



# Standards and Quality Report

## Session 2017-18



Dear Parent/Carer

Every year we make major decisions about our school to try and ensure that we are continually improving the education we provide for all our young people. This is summarized in our school improvement plan. We make these decisions based on information we have gathered from parents, pupils, teachers, the Local Authority and members of the wider community. Our full improvement plan is available from the school office or from our website (<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/my/forresacademy>).

This leaflet is designed to provide a summary of information about our school's progress over the last year. In particular, it will address four key questions:

*How well does our school support our young people to develop and learn?*

*How well do we work together to lead change and ensure on-going improvement?*

*How well do our young people attain and achieve?*

*How well do we ensure wellbeing, equity and inclusion of all our young people?*

I hope you enjoy reading about our progress, achievements and future plans for Forres Academy and that our excellent weekly coverage from our FANG (Forres Academy News Group) in the local press and on our website, have kept you up-to-date with the life and work of the school.

Carol Stuart (Headteacher)



Junior Duxes  
Emma Donald & Niamh Young



Senior Dux  
Pola Bartoszczyk

## Aspire to Inspire

Forres Academy is one of Moray's largest secondary schools. The school serves a rich mix of communities along with its eight associated primary schools. Our roll has been falling over recent years and is currently 790. Learners experience a broad, balanced curriculum leading to a full range of SQA qualifications and wider achievements.

Over 80% of our young people continue into S5 and over 60% also go on to complete S6. We enjoy close and effective links with many partners including our parents, local employers, Moray College, community agencies and primary schools.

We have recently refreshed our school vision and values after extensive consultation with parents, students and staff. Put quite simply *Forres Academy is a community where everyone is valued, respected, encouraged and inspired*. Our values reflect what we all wish to be; ambitious, caring, respectful, confident and resilient. We work hard to ensure they are embedded in relationships and behaviours across our community.

We have embarked on being a Rights Respecting School based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We have already achieved Recognition of Commitment and are working towards the Level 1 award.

Not only do our values emphasise achievement and attainment but they also recognize that without strong positive, nurturing approaches to our own health and wellbe



ASPIRE TO INSPIRE

*Forres Academy is a community where everyone is valued, respected, encouraged and inspired.*

**We aspire to be:**

- ~ Ambitious ~ Caring
- ~ Respectful ~ Confident
- ~ Resilient



ing, success is not possible. We have therefore also continued with our own nurture training for all our community

partners this year so we are a Wellbeing Promoting School.

We are fortunate to have a committed team of people that work together and learn from each other to improve the learning for our young people. They include our teachers, teacher volunteers, parents, senior students, our Active school's co-ordinator and our community partners who provide all the support and encouragement that is needed to reach those goals whether they be individual, team or whole school. However, our school also needs people to push forward change and we have staff, students and partners willing to take on these key leadership roles.

## **Vision and Leadership**

*We work well together to identify what we need to improve and get involved in making change happen. The overall quality of the school's arrangements for improvement through self-evaluation and its commitment to this is more than satisfactory and certainly improving.*

As a school community, we have consulted with our young people, staff, parents and other partners and reviewed our school's vision and values. These will continue to be the key drivers underpinning our approaches to everything we do such as learning and teaching, positive relationships, rights respecting schools as well as our curriculum planning.

We have also completed an extensive questionnaire with all students this year as part of our drive to improve the health and wellbeing of all our young people. This has allowed us to work with the Parent Council and Pupil Forum to identify and plan improvements. In particular reviewing our Bullying policy and communication with our young people.

As a result of our reflection and debate on our priorities for improvement across the school and with our primary schools, there has been improved shared curriculum development and professional learning. Most senior leaders (Principal Teacher and above) provide good leadership to develop and promote our vision and values.

