# Summarised Inspection Findings

# Woodmill High School

# Fife Council

# SEED No: 5446430

# 30 May 2017

**School Name**        **Woodmill High School**
**Council:**            **Fife Council**
**SEED number:**      **5446430**
**Roll (Sep 2015):**    **1,227**

**Attendance is slightly below the national average, 91.3 per cent in the school compared with 91.8 per cent nationally in 2014/15 and 2015/16.**

**In 2015/16, exclusions have increased.**

**In February 2016, the percentage of pupils registered for free school meals was below the national average.**

**In September 2015 10-<15 per cent of the pupils lived in the 20 per cent most deprived datazones in Scotland. [2]**

**In September 2015, 0–<5 per cent of the pupils were from minority ethnic groups.**

**In September 2015, the percentage of pupils with additional support needs was above the national average.**

**The school is located in 'Other urban areas'.[1]**

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Large scale housing developments in the school locale, is anticipated to have a continuing and significant impact on the school roll, and possibly the SIMD profile.

The school has a designated provision for young people with additional support needs. This is known as Department of Additional Support (DAS). Young people attend DAS from out with the school's catchment area.

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1. Location is grouped into eight categories based on the size of the population the school is in. These categories are:
 - Large urban areas (population >125K)
 - Other urban (population >10K)
 - Accessible small town (population 3-10K but within 30 minutes of 10K)
 - Remote small town (population 3-10K and more than 30 minutes from 10K)
 - Very remote small town (population 3-10K and more than 60 minutes from 10K)
 - Accessible rural (population <3K but within 30 minutes of 10K)
- Remote rural (population <3K and more than 30 minutes from 10K)
- Very remote rural (population <3K and more than 60 minutes from 10K)

2. Data is based on SIMD 2012. Pupils whose address cannot be matched to an SIMD data zone have not been included in the calculation

| 1.3 LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE | *satisfactory* |
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This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community.  Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation.  Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners.  The themes are:

- *Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community*
- *Strategic planning for continuous improvement*
- *Implementing improvement and change.*

- The school's statement of vision makes appropriate reference to ambition, attainment and achievement.  This is in a context of active inclusion for all young people and a concern for their broader achievement and personal development.  Senior staff actively promote that vision.  However, there remains scope for it to be more effectively shared across all staff, young people and the wider community as an important foundation for the work of the school.  This would help give clear direction to the leadership of change.

- The school's values are stated as community; integrity; equality and inclusion; and ambition, achievement and attainment.  These values reflect those of the local authority.  The values are often evident in the day-to-day working of the school.  However, there is scope for the values to be applied more consistently.  This would include the way in which they influence the quality of young people's learning experiences.

- Senior leaders take account of important aspects of the school's social, economic and cultural context.  The focus they place on developing young people's capacities to be part of Scotland's future young workforce is an example of this.  In so doing, they take account of the work place standards provided by Skills Development Scotland.  The changing demographic features in the local community present the school with a continuing challenge.  All staff need to continue to improve the attainment and achievement of all young people as a matter of priority.

- The headteacher has won the confidence and support of staff and the wider community.  He has established the broad sense of purpose of the school and has set the scene for leading improvements in the school's performance.  A range of partners plan and deliver programmes, in conjunction with school staff, to support young people in better engaging with their learning.  The School Partnership Group regularly identifies areas for improvement and recognises that there is further scope to evaluate shared outcomes. Senior staff work well as a team in leading and managing aspects of the process of change. Each individual member of the team brings strong complementary contributions.  This provides an important, corporate approach with the potential to achieve consistency in driving further improvements in the school.

- The school improvement plan operates over a three-year period.  This is coordinated with the associated primary schools' plans and reflects Fife Council's priorities.  The school workstreams range from operational tasks (such as improve attendance and inclusion) to more strategic targets such as the refinement of leadership development

- opportunities.  The improvement plan and specific workstreams are based on the school's self-evaluation approaches.  Staff across all departments should now use these self-evaluation approaches more robustly.

