

14 May 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2017, HM Inspectors published a letter, following an inspection of Craigie High School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Dundee City Council. 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 at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection and at other aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Improve the consistency of effective leadership at all levels. This will support the development of high standards and expectations of the engagement, achievement and attainment of all learners.

There are improvements in the approach to providing leadership opportunities for staff and young people. Principal teachers now have a clearer role in leading aspects of school improvement. This work is supported by a more focussed approach to planning improvements. Teachers are increasingly demonstrating their commitment to improving the work of the school by engaging in identifying strengths and areas requiring improvement. Further improvement is required in the approaches to gathering and using evidence to identify where improvements are most needed. This should include being clear about the strategies to raise the attainment of young people. While there are a few opportunities for young people to develop and demonstrate leadership skills, there is significant scope to ensure that young people have more regular and effective opportunities to contribute their voice to improving the school. Parents and other partners working with the school also need to be more involved in contributing to discussions about how well the school is doing in meeting the needs of young people. The headteacher, together with the senior management team, now needs to improve the pace of progress to ensure better outcomes for young people through stronger leadership and direction.

Develop a shared understanding across all staff of what high-quality learning, teaching and assessment can look like. Ensure that this is effectively applied to improve young people's experiences.

Improved systems are now being put in place to support the development of more effective learning, teaching and assessment. The introduction of a whole school tracking and monitoring system for the broad general education (BGE), and an improved system in the senior phase, are helping staff develop a clearer understanding of young people's progress in their learning. Information from these systems is increasingly being used by teachers to inform planning for young people's learning. In the majority of classes, young people understand the purpose of lessons and what they need to do to be successful in their learning. In a few instances, learning is appropriately motivating and challenging for all young people. In these lessons young people are active participants in their learning and the pace of work is appropriate for all. Ensuring that all young people are motivated and engaged in

their learning will help to minimise instances of disruptive behaviour. Learning in the Enhanced Support Areas (ESAs) is well planned and structured. The learning environment is stimulating and motivates the young people to engage in planned activities. Young people who are taught in the ESAs are making very good progress and thriving in school. They are included and supported very well in classes across the school. Teachers should continue to review the ways in which they identify and share good practice. This will help to ensure that they provide all young people with motivating and challenging learning experiences across the school. Young people would welcome a greater say in shaping their learning. Teachers should give young people more regular opportunities to evaluate the quality of their learning through effective dialogue about their progress. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to engage young people in discussing what is working well in the school and what needs to improve.

Improve attainment and achievement across all stages. Continue to develop approaches to monitoring and tracking to ensure all young people make the best possible progress in their learning.

A number of steps have been taken to support raising attainment. There is now a whole school system to provide timely information for teachers to take appropriate steps to improve young people's progress and attainment. There has also been more effective targeting of supported study. However, at present there is insufficient evidence to show that the steps taken are having the intended impact on raising attainment. The school recognises that it still has more to do to ensure that young people have achieved the best they possibly can in literacy and numeracy on leaving school. Overall, the attainment of young people at S5 improved across a range of measures in the latest year. This positive picture of attainment was not mirrored at S4 and S6 however, with a decline in attainment across a range of measures in the latest year. The school should continue to extend the range of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) rated qualifications that young people can take. Almost all young people have moved on to a positive destination such as higher education, further education or employment in the last two years and the proportions doing so shows improvement. All teachers need to continue to develop their understanding of the use of data to ensure that all young people are making the best possible progress in their learning. They need to ensure that the measures they are taking to support young people result in improved attainment and achievement for all.

Continue to develop an inclusive, nurturing ethos in all areas the school so that the wellbeing and learning needs of every young person are met.

The work to meet the wellbeing and learning needs of young people is at an early stage. A more effective approach to taking this forward is needed, including closer working with young people and parents. Senior leaders have worked with teachers to develop strategies that staff can use to meet the needs of learners more effectively. They now need to monitor how effective these are in ensuring that learning experiences are always well-matched to the needs of all learners. Staff have worked effectively with young people to help them gain a better understanding of issues and perceptions around bullying and how these are impacting on their wellbeing. They need to continue to work with young people to link their understanding of their behaviour with school values and the promotion of wellbeing for all members of the school community. Young people would benefit from more regular opportunities to explore and discuss their wellbeing in greater depth and evaluate their

progress. The school has taken steps to improve attendance and timekeeping and there has been a reduction in the number of exclusions over the past five years. However, senior leaders acknowledge that they need to have a clearer focus on the further measures the school needs to take to ensure that all young people can maximise their opportunities to learn.

Review and improve the curriculum to ensure all young people experience appropriate pace, challenge and progression through all stages of learning.

Teachers have worked well to develop a more consistent approach to literacy and numeracy across all areas of the curriculum. Departments are planning more effectively to ensure they develop young people's literacy and numeracy skills in the context of their subject. Teachers have developed a few new courses in the senior phase. Together with courses in college, including Foundation Apprenticeships, this provides young people with some choice in the senior phase. More young people now need to benefit from experiencing a greater range of pathways for learning. The young people educated in the ESAs have a curriculum which is well planned for them. It is suitably challenging, meets their learning needs and prepares them well for life after school. Senior leaders need to review their vision for the curriculum to be clear about what the staff of Craigie High School are trying to achieve for all their young people. This will need to engage staff, young people, parents and wider partners to ensure young people have appropriate learner pathways to meet their needs and aspirations.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Dundee City Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 18 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Dundee City Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made. In the interim we will arrange a visit to keep informed of progress.

David Drysdale
HM Inspector