- **School and Department Improvement** : All staff are members of School Improvement Groups which directly link to our improvement priorities. This year we have been further developing our curriculum, deciding on what we expect to see in every classroom in terms of effective approaches to learning and teaching and promoting positive relationships. We have also been increasing opportunities for our future workforce to gain experiences to make them more career ready overall. We have now implemented improved ways to promote and recognise the achievements of our young people, including a new merit system and full and half colours for sporting and other achievements. We have now implemented a 33 period week structure which has allowed us to improve the opportunities and relevance of our whole curriculum. All staff are involved and are committed to continually reviewing their practice and that of the school and their department. They are aware of strengths and areas for improvement in their own department through departmental improvement plans. Staff are very committed that young people learn and achieve well. Effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of what we do and to gather and respond to the views of stakeholders. Leadership of this is improving. Senior Leaders (including Principal Teachers) use a range of evidence to evaluate learners' experiences such as classroom observations, feedback from young people and parents as well as performance data. Most staff are involved in a programme of lesson observations and the positive impact this is having on their own practice is increasing. This is not consistent across the school however so this year we introduced more 'walk throughs' by Senior Leaders - an area we want to build on next year.
- **Forres Associated Schools Group**: Effective practice has been established in terms of shared developments and training with our primary colleagues. In particular, this year numeracy, science and modern languages joint working has improved learning transitions as well as approaches to nurture and moderating standards of students' progress. We also continue to build on our joint Skills for Success framework to support students throughout their 3-18 curriculum.

- **Student Leadership**: Young people benefit from a wide range of leadership opportunities. Examples include leading sections of our Parent Information Evenings, sporting events, community initiatives such as promoting good Mental Health, as well as leading support for their own peers eg, our My World of Work Ambassadors and our Sports Ambassadors.

Our senior students' leadership programme is extensive and allows all of our S6 students to take responsibility for many aspects of school life and develop a range of skills for learning, life and work. Our Pupil Forum working groups are managed entirely by pupils with outcomes aimed at benefitting the school community and promoting responsible citizenship. We have a good range of wider achievement opportunities and activities. This year we have introduced many more Developing the Young Workforce opportunities into the Senior Phase Curriculum which provides a more relevant curriculum for all. Young people at all stages are leading and taking responsibility for charity events, music performances as well as debating and sporting events. Young people have achieved many awards for the school in recognition of their skills and contributions.

- **Staff Development**: All staff take part in a range of professional learning agreed by each member of staff through effective processes for professional review and development. A planned programme of in-house professional development focusing on learning, teaching and assessment as well as our multi-agency nurture training programme continued to be delivered this year through in-service days and after school sessions. Many staff contribute to our own school training programmes and have been asked to share practice at authority and national level. Most staff can talk about the impact of their professional learning on their work and the experiences of learners. All staff are engaging in a range of professional learning again this year including using, sharing and developing good practice in moderation, continuing to develop courses and programmes across the Senior Phase as well as increasing Pupil Support in the Broad General Education. Many staff work for the Scottish Qualification Authority as markers, assessors or verifiers gaining valuable experience and knowledge which can be passed to our young people.
- **Parents**: We have continued to engage with our parents through parent information evenings and questionnaires as well as at many other events. Almost all our parents are happy with the school overall. As a result of feedback we subscribed to a new online provision 'Show my Homework' to ensure parents are aware and can therefore feel more able to support their child with homework. This has been well received as has our improved website and Twitter account to improve communication. We have also responded to parental requests this year for more frequent reports on progress by introducing these throughout the year and not just one report in the Senior Phase years. Both parent and staff feedback has been positive. Our Parent Council has gone through a period of change with new leadership and membership now established. Their commitment to enhance parental engagement has been shown through the Chair undergoing national training and the training sessions arranged through the Scottish Parent Teacher Council.

# Attainment and Achievement

## How well do young people learn and achieve?

### Attainment

In 2017 we saw an improvement in the % of S4 students gaining 5 or more and 6 or more Level 5 qualifications.

We continued to see improvement over a **five** year period in the % of S6 students gaining 1 or more National 7 (Advanced Higher Grade) awards, above our virtual comparator\* .

All of the following are above the Moray average:

% of S5 students gaining 1 or more National 6 (Higher Grade) awards

% of S5 students gaining 3 or more National 6 (Higher Grade) awards

% of S5 students gaining 5 or more National 6 (Higher Grade awards)

All of the following are well above the Moray and National average:

% of S6 students gaining 3 or more National 6 (Higher Grade) awards

% of S6 students gaining 5 or more National 6 (Higher Grade) awards

% of S6 students gaining 1 or more National 7 (Advanced Higher Grade) awards

The % of S6 students gaining 5 or more National 5 awards has increased by over 10% over the last 5 years. The % of our S6 students gaining 5 or more National 6 (Higher) awards has increased by over 15% over the last 5 years. Both are above our virtual comparator.

We are ambitious for our pupils and want as many of our school leavers as possible to be highly literate and numerate, increasing their life chances greatly. By the end of their school career over 96% gained Level 4 Literacy and just over 78% gained Level 5 Literacy. We saw a slight increase this year in the % gaining Level 6 Literacy at just over 50%. The performance in numeracy at both levels continues to be a main area for improvement in our planning. We did see a slight increase at Level 4 with 83% of all Leavers gaining this award and 56% at Level 5. Our numeracy co-ordinators have been working with our primary colleagues to ensure a consistency in approach to help progression from early years through to secondary. It is pleasing to see from our recent transition programme how this is having a positive impact. From S1—S3 we have introduced small targeted groups for numeracy this year and progression data has shown great improvements. At the Senior Phase stage the impact of our work has also shown more young people being presented for National 4 and National 5 Numeracy in S4. We have also introduced Mentoring in S4 which we need to evaluate for the new session.

As a school we are committed to raising attainment for all our young people no matter their ability or background. When we look at our leavers information we also have a positive overall picture across most attainment groups. Our middle 60% attainment group is higher than Moray + National average and on a par with our virtual comparator. Our highest 20% attainment group is doing better than our virtual comparator and significantly better than the Moray and National average. Our performance in the lowest 20% attaining group in S4 is our main concern and is why we have widened our curriculum options, introduced mentoring, introduced a more robust reading intervention programme and reviewed suitability of courses for all our

learners so they gain the highest awards they are capable of achieving.

*\* What is a virtual comparator?*

*It is a way of comparing the performance of all pupils at our school with a group of pupils, taken from around Scotland, who have the same backgrounds as those of our school. This gives a fair way of comparing our own performance to that of a similar group of pupils, so that we can see where performance is strong and where it might be considered as needing improvement.*

### Positive Destinations

There had been a steady increase over the last few years in the percentage of our young people going into positive and sustained destinations resulting in one of the highest percentages across Moray at 95.5%. This year it fell back but we know we have made great strides in our work to develop the young workforce this year as part of our School Improvement Plan, with all teaching staff having been trained on the use of My World of Work to allow improved understanding of how this resource can be used to strengthen the relevance of the curriculum for young people. Teachers have also had training on the national Careers Standards document so are aware of pupil entitlements. All of our Information Evenings for parents now include pupil presentations on their skills development, with the subject choice process inextricably linked to consideration of potential career pathways.

This session we have increased the opportunities for all young people themselves to engage with consideration of career pathways, including our Generation-2-Generation Event for all S2 pupils in which they learned from parents and businesses about the many types of employment available locally, as well as the varied routes into these jobs. Our S3 cohort continue to benefit from taster sessions at Moray College to widen their perspective on potential future areas of study and employment. Many of our young people in S4 have taken part in Meaningful May, a programme specifically designed to prepare young people for the world of work and which includes 3 weeks' work experience. Our own successful wider achievement courses allow young people to develop work relevant skills such as journalism and cyber security and our senior students continue to benefit from Skills for Work and Foundation Apprenticeship courses as part of the Moray College schools' programme, as well as vocationally orientated Open University YASS courses, for which we have a 100% pass rate. We continue to increase our business links thereby enhancing the relevance of the curriculum with several departments such as HE, PE, Music, Drama and Physics offering young people the opportunity to engage in activities directly related to the world of work. We offer a variety of flexible work placements in our senior school, with pupils selecting to participate in vocationally challenging programmes such as Johnstons of Elgin's Schools Interaction Programme, Career Ready, World Host etc as well as being given the opportunity to opt into career specific events such as Doctors at Work, CARs, Opito, Police Scotland or Armed Forces etc.

At Forres Academy, we strongly believe that a good education is about providing opportunities for each student to develop into their own person. We are proud of the balance we strike between academic success and personal development.

Students at all stages are able to develop their interests and talents through an extensive range of opportunities for wider achievement including excursions, events, clubs and other activities and initiatives. The number of out-of-class activities are increasing and are well attended.

Below are only some of the notable achievements, including well deserved National and Regional recognition.

## Sports

We continue to meet the standards for the SportsScotland Gold School Sport Award. We have been recognised with this prestigious national award for innovation and achievement in delivering physical education and extra-curricular sport. It also recognises the good sporting links between our school and our community. We are proud to be the first secondary school in Moray to gain such an award.

We increased further the opportunities outwith the classroom by offering 20 different activities. Many of these were sport based and were very successful. Our badminton team won the Moray secondary school trophy for the third year in succession. Our new girls football team came fourth in the school league competition. Netball has increased in popularity allowing us to have both a junior and senior team. The junior team taking second place and senior 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Moray Schools league. Our new cricket club came an amazing second place in the Moray Junior League. Orienteering continues to flourish with the school winning the League trophy for the 8<sup>th</sup> year running. Cross country has long been popular at Forres Academy and our athletes were again successful winning several gold, silver and bronze medals at Moray, North of Scotland and National championships. Our girls team won the North of Scotland shield and two students also won bronze medals at this championship with one qualifying for the British Biathlon Championships. Our golfers came second at the North of Scotland School Golf Championships, with individual gold medals for the scratch competition and individual gold in the handicap section. Tennis has flourished again this year as we continue with our School of Tennis programme. In September we welcomed back Judy Murray and Kris Soutar to deliver more 'Tennis on the Road' training sessions for our Young Tennis Ambassadors. This will upskill them in preparation for their commitment to the delivery of tennis activities to the students at Forres Academy, Moray primary schools and the Moray Tennis Forum. We now have thirteen young sport ambassadors and the most senior shone nationally gaining Ambassador of the month by sportScotland in November with one achieving Young Tennis Volunteer of the Year from Tennis Scotland. They have really developed their leadership skills as well as providing great opportunities for their peers. Our swimmers were again extremely successful coming top of the medal table securing 13 golds, 6 silvers and 6 bronze medals at the Moray time trials. Two students were also selected for the Scottish Schools competition. We were also delighted that the sportMoray awards allowed our students to be recognized for their successes in their chosen sports winning Intermediate Sportsman Award and being shortlisted for many others.

## Other Awards

Our Engineering Club won the Highlands and Islands Secondary Club of the Year and were just recently presented with the Sportsmanship prize at the Robotic Games in Ed-

inburgh. Two students won the inaugural Moray Schools' Debating competition. The Young Enterprise Group had great success this year with their company Sup-herb. They won prizes for best financial management; best company report and came runners-up for Highland and Moray Company of the Year. One student also won the title for Pioneering Leadership. Other awards were received by our young people as a result of their excellence in writing, poetry, music, leadership, mathematics, enterprise and cooking. This has resulted for some in their work being published and some young people being chosen to represent Moray at national events.

## Wider Achievement

Skillforce students have been presented with a wide range of awards as have our pupils who have been participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. In the senior school we offer a range of wider achievement courses which lead to some form of accreditation. Examples include John Muir, Duke of Edinburgh, practical journalism, Scottish studies, Mandarin as well as other local and national awards. We have once again built on our structured leadership programme for our S6 students this year resulting in an increase participation in leadership and volunteering activities. Many of our students put back into the school through peer support, taking on the leadership responsibilities of being Prefects, Elite Tutors, Peer Supporters etc. Many of our pupils should also be recognized for their community involvement at Local events and schools.

## Citizenship

- Over £4000 has been raised for a variety of our chosen charities through a variety of activities including a Slideathon, Christmas market and S6 Beach walk.
- All our S2 students are involved in a new community partnership for the school – the Youth Philanthropy Initiative where they will secure money for their chosen charity.

## Global Citizenship

We want our young people to appreciate global issues and appreciate the world around them.

- Our links with schools around the world have been strengthened this year. We now have exchange trips to Vienenburg as well as our Mount Dora Twinning and our long-standing links with Malawi
- We continue to welcome Chinese students who contribute to our expanding Modern Languages provision. Five students also visited China this summer
- This year we had our first group of students participating in the World Challenge expedition to Costa Rica
- Our students benefit from excursions abroad including Berlin, Italy and France

*We have increased the ways in which we recognise our students' achievements both in and out of school, ranging from our award winning Forres Academy News group, Twitter, 232 Satire Awards, new Merits system, new Full and Half colours awards as well as recognising achievement celebrations with our S3 Broad General Education Awards ceremony and annual Prizegiving Ceremony.*

## Learning, Teaching and Assessment

*Our young people experience good learning and teaching. The following highlights some of the progress we have made this year to improve on these experiences.*

**Curriculum Pathways:** We have extended our Literacy Links programme to support a number of our young people to make appropriate progress in literacy and introduced a robust Reading Improvement Programme. Targeted numeracy support has been offered to a group of students in S1—S3. All students S4 - 6 have a wider range of options to choose from with our Developing the Young Workforce options. All departments have looked at alternative courses which may be more suitable for students. Planning Pathways meetings have ensured appropriate support for targeted groups of young people.

**Learning and Teaching:** Our Leading Learning group and our Staff Learning Community have continued to support our expectations with all staff on several occasions last year. Our agreed Forres Academy approaches to effective Learning and Teaching has this year been used as a basis for every teacher's review of their own professional development. Higher order thinking skills, skilled questioning, effective feedback and effective use of digital technologies have been areas for specific focus and sharing of good practice across departments.

**Skills Framework:** Successful work on a common skills framework (developed with our primary schools) has improved students' understanding of the purpose of their learning. Consistent approach to skills terminology has led to a sharing of P7 profiles with all secondary staff as part of transition information. Improved S3 Profiles over the past 3 years reflect the impact this is having in terms of our young people's development of skills for learning, life and work.

**Assessment:** There is an increasing use of self and peer assessment in classes as well as learning conversations to ensure young people are aware of their strengths and next steps in learning. This has been a focus particularly in S1 - 3 over the last three years. The use of valid and reliable assessment evidence to reach judgements and report progress of our young people is improving. High expectations of the standards to be achieved need to be consistently shared across departments. Moderation has continued to be a focus this year within and across departments allowing curricular areas to work more effectively. We have improved the way we use the range of information on our students' attainment and achievement across all curriculum areas, including those facing additional challenges. We use this information to put in place support or challenge to improve our young people's progress. Our tracking of progress has been reviewed again across S1-S3 and our new shorter and more regular reports in S4-S6 have allowed for improved monitoring of progress.

**Curriculum:** Five years ago we set out to be creative, but not faddish, in our curriculum. With the introduction of the 33 period week this year we have once again been ambitious and ensured that we have reviewed the rationale of our curriculum and made appropriate changes to improve the experiences we can offer. We have extended our Universal Support provision to all S1—S3 students to support their overall progress. We have also increased time for Numeracy and Literacy in S1 and S2 as well as increasing time in S4 for the four courses students have chosen to study. We have introduced more breadth to our S5– S6 curriculum.

### Quality Indicator evaluations

The National Improvement Framework asks us to rate ourselves using the six point scale on four main quality indicators. Through our self-evaluation processes we rate the school as follows:

1.3 Leadership of change	Satisfactory/good	3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Satisfactory/good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory	3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement	Satisfactory

### What are we going to do next?

Our 2018/19 plan is building on many things from our 2017-18 Plan as well as some new exciting plans already started for this coming session. A more detailed plan can be found on our website.



#### Improve Learning, Teaching & Assessment

##### Develop more manageable assessment & reporting processes

Simplify BGE tracking & implement SEEMIS tracking in Senior Phase

Improve attainment in numeracy

##### Expand senior phase curricular pathways

Review the rationale and design of our curriculum

getting  
it right  
for every child  
in Forres Academy

#### Leadership of learning and change

Use Forres Academy Learning Cycle to establish department focus for learning visits

Focus on improving challenge and differentiation

Improve parent/pupil engagement

Improve approaches to the use of data/evidence which inform on-going self-evaluation

#### Success and achievements of ALL learners

Introduce Universal Support periods in S2 & S3

Embed employability skills in the BGE

Improve equity and inclusion based on this year's evaluations (PEF)

Roll out Relational School training