- The school's Extended Board of Studies (EBoS) plays a key role in the school's improvement planning approach, bringing together the different contributions of principal teachers.  Members of EBoS are currently developing a Middle Management Handbook.  This has the potential to make an important contribution to the much-needed consistency and quality in the leadership of change by middle managers.  The school should build on this good practice by developing much-needed school-wide guidance to lead improvements in quality and consistency in priority areas.  This needs to include learning, teaching and assessment, promoting positive behaviour, and monitoring and tracking of progress and attainment.  The pace of change in these priority areas has been too slow.

- Staff value the wider opportunity provided by departmental meetings to engage in planning for change and contributing ideas towards leading change.  Many staff lead aspects of professional learning, sharing skills and approaches with their colleagues to share good practice.  The school has improved the alignment between departmental improvement planning and the core school planning process.  However, in responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, around a fifth of staff did not feel they had opportunities to shape the curriculum through discussions with colleagues and partners.  A third of staff did not feel that they had regular opportunities to undertake leadership roles.

- Staff are increasing the leadership development among young people.  For example, they are building relevant skills and attributes in programmes for personal and social education.  Young people at the senior stages make important, enterprising contributions to leadership in the school.  This includes their roles in supporting younger peers, duties relating to the House system, and in a number of school club activities.

- The school has demonstrated its capacity to implement significant change.  For example, senior staff and the EBoS worked well with stakeholders in the challenging process of revising the senior phase curriculum at S4.  Staff developed a well-researched rationale in consultation with staff and young people.  Their rationale was shared with the Parent Council and other partners, winning support for implementation of the school's plans.  The school now needs to follow that effective approach in developing school-wide systems and guidance on other key aspects of its work, ensuring that these developments are appropriately evaluated to assess their impact on young people's experiences and outcomes.

- Managers, staff and young people in Department of Additional Support (DAS) share a clear understanding of its vision and purpose.  The department aims to prepare young people, as well as possible, for life beyond school.  They support them to achieve to the best of their ability and to develop independence and skills for life and work.  To help them to achieve this vision, young people have appropriate opportunities to learn important life skills in the community, attending Fife College and taking part in activities which promote healthy life styles.  When given the opportunity, most young people work well with their peers in pairs, in groups and independently.  The department has successfully established a calm, positive, nurturing ethos and relationships which are enhanced further by accessible and spacious indoor and outdoor safe learning spaces.

## 2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT  *satisfactory*

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.*

- Most young people engage with their learning and have positive relationships with staff.  In most classes, behaviour is managed well, with staff making timely interventions to ensure young people are participating in planned learning activities.  There are a few young people, mainly in the broad general education, who are causing low-level disruption in classes.  Staff should ensure lessons capture young people's interests and are better differentiated.  In so doing, staff need to take more account of young people's prior knowledge and their progress.  They should identify with young people appropriate next steps.  The majority of young people in the senior phase demonstrate an ability to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning.  Staff should continue to develop opportunities for young people at all stages to work collaboratively, lead their own learning and increase their skills as independent learners.

- Staff offer a wide variety of lunchtime and after-school activities to help young people develop further their skills and enhance their achievements.  Young people also lead, organise and run activities based on their own interests.  Achievements are recognised through badges, ties and the "Big Show Off" event.  Young people report that whole-school leadership activities are helping them gain a greater understanding of their skills and build their confidence.  A next step is to ensure that all young people benefit from such learning experiences.

- In the majority of lessons, teachers are using digital technology through the use of computers, projectors and, in some classrooms, interactive boards.  There is scope for teachers to be more creative with the use of digital technology.  This may be achieved through an increased use of Glow, for example.  The school website could be usefully updated to ensure it contains relevant information on all curricular areas.  This would provide support for learners.

- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is too variable and, at times, is weak.  The staff team need to develop a strategic approach to learning and teaching.  In this, staff need to be supported with professional dialogue, systematic observations, and well-planned development opportunities.

