

Appendix C

Inspection of Northfield Academy and update on progress since the Special Education & Children's Services Committee with report on 30th March 2023.

Inspection Context

In January 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Northfield Academy. A link to the report can be found [here](#).

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The individual members of staff who are making a positive difference to the experiences of young people.
- The work with partners, which is supporting young people and offering valuable social, workplace and educational opportunities. This is enabling a few young people to have very positive experiences in preparing for life and work.


The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Aberdeen City Council.

- Senior and middle leaders should work to improve the strategic leadership of all areas of the school. Review and update the school's vision and values. There should be a clear and shared understanding of the expectations, direction and identity of Northfield Academy. Ensure plans for improvement are agreed with young people, teachers and parents.
- Develop a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment. Build positive relationships across the school. Young people should be central to discussions about behaviour expectations and feeling safe in school.
- Agree with staff a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Develop effective processes to plan, track and monitor young people's progress.
- Ensure the wellbeing needs of all young people are a key part of all school activities. Clarify procedures relating to pupil attendance and time keeping.
- Urgently improve attainment from S1 to S6. Review the number of young people who leave school in S4 and S5, and those who do not go to a positive destination. Make plans to support broader achievements for all young people. The school should demonstrate how young people on reduced timetables are included, educated and safe.

The school secured the following gradings against the Quality Indicators.

Leadership of change	unsatisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	unsatisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	unsatisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	unsatisfactory

Summary of Progress since 30th March 2023

Recommendation	Actions taken to date
<p>1. Senior and Middle leaders Improve the strategic leadership of all areas of the school. Review and update the school's vision and values. There should be a clear and shared understanding of the expectations, direction and identity of Northfield Academy. Ensure plans for improvement are agreed with young people, teachers and parents.</p>	<p>The Tactical Team (see Report from 30.03.23) has met weekly with a pattern of fortnightly meetings including the entire Northfield Academy Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>Updates are provided below based on the framework of Quality Indicators from <i>How Good is Our School 4</i> (link here)</p> <p><u>Leadership of Change (Quality Indicator 1.3)</u></p> <p>The Leadership of Change Team have been engaging with the school and wider community to update the school vision and values. Following stakeholder meetings, the vision and values have been expressed in a new school badge and set of values:-</p> 
<p>2. Develop a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment. Build positive relationships across the school. Young people should be central to discussions about behaviour expectations and feeling safe in school.</p>	<p>Regular meetings have taken place to work alongside TU colleagues and regularly engage with the staff team. It would be only right and perhaps understandable to emphasise that the months since inspection have been challenging for the staff team as they reflect on the report and build for the future. It is pleasing then that a recent survey of the staff team demonstrates some improvement in their views on how they have been consulted in the necessary changes that have been necessary and at pace. Also importantly, for the first time in recent times, a majority of staff feel that behaviour in corridors has improved (51.6%). It is acknowledged that the improvement journey will be incremental yet vital in the life of the school.</p>
<p>3. Agree with staff a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Develop effective processes to plan, track and monitor</p>	<p><u>Safeguarding and Child Protection (Quality Indicator 2.1)</u></p> <p>Through fortnightly meetings of the Safeguarding Group, data is analysed to intervene in relation ensuring young people are safe and behaviour is showing positive signs of improvement. Although positive change will be incremental, there have been early successes to celebrate. Following up on a pattern of young people leaving class without good reason, weekly collection of data led to a target group being identified. Families were contacted and data was shared with both young people and families. Over the intervening month, this sharing of data and celebrating small successes resulted in a notable reduction in walkouts from class.</p>

