Summarised findings report (SFR)

Carrick Academy

11 January 2022

The purpose of this document is to provide the school with the summarised findings of a school improvement visit. The contents should be shared with staff and the Parent Council. The findings will form the basis for future improvement discussions with your link QIO.

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QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

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Learning and Engagement

A nurturing, positive and inclusive ethos is evident within classes and across the school. Staff have high expectations in terms of effort and behaviour. The Carrick Code was recently developed by a group of middle leaders to support and manage relationships within classes. Its implementation is at an early stage and further work is being undertaken to develop consistency.

Almost all young people are engaged and motivated. In some classes young people were highly motivated in their learning. In Art and Technical young people are developing skills and knowledge though the BGE and into the senior phase. Built on strong relationships, this approach has resulted in high levels of engagement.

Using concrete materials, young people in math classes are engaged and are able to experience success. In most classes young people enjoy learning. In the majority of classes levels of pace and challenge are appropriate and well-matched. In a few classes the pace of learning was either too brisk or too slow.

Almost all learners are encouraged to take an active role in lessons. Strategies are used effectively to encourage young people to participate in learning. In some classes young people are able to make choices in their learning. This is used to differentiate learning and meet needs. Digital technology is used appropriately, though primarily as a method of displaying information. In Biology, digital technology is being used effectively in a "flipped learning" approach to support engagement.

Learning intentions and success criteria are used consistently to frame learning. In most lessons success criteria was returned to at the end of lessons as a basis for plenary discussions. In most classes young people are engaged and can work independently. Young people in the senior phase were confident discussing their learning and what they need to do to improve. Pupil views are valued and are gathered through a range of groups and through ELOS time in the mornings. Through a process of consultation, pupils contribute to wider school improvement through the development of their own pupil improvement plan.

Quality of Teaching

With the move to the new school building next academic session, the school is agreeing a refreshed vision and values with stakeholders.

Post-covid there is a clear and renewed focus on learning, teaching and assessment. All staff were involved in shaping the key priorities through the development of 10 aspects of effective learning, teaching and assessment. This started through a local authority initiative which showed inconsistencies in teaching staff's understanding of what high quality learning, teaching and assessment looked like across the school.

There is a strong focus on improving the capacity of teaching staff through high quality professional learning. An evidence-based approach, using resources such as Bruce Robertson's Teaching Delusion and Rosenshine's Principles, is showing to be effective. Staff collegiate time is being used effectively to support improvements in learning, teaching and assessment. An open and collegiate culture is being developed as a result of the approaches taken. There is a very positive approach to this work from staff. They were clear about the strong leadership in learning, teaching and assessment from the head teacher and senior leadership team.

The key elements of the lesson evaluation toolkit are evident in classroom practice:

- In almost all lessons there is a clear and consistent structure to learning.
- In most classes targeted questioning is used to elicit deeper thinking and is well matched to the needs of learners.
- A wide range of Making Thinking Visible (MTV) routines are embedded across classroom practice to promote engagement. In particular, show-me boards are used effectively and confidently to check for understanding and promote curiosity.
- Feedback is used very effectively in the senior phase to support learning and progress. Almost all young people talked about working and target grades and were able to talk about what they needed to do to improve. Young people in the broad general education spoke about the feedback they received but were less clear as to how this would lead to improvement.

Effective Use of Assessment

Assessment is For Learning and Making Thinking Visible (MTV) strategies are used formatively to gather information to inform learning, teaching and assessment. The school are exploring opportunities to integrate greater use of retrieval practice and over-learning approaches.

Planning, Tracking and Monitoring

The progress of pupils in the senior phase is closely monitored through the setting of target grades and working grades. Almost all young people in the senior phase are aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve. The DHT with responsibility for senior phase tracking meets middle leaders and single person department teachers to discuss tracking data, including data related to individual young people and vulnerable groups. Communication with parents/carers is an integral part of the process and they value the work that the school does in this area. This work is leading to improved attainment. The school is currently working with the local authority and colleagues in other schools to progress a point of exit tracking approach.

Tracking in the broad general education, including across all curricular areas, is a priority area for development. Staff are working collaboratively with colleagues across the local authority to share and develop approaches. Interventions and supports for learners in the broad general education are identified through assessment, observation, and transition information. Standardised assessment data is used by a few departments to support learning, teaching and assessment. In the Art and Design & Technology departments the development of skills is planned effectively from the broad general education through to the senior phase.

Care experienced young people are tracked effectively through the care experienced tracking lead. This information is used by the school but also the Virtual HT working across the local authority.

Strengths

- The strong and coherent leadership from the head teacher and senior management team. By streamlining school priorities and committing to key priorities, staff have fully engaged in professional learning that is positively impacting on pupils' experiences.

- The ethos, inclusive culture and positive relationships between staff and young people. The collegiate staff group have high expectations of young people while at the same time providing a nurturing and caring learning experience.
- The approach that the school has taken to building capacity in teachers to lead and improve learning, teaching and assessment.

Areas for Development

- Continue to develop the collaborative approach to improving learning, teaching and assessment through areas such as digital learning, young people leading learning and embedding skills for learning, life, and work.
- Develop manageable and robust approaches to tracking and monitoring the progress of young people in the broad general education.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Local authority officers discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, young people. In addition, local authority officers examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. There were no areas for development identified.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- fulfilment of statutory duties

Is the school fulfilling statutory duties?

Yes

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard terms of quality are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.