- In almost all classes, explanations and instructions are clear.  Teachers should ensure young people are clear about the purpose of their learning.  This should be underpinned with high-quality criteria that supports the development of the skills required to be successful learners.  Most lessons are overly teacher-directed with young people passive and not given sufficient opportunities to lead their learning.  In almost all classes, questioning is direct and closed.  There are too few opportunities for young people to engage in open-ended discussions which promote independent and higher-order thinking skills.  A number of staff have undertaken professional learning on teaching approaches.  They should now demonstrate more impact of

such professional learning.

- Young people are confident in asking for support and receive effective verbal feedback in most lessons.  Written feedback in summative reports is based on strengths and next steps.  Teachers should ensure that they promote high expectations and provide consistent high-quality feedback to young people that details how to improve their learning and progress.  This should feature across all aspects of their school work including class jotters, homework assignments and assessments.  Teachers need to have regular conversations with young people about their progress in learning.

- Summative assessments are used to assess progress in learning across the school.  These are typically end-of-unit tests or exam-type questions.  This could be usefully extended to include a wider range of assessment.  In the broad general education, assessments are not articulated to Curriculum for Excellence levels.  Overall, there is not yet sufficient clarity about teachers' professional judgements about young people's progress in learning during the broad general education.  Most young people in S2 and S3 are unclear about the level at which they are working.

- Teachers are moderating the quality of learners' work in almost all departments.  This has largely prioritised the senior phase, with some focus on transition from P7.  Annual moderation events are planned through subject network meetings.  These provide opportunities for professional dialogue on understanding standards.  Staff should now clearly focus on evidencing the achievement of a level in the broad general education so that they are more confident in making judgements about learners' progress.

- Almost all subject areas are planning, tracking and monitoring young people's progress in the broad general education.  Staff plan using the experiences and outcomes.  There are few examples of assessment of learners' progress being used to plan further learning.  The school should build on the emerging good practice in this area, and take more account of the views of young people when planning learning.  The school has not yet developed a cohesive whole-school approach to help young people identify their next steps in learning.  Staff need to challenge young people using the results of tracking and monitoring.

- The school is using tracking and monitoring more consistently in the senior phase.  In doing so, they analyse and use a range of data to plan appropriate interventions to help raise attainment.  Throughout the school, monitoring and tracking is used effectively to inform reporting for parents.  However, the school should ensure greater alignment between collated data at whole-school level and ongoing data which is collected in faculties or subject areas.

- Staff in DAS demonstrate a strong commitment to children's and young people's wellbeing and progress in learning.  Pupil support assistants provide well-judged, nurturing support which is developing young people's confidence and resilience in order to prepare them for learning.  Young people engage more readily in learning tasks when these are linked to real-life experiences.  Most young people in DAS show genuine interest in their learning.  They talk enthusiastically about their work, including that connected to the Scots language, for example.  Staff do not always plan tasks, learning activities and resources to take account of learners' differing needs.  This leads to a slower pace of learning for some and insufficient challenge for others.  More regular observation of class lessons, with a view to identifying and

sharing good practice, would improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching.  This, in turn, would lead to better outcomes for young people.

- The DAS policy on teaching and learning is not followed consistently across lessons. For example, it is not always clear what young people are expected to learn.

- In DAS, principal teachers are systematically reviewing young people's progress in achieving targets set within integrated support plans (ISP).  This is to ensure that young people are making appropriate progress in literacy, numeracy, and personal and social development.  It is less clear how staff track progress in other areas of the curriculum.