<p>young people's progress.</p> <p>4. Ensure the wellbeing needs of all young people are a key part of all school activities. Clarify procedures relating to pupil attendance and time keeping.</p> <p>5. Urgently improve attainment from S1 to S6. Review the number of young people who leave school in S4 and S5, and those who do not go to a positive destination. Make plans to support broader achievements for all young people. The school should demonstrate how young people on reduced timetables are included, educated and safe.</p>	<p>Data-driven intervention also led to the targeted distribution of members of the School Leadership team to be based within certain areas during the week. The staff team have recognised that this change has resulted in a better response to incidents where dysregulated behaviour is displayed.</p> <p>Following an initial review of young people who had indicated concerns about how safe they felt in school, all young people were interviewed with follow-up contact with parents, carers and with the pastoral team. At the time of writing, further surveys were being gathered on key questions taken from the inspection questions. The data from these will be used to proactively intervene prior to the summer break.</p> <p><u>Curriculum (Quality Indicator, 2.2)</u></p> <p>Perhaps the most significant and obvious changes have taken place in developing a revised curriculum model for Northfield Academy. It is a well establish truth that curriculum drives improved attainment and so it has been vital to make changes at pace in the curriculum so that young people enjoy a more relevant and appropriate pathway choice to meet all of their needs.</p> <p><u>S1</u></p> <p>As outlined in the Committee Report of 30th March, a redesign of S1 is underway based on an understanding of; the importance of a smooth and positive transition from Primary to Secondary school, the need for young people to develop positive relationships through wider experiences, and the way that young people respond well to having fewer, stronger relationships with adults who get to know them well. Nine experienced primary experienced class teachers have been recruited, with young people and partners playing a role in the recruitment process. A block of space has been identified for S1 at Northfield Academy and facilities colleagues are undertaking works to create a positive collective learning environment. The Depute Head Teacher with responsibility for transition and S1 has been meeting young people regularly in their ASG primary school, and most recently with parents and carers to provide them with information about what to expect in their new S1 environment. Planning for a residential experience as part of the first week in S1 is in the final stages.</p> <p><u>S3</u></p> <p>Young people are being given an opportunity to personalise their learning through choice at the beginning of S3, with new timetables having commenced on 29th May.</p> <p><u>S4</u></p> <p>With positive support both from staff members at Northfield Academy and also from partner providers, a revised and broader curriculum is being offered in S4, distinct from the offer for S5 and S6. This allows the opportunity for young people to access some exciting new courses on top of existing courses offered as part of the curriculum; a Level 4 Automotive Course (offered in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council), a Level 4/5 Foundation Apprenticeship in Construction</p>
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(again in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council), a National Progression Award in Makeup Artistry (through partners Glamcandy) to name but a few.

S5/S6

The S5/6 curriculum has also undergone urgent review and change. Following feedback from young people, part of the column structure has been aligned with a neighbouring school to create a consortium arrangement on Monday to Thursday afternoons. In the remaining three columns, staff have revised their course offers to reflect the needs of all young people. In addition to this, significant numbers of young people from Northfield Academy have had the confidence to make choices from the new ABZ Campus suite of courses.

Learning Teaching & Assessment (Quality Indicator 2.3)

The Learning and Teaching Group have worked together to establish a Learning and Teaching Standard for Northfield Academy. The staff team gathered on the INSET day (2nd May) to allow teachers to review the physical learning environment in line with practice detailed within the CIRCLE Framework. In subsequent Staff Meetings, the focus has continued to be on the physical environment, with input provided by the Lead Teacher for the authority and from a colleague Head Teacher with significant experience as Associate Assessor.

With activity around supporting an improved physical environment and establishment of basic routines, a wider local authority team will conduct classroom visits during the week of 11th September.

Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion (Quality Indicator 3.1)

Work has continued to build around the creation of a Wellbeing Strategy for Northfield Academy, and in particular the creation of an Equalities Policy.

Following feedback from staff and analysis of data, professional learning has been provided on de-escalation techniques to support positive relationships and effective support in situations of dysregulated behaviour. By the end of May, almost all staff had participated in this professional learning, with plans for enhanced training and support for the extended leadership team in August and September.

Mindful of the need to establish consistently high expectations for all, and encourage calm, safe and purposeful environments, work is underway to form a simple set of expected behaviours based on the values of *Nurture Flourish Achieve* and supported by the need to be *Ready, Respectful* and *Safe*. These expectations will be co-created by staff and young people alike and will be in place for the second part of June in time to be part of expected school life in August.

Opportunities to 'look outward' have also been sought and progressed to ensure plans continue to be based on best-practice in this area.

Raising Attainment and Achievement (Quality Indicator 3.2)

Acknowledging that a combination of the creation of a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment and the construction of a curriculum that is relevant and meets the needs of all young people will ultimately lead to improved attainment, the entirety of the work described above will yield attainment benefits in the coming session and sessions.

In the short term, school leaders have been targeting specific groups of young people who are at risk of missing out on qualifications. There has been a particular focus on attainment in literacy and numeracy.