

3 September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Langlands School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Dumfries and Galloway Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to young people and worked closely with senior leaders and staff. We heard from senior leaders 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.

Staff need to ensure that all young people are engaging in learning activities that are matched to their level of needs, and that build on their existing skills and knowledge. In doing so, staff should provide young people with more learning opportunities to work together with peers.

Across the school, staff have raised their expectations of what young people can achieve. The caring and nurturing culture, based on positive relationships, remains a strength of the school. There continues to be strong teamwork between teachers and learning assistants. They work well together to motivate young people to learn. Most young people are engaging purposefully in learning experiences and progressing well with their learning.

Staff are using a wider range of learning and teaching approaches to engage young people in their learning. They are using digital technology, communication aids and outdoor spaces increasingly well to enhance young people's learning experiences. In a minority of classes, the pace of learning remains too slow resulting in a few young people becoming disengaged.

Senior leaders, supported by local authority colleagues, need to ensure that the school's learning environment does not impact detrimentally on young people's learning experiences. The increasing school roll is leading to learning spaces becoming increasingly cramped, busy, and less conducive to supporting young people's learning, physical and wellbeing needs. Senior leaders have outlined proposed plans to provide additional spaces for learning, including increased access to facilities and spaces in the adjoining mainstream school. It is crucial that young people are given the necessary space to continue to be creative, express themselves and engage in a variety of learning and wellbeing activities.

The school should ensure that all young people receive their full entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum across the school week. In taking this forward, staff should offer young people more learning activities which support skill development based on individual needs across all areas of the curriculum.

The curriculum for young people in S1-S3 provides them with an effective framework to develop their knowledge, skills and attributes. Staff have introduced newly developed programmes of work in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. These are supporting teachers better to plan learning that builds on young people's prior learning more effectively. Senior leaders should continue to develop the curriculum for learners who require

more help in their learning. This will ensure that all young people have a broad and balanced curriculum that builds more effectively on their prior learning, developing further their communication and sensory skills.

Staff have introduced three clear learner programmes for young people in S4-S6. This takes better account of young people's stages of learning. Most learners have improved opportunities to attain and achieve at the correct levels of learning. Staff have an increased focus on delivering national accreditations. Parents are positive about the impact this is having on their young people's learning. Staff have introduced life skills programmes. These are supporting young people well to develop the range of relevant knowledge and skills to support them as they prepare for life after school.

Senior leaders have revised the whole school timetable and reviewed the structure of the school day. This now ensures most young people receive their full entitlements to a broad and balanced curriculum.

A few learners continue to have low attendance. Senior leaders should continue to monitor attendance and offer learners and families bespoke supports to improve attendance further. This will help ensure learners make the best possible progress.

Senior leaders need to strengthen how they track and monitor young people's progress in their learning. This will better support staff to evidence the progress young people are making over time.

Led by senior leaders, staff have strengthened how they track and monitor young people's progress in their learning. Senior leaders and teachers are now able to gather more valuable information on young people's progress in achievement and wellbeing. Staff are tracking young people's progress over time well particularly in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

Raise young people's attainment and achievement across the school. At the senior phase, staff need to offer young people an increased range of National Qualifications and wider awards to choose from.

Senior leaders have improved the curriculum for young people S4-S6. Young people now have a wider range of relevant courses and subject choices across the curriculum including opportunities to make choices and develop their skills for life. As a result, almost all young people in S4-S6 are on track to achieve qualifications that match well their capabilities and skills. Staff have improved how they work with partners, and this is helping young people develop their knowledge and skills in meaningful contexts. Improved partnership with Disability Sport is increasing the quality and range of sporting activities most young people engage in. As a result, young people achieve success and recognition for their sporting achievements such as table tennis awards and Saltire awards. Young people and families are rightfully proud of these achievements.

Senior leaders have strengthened the school's approaches to transitions. New volunteering opportunities in the senior phase supports young people to develop important skills. As a result, a few young people leave school and continue to contribute effectively within the community. For example, through volunteering in beach litter picks and working in local

cafes. A few young people are on track to continue their volunteering in the local community and with local businesses when they leave school.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. We will ask for a report on progress within one year of the inspection. This report will inform any decision made by Education Scotland regarding further engagement. This may include another inspection visit. When such a decision is made, we will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action, agreed with Dumfries and Galloway Council that we intend to take.

Emma McFarlane
HM Inspector