## 2.2 CURRICULUM:  Theme 3 Learning Pathways

- Young people experience a broad and varied curriculum in S1 and S2.  They begin to specialise their curriculum in S3.  The school needs to keep under review the points in learning pathways at which young people are making choices for specialisation. They should ensure that, by allowing early choice, they are not limiting young people's capacity to achieve breadth of learning.  Although young people may choose new learning experiences in S3, such as childcare, they may choose not to progress these experiences into the Senior Phase.  By reducing young people's subjects in S3, and again in S4, not all learners will be able to build upon prior learning effectively or progress all of their subjects.  Teachers need to consider how best to optimise all areas of learning in the broad general education, using planning, monitoring and tracking of skills to ensure progressive pathways.  Teachers should also ensure that young people in S3 experience all of the curricular areas.  The school needs to keep under review curriculum choices in the broad general education to ensure that all young people receive their full entitlements and that their curriculum experience supports them with progression and improving outcomes.

- The broad general education is enhanced by the addition of leadership skills and study skills in S1.  The school is currently exploring how these skills may be developed further.  Young people from S2 to S6 engage in leadership work to gain an insight into attributes and skills which are useful for further learning and employment.

- From S4 to S6, the school provides a range of flexible pathways as part of an integrated senior phase curriculum.  There is a wide range of courses which lead to National Qualifications.  Partnership work, including consortium arrangements with neighbouring schools and strong links with local colleges and business partners, are also used effectively to enrich pathways.  The school targets groups of learners to engage, and develop their skills, in STEAM activities.  Young people benefit from a range of achievement opportunities.  This strong practice includes work placements, shadowing university students, sports leadership awards, volunteer awards and involvement in the local community.

- The school recognises the need to devise a clear and shared strategy for the development and assessment of literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and digital literacy.  Inspectors observed interesting practice in the use of storytelling as an intervention to raise attainment.  There is scope for developing a strategic approach to monitoring and tracking the progression of skills which will be facilitated by the use of Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks.

- The school meets national guidelines for providing young people with two hours of quality physical education at S1-S4.

- Work is developing between Woodmill High School and its associated primary schools to consider how learning may be articulated better between the schools. Commendably, planning aims to provide ongoing opportunities for children and young people to experience learning linked to Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) priorities.

- Senior managers work collaboratively to provide opportunities for young people to recognise and develop skills for employability as part of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).  The school has a strong focus on supporting young people to

make informed choices about their future through partnership working. The school works with an extensive range of partners who are pertinent to the local economy. There is useful collaboration between the school and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) careers staff. This is resulting in career management skills (CMS) being planned jointly to enable young people, including the most vulnerable learners, to develop, consolidate and apply their CMS. SDS and the school's guidance staff also lead successful one-to-one interviews, assisting learners to make informed subject choices. An annual in-school career fair provides young people and parents with direct access to a wide range of information about further learning and employment. Newly-devised and informative course choice booklets also outline skills and knowledge which will be developed in all curricular areas, linking these to careers and possible education routes.

- Staff in DAS do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of learning pathways for young people. They should design these based on the experiences and outcomes and design principles. Staff should improve the curriculum to ensure a focus on skills which is linked clearly to assessment and moderation. The department is developing skills that lead to employability and a few former pupils have been very successful in gaining permanent jobs. Staff are keen to extend opportunities within the curriculum to develop the resilience of young people.

## 2.7 PARTNERSHIPS: Theme 3, Impact on learners and families – Parental Engagement

- Parents highlight the headteacher's approachability.  The Parent Council feel that it is consulted in a meaningful way and is involved in improvement planning.  This consultation could be widened to other parents.  The Parent Council promotes equity for all learners by supplying all young people in S1 with a school tie.

- Parents are kept informed of the life and work of the school through newsletters, the school website and social media.  There is a need to keep these lines of communication consistent and up-to-date, with timely responses to individual communication.

- There is scope to engage parents more fully in their children's learning, including for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.  Parents would appreciate more information on their children's progress so that they are better able to support learning at home.

- DAS has well-established approaches to involving parents in their children's learning.  Home-school diaries support effective communication and shared approaches to supporting young people.  Examples include reviews of young people's progress, enhanced transition arrangements and a range of events organised by their children.  The staff in DAS inform parents and carers of support groups which can provide specialist training, information and support for them and their children when, for example, making the transition to adult services.

