

1 May 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

**Brechin High School  
Angus Council**

In June 2012, 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 Angus Council. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published a further two letters in April 2014 and February 2017. 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. 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 quality of learning and teaching.**

The quality of learning and teaching has improved across the school. Staff have worked well together to agree shared standards and expectations of young people's learning, behaviour and effort. These expectations are set out clearly in the 'Brechin Standard'. While this is having a positive impact on young people's experiences, the school recognises that there is more to be done to embed this fully. In almost all lessons, classroom routines are well established and learning is purposeful and orderly. There is a strong commitment across all staff to improving learning and teaching. There is evidence of more structured lessons and an increase in methodologies that involve young people more actively in their learning. This has been enhanced by the introduction this session of personal digital devices. As a result, young people are more engaged and positive about their learning. There is still a need to ensure that learning is matched well to young people's needs and that learning is challenging enough for all learners. Young people in S1 to S3 now have a better understanding of their progress in learning as a result of improved feedback and regular tracking reports. There is still work to be done to ensure that targets on these reports are personal to individual young people and lead to improvements in learning. Overall, there is still variability in young people's learning experiences across the school. We have asked senior leaders to build on the good progress staff have made and continue to prioritise the development of high quality learning and teaching.

## **Increase expectations of what young people can learn and achieve and raise attainment.**

The school has significantly improved its use of data to plan for improvements in attainment. Senior leaders clearly communicate high expectations about attainment targets and improvement work is focused on achieving these targets. All staff show a good awareness of their collective responsibility for raising attainment. At S4 to S6, the school has improved attainment in a number of measures. However, there is still work to be done to improve the percentage of young people achieving qualifications at National 5 and Higher. The attainment of young people in S4 to S6 remains below that of other young people with similar needs and backgrounds from across the country. Staff at all levels are carefully tracking the attainment of young people and providing support where appropriate. The school's tracking data predicts improvements in attainment in this year's qualifications. More time is required to see the impact of the improvements in learning and teaching on young people's attainment.

## **Ensure agreed targets for improvement are delivered through more effective leadership at all levels.**

The school has made good progress in developing leadership at all levels. The revised vision, values and aims for the school provide a clear, shared focus for the work of the school. The headteacher and senior leaders provide strong direction through an unrelenting focus on the key priorities for improvement. Staff at every level are contributing to school improvement. They are supported to think creatively and have good opportunities to lead aspects of the school's work. Partnership working is improving the curriculum in the senior phase. Young people in S4 to S6 have a greater range of options which are meeting their needs better. Overall, the school has put in place clear plans with identified outcomes for young people. Senior leaders have developed processes to monitor progress towards these targets that involve staff, young people and parents. This is leading to positive progress in agreed areas for improvement and the capacity for further improvement.

## **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. We will ask for a report on improvements in attainment within one year. Angus Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its centres.

Mary Byrne  
HM Inspector

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

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