

Education Scotland, 1st and 2nd Floor, Endeavour House, 1 Greenmarket, Dundee DD1 4QB

t 01382 576700

f 01382 576701

e dundee@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

w www.educationscotland.gov.uk

Textphone 01506 600236¹

20 December 2011

Dear Parent/Carer

**Gleniffer High School
Renfrewshire 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 and senior management team shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including progress being made towards Curriculum for Excellence and the impact of the school's work on improving learning and teaching on young people's progress and achievements. We also considered the role of young people in improving the life and work of the school community. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school was at improving young people's education. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Across the school, young people learn and achieve very well. They are proud of their school and value the range of experiences that help them become articulate, thoughtful and successful learners. Many young people make a positive contribution to the school community, for example, by organising school events or volunteering in the local care home. The school promotes young people's achievements well. Staff have collected helpful information on young people's participation and achievements in school and community activities. Young people are now being supported to identify and apply these skills across their learning. Relationships between staff and young people are very positive. Staff give helpful explanations, clear instructions and use questioning effectively to engage young people actively in their learning. As a result, young people enjoy their lessons, benefitting from increasing opportunities to work in pairs or groups, to share ideas and work on motivating tasks. They apply themselves confidently and responsibly to their work in class. Increasingly, they are evaluating their own work and setting themselves realistic targets for improvement. Young people feel they have a say in making the way they learn in school better.

The school continues to improve its performance and the attainment of young people. At S1 and S2, staff are promoting and developing young people's literacy and numeracy skills well across the school. Young people, including those with identified support needs, are making good progress across all curriculum areas. From S4 to S6, young people's attainment, overall, has been in line with or better than national averages. In almost all aspects, their

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

performance in national examinations is better or much better than schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds. The school's effective actions to raise attainment have helped more young people to leave school to enter employment, training, further or higher education.

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

Within its very caring and inclusive learning environment, the school supports young people to develop and learn very well.

Almost all teachers provide learning activities and resources which meet the needs of young people very well. A number of teachers are very skilful in matching tasks to learning needs. Many use information and communications technology (ICT) well to make lessons interesting. Pupil support staff provide detailed and helpful guidance about the young people they work with. Support for learning staff provide high-quality support for young people, with valuable contributions from learning assistants. Senior students contribute very effectively, through volunteer and 'buddy' programmes, to supporting younger peers, particularly those with additional support needs. Partnership work with external services and agencies, such as home-link staff, is effectively supporting young people to develop their learning. Overall, these approaches are helping young people gain confidence and develop a strong sense of belonging within an ethos of mutual respect.

The curriculum successfully combines learning experiences in class with wider opportunities. Staff give full consideration to the principles and purposes of Curriculum for Excellence in developing the curriculum. New approaches and courses at S1 and S2 are helping young people to make connections across their learning and develop their literacy and numeracy skills. The literacy working group provides very helpful guidance and advice to staff and young people through their 'Necessary Nine' work. As a result, young people's writing across their subjects is improving. In a few subject areas, teachers are working well with primary colleagues to share standards and ensure courses build well on young people's prior learning. This good practice should be built upon so it is consistent across the school. From S3 to S6, the school provides all young people with a wide choice of courses, including some delivered in partnership with local colleges, community partners and local schools.

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

The school has in place very effective approaches for self-evaluation and improving the quality of its work. As a result, we are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve.

The headteacher has provided strong leadership in developing a culture of improvement through self-evaluation across the school. He demonstrates a personal and passionate commitment to delivering the school's shared values and aims. Depute headteachers play a very effective role in encouraging and challenging staff and young people to take responsibility for improving their school. Principal teachers have a consistent and very thorough approach to monitoring and tracking improvements within subject departments. As a result, staff have a shared understanding of the areas for improvement and their contribution to ensuring these are achieved. This includes observations of learning, discussions with pupil focus groups and rigorous analysis of performance in national examinations. A significant number of staff contribute to working groups. This is having a positive impact on the sharing of good practice and improving learning and teaching across the school. There are very effective arrangements in place for monitoring and tracking young people's progress in their coursework. The school community and its partners have high regard for, and confidence in, the collective leadership of the school.

This inspection of your school found the following key strengths.

- Well-behaved, confident, young people who achieve widely and show pride in their school.
- Enthusiastic and innovative staff who work well together to improve the school.
- Progress made towards Curriculum for Excellence.
- Strong culture of self-evaluation leading to improved attainment and achievement.
- The inspirational leadership and drive of the headteacher.

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 improve young people's learning and achievements in line with the principles of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Continue to share and build on the best practice within the school to ensure consistency of high quality learning and teaching throughout the school.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are 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).

Fiona Robertson
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=8817&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.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact 01506 600200, or write to us at the above address or e-mail: feedback@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk.