

25 April 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

**Coltness High School
North Lanarkshire Council**

In May 2014, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and North Lanarkshire Council. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in February 2016. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked again at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made. This letter sets out what we found.

Improve the curriculum to ensure young people benefit from broad and relevant learning pathways with appropriate progression routes.

The school has made significant improvements in its curriculum since the original inspection. From S1 to S3, young people now continue their learning across all curriculum areas, with opportunities to specialise in particular areas of interest at the end of S2. Across the school, there is a stronger focus on developing young people's literacy and numeracy skills. As part of this work, there is scope for teachers to have higher expectations of young people's listening and talking skills in lessons. We have asked teachers to provide more challenging opportunities for young people to develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects and in interdisciplinary projects. The curriculum for young people from S4 to S6 has been enhanced by a broader range of opportunities made available through partnerships with other schools and with the local college. The curriculum supports young people well to develop skills for work and to prepare for life beyond school. This is reflected in the continued increase in young people's achievements and in positive post-school destinations. Exclusions have continued to decrease and staying-on rates into S5 and S6 have continued to improve.

Ensure tasks, activities and resources meet the differing needs of all learners.

All staff have engaged in professional learning to increase their understanding of young people's varying learning needs. Staff are better informed about all young people's progress and prior learning, and about young people with additional support needs. Inspectors noted overall improvements in learning and teaching across the

school. When given the opportunity to do so, young people work well in pairs and groups to support each other and take responsibility for their learning. However it remains the case that in too many lessons, all young people are given the same task and the learning is too challenging for some and too easy for others. To improve this, staff need to make better use of the information they have about young people to plan more creative and varied learning activities to meet the needs of all learners. We have asked senior leaders to continue to use the *Coltness Lesson* to improve learning and teaching across the school. It is important that all teachers have a shared understanding of aspects of the *Coltness Lesson* such as active learning so that young people's learning experiences continue to improve.

Improve approaches to tracking and monitoring young people's progress to raise attainment.

The school has continued to improve tracking and monitoring of young people's progress and achievements. This is now well embedded in the routines for young people from S4 to S6. A new system is being developed to capture information about young people's progress and achievements from P7 to S3 in all curriculum areas. The school's approaches to assessment and reporting have been improved taking account of national guidance. The next step is to ensure information about young people's progress is analysed regularly and used to plan learning to meet the needs of individuals and groups of young people. Overall, the attainment of young people by the time they leave school has continued to improve. Young people perform as well as, or better than, young people with similar needs and backgrounds in other schools across Scotland.

Continue to strengthen self-evaluation approaches to ensure a consistently accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement.

The school has taken some effective action which has strengthened self-evaluation and planning for improvement in faculties and at whole school level. Faculty Heads make better use of information from assessment to identify aspects for development. Lesson observations include a stronger element of professional dialogue through which staff challenge and support each other to continue to improve their practice. Young people enjoy the increased opportunities to contribute their views on how their learning experiences can be improved. There is scope for senior leaders to build on this further by improving how they collate and interpret the evidence gathered through self-evaluation activities. This will help bring about further improvements in young people's learning and achievements across the school.

What happens next?

The school has made good progress since the original inspection. We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Our Area Lead Officer will liaise with North Lanarkshire Council to monitor the school's continued improvement. North Lanarkshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Patricia Watson
HM Inspector

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