## 2.1: SAFEGUARDING

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and where appropriate, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

| 3.1 ENSURING WELLBEING, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION | *good* |
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This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
- *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
- *Inclusion and equality.*

- Young people are supported well by the 'team around the child' house structure involving the DHT and, staff in guidance and support for learning. The house teams have placed a high priority on further developing their GIRFEC approaches in preparation for the Named Person responsibilities. The house teams' detailed knowledge of young people's needs equips them well to provide support, and take decisions and actions to improve their outcomes. Planning involves assessment of young people's wellbeing and needs using the wellbeing indicators. The school fulfils statutory duties relating to the planning and review of Coordinated Support Plans for young people. Staff across the school should now develop the use of the wellbeing indicators to plan improvements in outcomes. They should ensure that all young people have a clear understanding of their wellbeing and rights.

- Young people, who have previously been disengaged from their learning, or who have had other support needs, have benefitted from the range of flexible and responsive strategies to support them to participate in their learning. Individualised learning programmes are carefully planned, monitored and reviewed with appropriate partners. This has led to a significant reduction in exclusions and increased engagement in learning for some young people. The school's success in ensuring post-school destinations provides important evidence of the impact of this work.

- Young people with additional support needs have their needs identified well. The school is skilled at gathering information and identifying needs with associated primary schools and specialist services and staff. Support for learning staff share relevant information to support the planning for and progress of learners with additional support needs. Across the school, staff need to develop skills in using the identified strategies and approaches to differentiation in order to increase pace and challenge, and improve progress and achievement of all learners. The new principal teacher of support for learning, together with the DHTs, are well placed to play an appropriately strategic role in building the capacity of all staff in meeting the range of needs of young people.

- Young people report that guidance staff are approachable and know them well. Staff should ensure that they are always available. To achieve this, the school needs to develop a whole-school approach to the delivery of the universal support entitlement. This need to make clear the roles and responsibilities of all staff and partners in promoting and supporting improved outcomes in wellbeing for all learners. In doing so, the use of registration time, as part of the provision of universal support, needs to be reviewed and improved.

- Most young people feel they are treated with respect and fairness by staff and other young people. However, young people do not feel that this is consistent across the school. They feel that the poor behaviour of others impacts negatively on their experience, both within and outwith the classroom. Young people and staff do not have consistently high expectations of young people's behaviour, attitude to learning and attainment. The school should progress its plans to review its anti-bullying and behaviour policies and procedures. There needs to be a whole-school strategy for the promotion of positive behaviour and embedding children's rights to improve learner participation and their influence on decisions.

- Young people speak knowledgeably about being able to make informed decisions about risk-taking behaviours around substance misuse and alcohol. They are positive about the revised PSE programme. The school has developed a range of up-to-date and changing contexts. The anti-social behaviour unit was developed in response to a rise in such behaviour in the local community. The school is aware of the gap in provision of HWB for young people in S5/S6. As this new programme evolves, it will be important to ensure an appropriate emphasis is given to promoting mental health and wellbeing.

- The school promotes some aspects of equality and diversity and tackling discrimination. The PSE programme includes a focus on understanding diversity, disability and same sex relationships as well as tackling identity-based discrimination. A Gender Sexuality Alliance group meets weekly to support young people from the LGBT community.

- Young people benefit from the effective partnerships which are supporting health and wellbeing. This includes a counselling service, educational psychologist, Active Schools Co-ordinator and third sector organisations. Strong partnership working with Active Schools is effectively promoting physical activity and sport within and beyond school through provision of extensive out-of-school clubs. This is providing good progression pathways to local sports clubs for young people to continue their participation beyond school. A lunchtime drop-in and support from Fife Young Carers project provides good support for young carers across the school.

