacher to observe the teaching and learning that our young people experience; they met with young people and groups of staff. I have enclosed a copy of the 'follow through' letter which will be shared with Education Scotland. I have also enclosed a report they have written about the schools progress based on their visit and their analysis of our SQA attainment over the last few years.

I am pleased that the local authority recognises the improvements that have been made over the last couple of years and they can see the positive impact that this is having on the ethos within the school, resulting in improved achievement and attainment for our young people. As a school community we will continue to evaluate our work to improve outcomes for our young people.

Please ensure that the school has an **up-to-date contact number and email address for you** so that we can keep you fully informed of all that is happening in the school.

Our School Website address is www.carrick.sayr.sch.uk

Our Twitter account is @Carrick_Academy

Thank you for your continued support and please do not hesitate to contact me at the school if you have any matters of concern that you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Shona Stevens'.

Shona Stevens

Head Teacher



31st October 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

Education Scotland's Inspection of Carrick Academy, 2015

In March 2015, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. In that letter, parents were told that the inspectors were satisfied with the overall quality of provision. They discussed with staff and South Ayrshire Council how the school might continue to improve. The following areas were agreed.

- Engage young people and parents more in evaluating and improving the work of the school.
- Continue to develop systems to track and monitor young people's progress from S1 to S3 to ensure that they all attain as highly as possible.
- Ensure that all staff meet the needs of all learners and are supported to do so.

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.

Since the inspection in March 2015, the views of young people increasingly influence school improvement. Across the school, young people have the opportunity to take part in a range of initiatives that enable them to influence decisions about their school.

The school now has more opportunities for parents to be involved, for example the school offers workshops on health issues as well as literacy and numeracy. These events have been well received and parents report that they found the workshops informative. Parents are also kept fully informed of the work of the school through the school website, twitter, email and text messages.

Since the inspection report was published, the school has continued to improve the curriculum by reviewing the Broad General Education. Robust tracking systems are in place leading to better support for young people. Across the school, teachers know young people well and understand their individual learning needs, leading to the use of appropriate support strategies.

Overall the school has shown very good progress and this can be seen in the quality of relationships in the school as well as, in the achievement and attainment of the young people. Young people show pride in their school and value the role they have in influencing decisions about their experience in school and the resulting improvements made. The school is well led and the head teacher and staff are well placed to ensure the school continues to improve.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lynn Crossan'.

Lynn Crossan
Quality Improvement Officer

SCHOOL SELF-IMPROVEMENT REPORT

CARRICK ACADEMY

6 OCTOBER 2016

Context

The visit took place as part of the annual programme of SQA attainment focused self-improvement visits to secondary schools.

The self-improvement team was led by the school's quality improvement officer (QIO). She was supported by the Director of Educational Services, the school's senior leadership team, a secondary deputy headteacher, two inclusion co-ordinators, a quality improvement manager and two QIOs.

The senior leadership team discussed their self-evaluation paper on the strengths and development needs of the school. This was followed by a series of 40 classroom visits undertaken by school and central staff. Central staff also led focus group discussions with young people and staff. The whole team met to agree the findings of the visit. The following strengths and areas for development were identified:

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

Strengths

Learning and engagement

- Across the school young people benefit from a culture of ambition and a positive ethos in classrooms.
- In almost all lessons young people are actively engaged, motivated and can discuss their next steps in learning.
- In almost all lessons the pace and challenge of learning is appropriate and young people participate in a range of class based learning activities.
- Across the school, young people benefit from good use of digital technology in lessons to support learning eg the use of iPads.
- Learners' achievements both in and out of the classroom are recorded and recognised as part of the house system.
- Young people achieve well across a range of sporting and cultural activities and benefit from the opportunity to develop leadership skills.
- Learners have increased opportunities to accredit their achievements via Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Sports Leader UK, Young Applicants in Schools Scheme, Platinum Youth Achievement and SQA Personal Development awards.
- Across the school, young people have the opportunity to take part in a range of initiatives that enable them to build their self-esteem and confidence such as The Ayrshire Music Festival, SAC Youth Forum Award for Sustainability and Provost's Carbon Footprint Challenge.
- The views of young people increasingly influence school improvement. Young people have a genuine say in what happens within the school and are working together to improve standards.

Quality of Teaching

- Across the school, lessons are well planned and creative teaching approaches are evident.
- In almost all lessons, differentiation is evident through success criteria, task or expectation.
- Across the school, teachers know young people and their individual learning needs, leading to the use of appropriate support strategies.
- Robust tracking systems are in place leading to universal and targeted interventions for young people.
- Across the school staff take responsibility for their own professional learning and take part in paired learning visits to enhance practice.
- There is clear evidence of the impact of practitioner enquiry and innovative approaches to raising attainment in numeracy and mathematics and strategies are also clear within the class.
- *Making Thinking Visible* strategies are being used in some classes with obvious benefits for young people.

Areas for Development

Learning & Engagement

- Further develop the level of consistency in the use of question techniques to enhance learning and promote higher order thinking skills.
- Continue to share strategies to provide detailed feedback to learners and identify next steps in learning.
- The school should continue to build upon the very good progress of engaging young people in important decisions about school life by including views on learning and teaching.

Quality of Teaching

- Continue to embed *Making Thinking Visible* into classroom practice to enhance young people's experience.
- Continue to develop study packs across subject areas in response to feedback from young people.

Overall the school has shown very good progress and this is evidenced by the ethos, achievement and attainment of the young people within the school. Young people demonstrate pride in their school and value the role they have in influencing decisions about their experience in school and the resulting improvements made. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements.