



**Fraserburgh Academy
Aberdeenshire Council
23 June 2009**

We published a report on Fraserburgh Academy in September 2006. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action. We carried out follow-through inspections in June 2007 and May 2008 and published reports on those visits in September 2007 and September 2008.

This follow-through report is based on an inspection visit which was carried out in April 2009. It tells you about improvements since the original inspection in the quality of education which the school provides. It also comments on how the school is getting on with the main points for action. First we focus on changes in the core work of the school. We explain how the school has got better at helping children to learn and benefit from being at the school. Next we look at the key processes which enable this to happen, including the involvement of parents¹. Our report also describes developments in the 'ethos' of the school, by which we mean how well young people are cared for and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally we comment on improvements in leadership to help the school achieve its aims.

A copy of this report has been placed on the HMIE website www.hmie.gov.uk. Where applicable, you will also find descriptions of good practice in the school and analyses of questionnaire returns.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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1. The school

Fraserburgh Academy serves the town of Fraserburgh and the surrounding areas. An acting headteacher has been in post continuously since February 2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Improving morale of staff and young people and their commitment to improve the school.
- Partnerships with parents and the wider community.
- Developing young people's understanding of different cultures.
- Leadership of the acting headteacher and the support given by other senior managers.

3. Examples of good practice

- Developing leadership skills in young people.
- Celebrating diversity.

4. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Staff have successfully taken some important steps to improve young people's learning, behaviour and achievement. Staffing is now more stable and this is helping to improve young people's learning. Young people have many opportunities to achieve through a range of challenging activities. They show consideration for others, for example, in raising money for charity, and are taking greater responsibility for their learning. Young people are developing effective leadership skills. They recently led training sessions on leadership for staff. Young people make appropriate progress in targets which staff set for them. At S1/S2, the majority of young people now achieve

appropriate national levels in reading and mathematics. Less than half had been achieving appropriate levels in writing but this has improved in 2009. At S4, attainment is now in line with national averages and with schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds. There remains scope for improvement in attainment at S5/S6. The school is taking a number of promising steps towards the implementation of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff are beginning to plan how to develop young people's skills in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

5. How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?

Young people feel safe and are well looked after. They are confident staff will provide help if it is needed. Staff work well together to support the learning of young people with additional needs. They recognise the importance of linking all aspects of support for young people, including support for learning and behaviour. This is being well led by senior managers. Parents support the school well and are kept fully informed. Community links are strong. For example, local businesses provide positive support for young people's learning. The school works effectively with Banff and Buchan College to provide more opportunities for young people to learn a wide range of vocational skills. Other partners, including the school counsellor and school-based social worker, provide young people with suitable support.

6. Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?

Staff and young people play an active part in the school community. Teachers use training sessions well to share good practice. The majority of staff contribute positively to a large number of working groups. Almost all of these groups are now led by unpromoted staff and focus well on school improvement. Young people organise school

activities effectively. They provide strong support for their younger peers. School staff make effective use of the views of staff, young people and parents to judge how the school is doing. Recent surveys indicate improvements in several important areas, including staff morale. Senior managers regularly observe lessons and meet with staff to discuss attainment. A growing number of staff share good practice and provide helpful comments on each other's lessons. The good start made to observing lessons should be continued and made more consistent at all levels.

7. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?

Staff now have high expectations of young people's achievements. They successfully encourage young people to behave and achieve better. Staff provide good opportunities for young people to learn and revise their studies outwith the school day. Young people now have a greater pride in their school. They are responding positively to improvements made by staff. The number of young people being excluded has fallen considerably. Staff now use assemblies well to recognise young people's achievements. Teachers encourage greater awareness of different cultures through, for example, the highly successful Diversity Days.

8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The school is benefiting from the strong leadership shown by the acting headteacher. He has been in post since February 2008 and has the respect of parents, staff and young people. He has been ably supported by the depute headteachers and the education authority. Together they are working well to improve the school in many important areas. Staff are well supported by senior managers and feel the school now has a clear sense of direction. There are positive relations between staff and young people. Staff have good opportunities to take responsibility. They are developing their professional skills, for example, by serving as associate members of

the senior management team. A growing number of staff are taking a leading role in improving the school.

9. What happens next?

The school and education authority have achieved important improvements since the original inspection. Senior managers, led by the acting headteacher, provide strong leadership and direction. Staff now need to continue to share good practice to raise attainment, particularly at S5/S6. The arrangements to achieve improvement through self-evaluation are now at a satisfactory level or better. With continued effective leadership and staff commitment, the school is well placed for further improvements. We will make no further visits in connection with the original inspection. The District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor continued improvements in attainment.

HM Inspector: Alistair Brown
23 June 2009

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