- The school's catering service is not currently able to demonstrate that they are meeting the statutory nutrient standards for school lunches. A few food and drink standards for lunch provision are not being met. The school-run tuck shop requires to be reviewed to ensure that the products sold meet the food and drink standards outwith lunch. The school and catering service should work together to promote further the uptake of school lunches, including free school lunches, to ensure this duty is being fully met.

- The school is providing core RME for all young people in S1 to S4 but at present there is no core element in S5 and S6. The senior leadership team should explore ways in which it can provide a regular and appropriate experience for young people. At present, the school is not fulfilling its statutory duty in relation to Religious Observance. The senior leadership team should continue to explore ways in which it can better meet the needs of staff and young people in partnership with appropriate members of the wider community.

- Young people in DAS are actively involved in decisions which affect their lives through the DAS Pupil Council. It meets regularly with the DHT and principal teacher to discuss and take account of their views. Young people told inspectors that

managers listen to their views and act on them.  They also informed inspectors that staff are supportive and approachable and do their best to help.  The school provides good supported access to mainstream classes and young people's subject choices.

- Staff receive helpful details of the young people in DAS, along with learning and teaching and behaviour management strategies.  This is helping staff to meet young people's needs more effectively.  DAS class timetables have an important focus on life skills, literacy and numeracy.  All young people have assessment folders which follow them through their time in school from placement.  The DAS now needs to develop these further to ensure that they have a focus on skills and are more clearly linked to Curriculum for Excellence.

## 3.2 RAISING ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT    *satisfactory*

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners.  Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes.  Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator.  The themes are:
- *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*
- *Attainment over time*
- *Overall quality of learners' achievement*
- *Equity for all learners.*

- There is headroom for improving attainment and achievement.  The school should ensure that changes to the curriculum are raising attainment, particularly in S5. Senior leaders should retain a focus on there being sufficiently high expectations in course presentations.  Young people's attainment would be raised through improved learning and teaching.  The school needs to ensure that its review of attainment and progress is consistently robust and includes the broad general education.

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy
- In the broad general education in the latest year, the school is reporting that most young people, by the end of S3, have achieved the third curriculum level in literacy and numeracy.  Just over a third of young people are achieving fourth curriculum level in literacy, with over a half of young people achieving fourth level in numeracy. There is scope for improving further the reliability of data on young people's attainment in literacy and numeracy.  It would be beneficial for all teachers to be discussing and gathering evidence of young people's progress in literacy and numeracy.

- For all leavers in 2015, most young people are achieving SCQF level 3+ in the two separate measures for numeracy and literacy.  However, young people are performing significantly lower in numeracy and literacy at SCQF level 3+ than the virtual comparator (VC).  The school has analysed performance and is able to account for those who have not achieved SCQF level 3+.  They have assisted some of these young people into employment.

- For all leavers, at SCQF levels 4+ to 6+ for numeracy, in the latest two years, the school is performing in line with its VC.  At SCQF levels 4+ and 5+, there are significant improvements over the last five years.  For all leavers in 2015, the school performed significantly lower than the VC for literacy, with the exception of L5+ Cr which is in line with the VC.  There are significant improvements in literacy at SCQF level 5 over the last five years.

### Attainment over time
- Teachers are recording young people's achievements of curriculum levels in the broad general education.  The school is still to develop a consistent and robust way of tracking progress across the broad general education.  In the senior phase, the school tracks progress from which it plans interventions.  Senior leaders who lead on senior phase tracking have a thorough knowledge of the progress of young people, and the strategies that are put in place to raise attainment.  In particular, the school is able to show impact from quicker identification of under-achievement and mentoring.

- Most young people in DAS are working at an appropriate level within broad general education.  Staff should continue to monitor young people's progress over time

across all subjects within the broad general education.  They should use this data, both at the broad general education and senior phase, to help determine priorities for improvement.

