

8 February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Craigie High School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to Craigie High School. Our engagement helped us learn more about how young people and their families, have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support young people's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Craigie High School has been serving the communities of Craigiebank, Douglas and Mid-Craigie in the east of Dundee, Scotland for over 45 years. It has a school roll of approximately 620 young people from a wide range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Since the follow-through inspection in October 2019 there have been significant changes to the leadership team, their remits and to the pupil support team.

COVID-19 has prevented staff from taking forward all the planned improvements as they would have wished. For example, they have been unable to work with partners to support improvements to the curriculum. They did however, use the opportunity to help staff to understand better how to make improvements to the learning experiences for young people and to identify and address gaps in learning caused by COVID-19 related absences. Staff worked quickly to develop their skills in using digital approaches to deliver learning for young people. This is continuing to have a positive impact and is helping to mitigate some of the effects of any staff and young people's absences.

Staff also conducted a number of surveys which focused on the wellbeing of young people throughout periods of remote learning. As a result, Guidance staff adapted the personal and social education programme to better support young people. They also worked closely with individual young people to develop other ways to support them.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The headteacher has led the senior leadership team with commendable commitment, integrity and energy to inspire positive change in the culture of Craigie High School. She is supported well by the senior leadership team and staff now use evidence well to inform improvements. The headteacher models professional behaviour and supports a coaching style of leadership. Teachers are able to take responsibility increasingly for their own learning, through a range of leadership opportunities available to them. They learn well from and with each other, and have a relentless focus on improving outcomes for young people. Young people have a greater voice in their school using the 'Have your say' approach.

Staff are working well to develop a culture based on respectful, positive and strong relationships between young people and themselves. Staff are creating more purposeful, stimulating classroom environments which are supporting more effective learning. This is leading to young people being more motivated and involved actively in their learning. Teachers now need to ensure that all young people learn at an appropriate pace and level so that can achieve at the highest level possible. Staff across the school are more informed about young people's progress with their learning. Teachers now have more effective conversations with young people about their learning, especially in the senior phase. Young people, who are not making the progress expected, are identified earlier as a result of improved systems and processes for checking progress. This means that staff are able to intervene earlier with additional support. Attainment in a range of measures has improved as a result. We asked senior leaders to continue to check young people's progress regularly and to encourage teachers to increase their expectations of what learner success can look like.

Senior leaders led a series of learning events for staff based on nurturing approaches to support the wellbeing of all young people. Staff, with greater clarity provided on their roles, are more informed about what they can do to help all young people move forward in their learning. Senior leaders take account of a range of local and national employment information in developing the curriculum at Craigie High School. Staff now have a clearer focus on the skills young people need to develop to be successful. Teachers have increased the number of courses and learning opportunities available for young people. Staff are confident increasingly that the greater variety of courses is leading to better outcomes for young people.

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. Dundee City Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

Frances E. Graham
HM Inspector