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Dear Parent/Carer

Our Lady & St Patrick's High School
West Dunbartonshire Council

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's school. Throughout our visit, we talked to many parents and young people and we worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well young people were learning and achieving and how well the school supported young people to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including the leadership development programme, the integrated learning challenges in S1 and S2 and the school's continuing professional development programme. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school was at improving young people's education.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Young people learn very well and achievement is exceptional. They are highly motivated and focused on their work. Across the school, they enjoy varied and challenging learning within stimulating learning environments. Independence, responsibility and mutual respect are key features of young people's experiences. Relationships between and amongst staff and young people are consistently very positive within a strong supportive community. Young people feel safe and well cared for and are treated fairly. They are extremely proud of their school. Young people are clear about what they are learning and what they need to work on to improve. They frequently work collaboratively and are increasingly involved in evaluating their own and each other's work. Young people in S1 and S2 demonstrate high levels of creativity, critical thinking and teamwork in the integrated learning challenges. These are helping improve young people's success as learners. The integrated learning challenges are also developing young people's overall confidence in working with others in different situations and discussing their ideas and opinions. Young people contribute very well to improving the life and work of the school and the wider community. All young people participate in the religious life of the school and are supported well through the routine of daily morning prayer. They value the opportunities to come together to explore what they believe and further their personal spiritual development as well as that of the school as a whole.

Young people have an impressive range of skills for learning, life and work and demonstrate key attributes of self-reliance and respect for others. They are developing their leadership skills very well through the school's leadership development programme which is an example of good practice. Achievement in art is outstanding with young people achieving great success in SQA qualifications and in local and national competitions. Young people achieve

¹ This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as this will not connect.

and perform very well in a range of musical, sporting and cultural activities. Across the school, young people understand and promote well the values of global citizenship. They support others in the community very well including raising considerable funds for local and international charities. They also contribute well to initiatives such as the Bankietalk recorded reading project for visually impaired young people. The school is continuing to improve its approaches to recognising achievement, including through an increasing range of accredited awards.

In S1 and S2, young people are progressing well across the curriculum in their broad general education. The school performs exceptionally well in national qualifications at S4, S5 and S6. Attainment at these stages is consistently above national averages and is much better than in schools serving young people with similar needs and backgrounds. Most young people progress successfully to further or higher education, training or employment.

How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

The school has an extremely effective range of provision of care and support to meet young people's social, emotional and learning needs. The curriculum meets the needs of all young people very well to support them in developing, attaining and achieving the best they possibly can.

Staff across the school are skilful and resourceful in adopting approaches which appropriately support all young people. They work very well as a team and draw effectively on the wide range of partners' contributions. Pastoral staff provide very high-quality support for learners to ensure they are able to learn and progress with as few barriers as possible. Staff across the school are diligent in monitoring young people's wellbeing and progress. All staff, including learning assistants, support for learning staff and the pupil and family support team, as well as senior pupils, take seriously their collective responsibilities and play an active role in working together to very effectively meet young people's needs. The librarian provides a significant contribution to young people's learning and achievement, including through the enriched reading programme. The school works in very close partnership with parents. The whole-school focus on developing approaches to ensuring tasks, activities and resources meet learners' needs has been particularly successful. Staff have consistently very high expectations of standards and quality of work and promote a strong culture of achievement. Young people experience great variety in their learning and work at a good pace. Teachers take careful account of individual needs in planning learning to ensure young people are appropriately supported and challenged in their learning.

Developing the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence has been ongoing and carefully planned for an extended period. New approaches and courses in S1 and S2 are helping young people develop their literacy and numeracy skills across their learning. Staff are successfully developing all areas of health and wellbeing, including through the life and ethos of the school. This is building young people's confidence, relationships and sense of belonging. Staff have taken innovative approaches to help young people link their learning across subjects and out-of-class experiences. This has been particularly effective in the integrated learning challenges and the leadership development programme. Through the integrated learning challenges, young people apply their learning in subjects in exciting contexts and are developing enterprise, creativity and problem solving skills particularly well. The school has strong and effective links with primary schools which ensure continuity and progression in learning, especially in literacy and numeracy. From S3 to S6, young people have a wide choice of courses, some delivered with partners, and have well-planned progression routes which meet their interests and needs very well. Equality and diversity is promoted very well in the work of the school including through the Promoting Acceptance for All (PA4L) and the Respect Me initiatives. Young people in S6 are benefiting from a programme of learning and spiritual development which will lead to an accredited

Caritas Award. The school has clear and well-considered plans to continue to develop courses and approaches to ensure appropriate progression and challenge across the curriculum and into the senior phase.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The school has very well-developed and extensive self-evaluation approaches which are leading to improvements across all aspects of school practice. Staff place a high priority on raising standards of attainment and achievement for all young people. The school's in-house continuing professional development programme is pivotal in the school's approach to quality improvement. Focusing on delivering priorities identified in the school improvement plan, it has resulted in a vibrant professional learning community with staff clearly focused on working together to secure improvement. The headteacher's outstanding leadership is highly valued by staff, parents, partners and young people who have confidence in his consultative and inclusive approaches. Together with his deputy headteachers, he provides clear strategic direction and guidance and is committed to delivering the school's values, vision and aims. They encourage, support and challenge staff and young people to reach their potential, be innovative and contribute to the continuous improvement of the school. Leadership across the school, including that of young people, is a strong feature of the school.

This inspection of your school found the following key strengths.

- The leadership of the headteacher, senior managers, staff and young people across the school.
- Approaches to implementing Curriculum for Excellence.
- Young people's levels of attainment and quality and range of achievements.
- Well-coordinated, partnership and collaborative approaches to supporting young people's social, emotional and learning needs.
- Commitment and skill of staff in using self-evaluation to improve the school.
- Consistently high expectations of staff and young people's attitude to work.

We discussed with staff and the education authority how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue to build on the very effective work in developing the curriculum and taking forward the school's plans for the senior phase.
- Share the good and innovative practice in the school more widely both locally and nationally.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are very satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are extremely confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified aspects of innovative practice which we would like to explore further in order to share the practice with others. As a result we will work with the school and local authority in order to record and share more widely the innovative practice. We will ask the school, in discussion with the local authority, to let parents know the outcome of the innovative practice visit(s).

Mary Hoey
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at

<http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=7455&type=3>.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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