- The attainment of all young people leaving school and the middle attaining group, as measured by the average complementary tariff scores, is in line with the VC.  For the lowest attaining group, in the latest year, attainment has been significantly lower.  For the highest attaining group, attainment is generally in line with that of the VC.

- At S4, the percentage of young people attaining 1+ to 6+ courses is in line with the VC at SCQF levels 3+ and 4+.  At SCQF level 5+, the percentage of young people attaining courses is significantly lower than the VC.

- By S5, at SCQF levels 5+ and 6+, in the latest two years, the percentage of young people attaining 1+ to 5+ courses is almost always significantly lower and much lower than the VC.  However, in the latest year there are some improvements at SCQF level 6+, to be in line with the VC.

- By S6, there are improving trends in the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF levels 4+ to 6+.  Almost all of these improvements are significant, with some being very significant improvements at SCQF level 5+.  However, in the latest year at SCQF levels 4+, 5+ and 6+, the percentage of young people attaining 1+ to 5+ courses is significantly lower or much lower than that of those in the VC.  In the latest year, at SCQF level 7C+ and 7A+, the percentage of young people attaining 1+ course is significantly lower than that of those in the VC.  There are significant improvements at SCQF level 7C+ over the past five years.

- In course-level attainment in S4, young people in a majority of courses achieved all of the units for National 4.  At S4 National 5, attainment in Mathematics was comparatively strong, whilst attainment in a quarter of courses was comparatively weak.  At S5/S6 Higher, attainment was comparatively strong in English and Art and Design.  Attainment in S5/S6 for National 5 and Higher is comparatively weak in about a fifth of courses.  The school needs to increase the A-grade passes in a few courses.

- Young people with additional support needs who stay onto S5 and S6, attain well in S4 across a broad range of National Qualifications.  These are mostly at National 4 and National 5.  In S5 and S6, they build well on these achievements with a good breadth of qualifications mostly at N5 and Higher.

- Over the past three years, most young people in DAS have attained a good range of National Qualifications across a range of subjects at National 1 to National 4, particularly in mathematics and numeracy and science.

**Overall Quality of Learners' Achievements**
- Young people benefit from a wide range of opportunities for achievements for which staff's commitment is acknowledged by young people and their parents.  There are high levels of participation in out-of-class learning activities, with many led by the young people themselves.  Many young people are achieving accredited qualifications and certification across sports, music, first aid and for the significant time spent volunteering in the school and local community.  The school is making good efforts to challenge stereotypes.  A 'girls into energy' course helps young women engage with STEAM subjects and young men are being supported to enter a

career in child care.

- All young people in DAS have opportunities to succeed in sporting activities, with a number successful in a range of sporting competitions at regional level in athletics, football and swimming. A significant number participate in drama classes and activities and a signing choir.

- The school does not yet have an accurate overview of the extensive range of achievements gained by individual young people. They should now work with partners to identify trends in participation and achievement and proactively take steps to support those young people at risk of missing out. Young people would benefit from the opportunity to reflect on the skills they are gaining from out-of-class learning activities in order to identify what areas they need to build on and develop further.

**Equity for all learners**
- The school is committed to ensuring that young people are supported in achieving improved outcomes. Young people who reside in areas of the highest social and economic disadvantage are being supported into employment as an appropriate positive destination.

- The attainment of all leavers in half of the school's SIMD bands is in line with national figures, with significant improving trends in one case. In the latest year, there have been improvements in two of the SIMD bands from being significantly lower. However, young people in an SIMD band least affected by disadvantage are often performing significantly lower than national figures.

- Over the last two years, almost all young people have entered a positive destination on leaving school. The school is in line with its VC for those leaving school to go to higher education. The percentage of leavers going to further education is sometimes significantly higher or much higher. While in line for the latest year, the number of young people entering employment on leaving school can be significantly much lower.

- Most young people who leave DAS move on to a positive destination appropriate to their needs. The majority attend college courses suitable for those with ASN. Those with more complex needs engage with adult social work day services and a few have successfully sustained employment in locally.

## SCHOOL CHOICE OF QI: 3.3 CREATIVITY AND EMPLOYABILITY

- **Creativity skills**
- **Digital innovation**
- **Digital literacy**
- **Increasing employability skills**

- In some curriculum areas, there are good opportunities for young people to develop their creativity and entrepreneurship. These include Woodmill Falcons F1 team in S3, Go Forth challenge and science clubs and Business Language Champions. The school is developing a strategy for Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). A number of young people benefit from learning opportunities in STEAM subjects. In some cases, these directly challenge gender stereotypes, for example Women into Science.

- Young people value highly activities which develop their leadership skills. They gain insight into attributes and skills which are useful for further learning and employment. These include resilience and emotional intelligence. Senior pupils gain experience of carrying out mentoring and facilitation roles to assist younger learners.

- Approaches to learning and teaching across the school need to provide more opportunities for all young people to develop greater confidence and ambition, and challenge assumptions and take risks. Young people should be enabled to take ownership of their learning and thinking. Learners need to develop more independent learning skills and have more of a say in what and how they learn.

- Across the school, wider achievement is promoted, facilitated and celebrated well. Senior learners gain useful experience of learning and working with others from volunteering and peer support activities. Young people value these opportunities for the way they develop their skills and gain confidence from their individual in-school and out-of-school achievements.

- The senior leadership team has been effective in identifying business partners to help create opportunities for contextualised learning. This broadens the curriculum. As the curriculum continues to develop, senior leaders should ensure partners' involvement in evaluation and improvement.

- Arrangements for tracking young people's achievements are yet to be developed. The school should develop an appropriate system to enable skills, including creativity skills, to be well-planned, tracked and evaluated in order to meet the learning needs of all young people.

- Across the school, there are limited opportunities for young people to develop their digital skills. The school needs to develop a strategy for digital learning.

- The school has a strong focus on supporting young people to make informed choices about their future. This is reflected in the approach to partnership working which incorporates skills for learning, life and work within the curriculum. Young people benefit from the emphasis placed on providing experiences and activities which help them to prepare for progressing to further learning and employment on leaving school.

- Senior leaders are well-informed about DYW. They are working proactively and collaboratively to provide opportunities for young people to recognise and develop skills for employability. The school has established an SDS Career Guidance facility to promote and provide easy access to SDS career advisors. This is well-supported by planned learning in the PSE programme. All teachers are informed of the Career Education Standard (CES) and Work Placement Standard (WPS) at an in-service day. However, CES is not yet integrated within the curriculum.

- There are a few examples of teachers incorporating information about career opportunities related to their subject area within lessons. There is an opportunity for the school to build on this practice to develop the capacity of staff to roll out the implementation of CES.

**PARTICULAR STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL**

- Staff's contribution to a wide range of clubs, activities and opportunities for personal development which are offered to young people.

- The strong partnerships which the school has developed, including a clear focus on helping young people to continue with education and employment on leaving school.

- The support provided by guidance and support for learning staff. In particular, the proactive steps they take to meet the needs of young people who require additional support with their learning and development.

- The supportive and nurturing ethos in the Department of Additional Needs (DAS), and the opportunities for these young people to be included in the life of the school.

**AGREED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL**

- Continue to develop the leadership skills of staff and young people to drive well-paced change.

- Ensure that systematic self-evaluation, as a responsibility for all staff, leads to clear identification of priorities which result in timely improvements for young people.

- Improve the quality of learning experiences to meet the needs of all young people.

- Continue to raise attainment and develop assessment to ensure that young people are making appropriate progress across the curriculum.

**WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE INSPECTION?**

Our Area Lead Officer will work with Fife Council to monitor the school's progress with the agreed areas for improvement. Within a year of the publication of this letter, we will ask Fife Council for a report on the school's progress. We will then decide whether further engagement with the school is required. This may involve another inspection visit. We will ask Fife Council to write to you detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action that we intend to take.