

Summarised Findings Report (SFR)

Queen Margaret Academy and Supported Learning Centre

19 December 2024

The purpose of this document is to provide the school with the summarised findings of a school improvement visit. The contents should be shared with staff and the Parent Council. The findings will form the basis for future improvement discussions with your link QIM.

QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- Learning and engagement;
- Quality of teaching;
- Effective use of assessment; and
- Planning, tracking and monitoring

- The positive ethos and culture at Queen Margaret Academy clearly reflect the school's values of community, ambition, responsibility, equity, faith and respect. Gospel values and the Charter for Catholic Education are embedded and have contributed to the creation of a learning community underpinned by mutual respect. Relationships across the school and within the supported learning centre are very positive and set the tone for calm, supportive and purposeful learning experiences. The headteacher, senior leadership team and staff have high expectations of learners across the school. These are further underpinned by the school community's commitment to promoting the articles of the United Nation's Charter of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The work of the school has been recognised through accreditation of the Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) Silver award. Learners take an active role in the life of the school, and their views are valued and acted upon. Parents and carers report that staff across the school and supported learning centre know their children well.
- In almost all lessons learners participate well in the tasks designed and delivered by teachers. Almost all learners are actively engaged in their learning and respond well to motivating tasks. Staff within the school and within the supported learning centre now need to ensure that all learners are provided with opportunities to lead their own learning while also being appropriately challenged to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Senior leaders have established a wide range of effective partnerships that significantly enrich children's learning experiences. These collaborations involve Ayr College, Thriving Communities, Virtual School Wellbeing Officer, Headstrong, River Garden the Campus Police Officer. By fostering these strong partnerships, the school and supported learning centre can offer diverse learning experiences and support learners' engagement and wellbeing.
- The senior leadership team, together with the staff learning and teaching group (LTA), have worked to develop a consistent understanding of 'what makes an excellent lesson at Queen Margaret Academy.' Learning and teaching approaches across the school and supported learning centre follow a consistent structure. The

school has developed a strong observation model and are able to confidently identify strengths and next steps.

- In almost all classes starter tasks are used to engage learners with the lessons. In the best examples the starter task linked well to core teaching. In a few classes the starter lesson was lengthy and detracted from key teaching time.
- In all classes learning intentions and success criteria are shared with the class. The LTA should now ensure that there is focus on the quality of the learning intention and the co-creation of success criteria.
- The school has recently begun a local authority initiative on adaptive teaching. Staff have completed two training sessions and the work will be ongoing throughout this session. All staff will complete training on this in May 2025. There is evidence that this is beginning to have a positive impact in a small number of lessons with learners able to evaluate their own learning and make choices about their next steps. The school should continue with their plans to develop this across the school.
- Most teachers use questioning well to check for understanding. In a few lessons, teachers use highly effective questioning techniques to help young people to think deeply about their learning and to use their higher order thinking skills. This leads to young people feeling more challenged and that they have a deeper understanding of what they are learning.
- Learners who require additional literacy support benefit from the use of laptops in class. There is scope to further develop the use of a range of digital technologies to support learning and teaching.
- Through conversations with learners, particularly within the BGE, it was evident that a variety of assessment approaches are being adopted. In some classes, AiFl strategies were used effectively to inform understanding and planning future learning. This is supporting young people to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities.
- Senior leaders have a clear rationale for re-visiting the purpose of assessment within the Broad General Education. The school has established a partnership with other local schools to provide staff with opportunities to moderate learning, teaching and assessment in the BGE. This will continue to develop staff confidence in achievement of a level at this stage of the curriculum. In feedback collated, almost all staff appreciated the opportunity to engage with colleagues out with their own context.
- Assessment in the senior phase was more directed by summative assessments. Moving forward, it would be worthwhile to consider a wider variety of assessment approaches at this stage of the curriculum. Almost all young people in the senior phase have an accurate picture of their strengths and required next steps in learning.

Senior leaders should continue to plan how this will be extended fully across the broad general education and within the SLC.

- Effective use of feedback was evident nearly all observed lessons. In a few classes, there was strong evidence of written feedback which supported young people to have a clear understanding of their strengths and next steps. It would be beneficial to share this practice more widely across the school.
- Staff have developed the Queen Margaret Academy Skills Framework to develop young people's development of skills across the curriculum. This framework was referenced in all observed lessons. In the best examples this was integral to support young people to understand the purpose and relevance of their learning. Staff should consider how to develop the use of this framework further so that it allows young people to reflect on and profile their skills.
- The school has enhanced its tracking and monitoring systems and processes in the senior phase of the curriculum. Professional learning opportunities have been provided to support all staff further develop their data literacy skills. Whole school tracking within the senior phase is well used by senior leaders and other key staff to identify learners at risk of missing out on qualifications. Targeted support, including a mentoring programme, is currently in place to track the progress of young people in receipt of free school meals. This is leading to improvements in attendance and attainment for most of these learners. The school is working with middle leaders to ensure that the tracking and monitoring data is having a direct impact on departments planning appropriate interventions to raise attainment and achievement.
- Staff within the school and the supported learning centre should ensure that all young people working within S1 to S3 are aware of their own individual targets and their progress toward these through regular learning discussions.
- The newly appointed DHT, with the support of other senior leaders, has developed a strategic vision to improve planning, tracking and monitoring in the BGE. A key element of this strategy includes engaging with other local authority partner schools to further develop moderation approaches and staff confidence in their understanding of achievement of a level.

Q12.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Local authority officers discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, local authority officers examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. There were no areas identified for immediate action. Advice was provided around the ongoing management of files.

QI3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fulfilment of statutory duties.

Is the school fulfilling statutory duties? Y

At the time of the visit elements of statutory duties were fulfilled.

Aspects for development

- Advice was given about the arrangements for administration of medicine. This is advice gathered from other local authority inspections.

Additional evidence

- The school have developed a strong ethos and culture of promoting positive relationships and inclusion, This can be evidenced through the wealth of engagement and input from partnership work.
- The school have developed effective systems to support the mental health of young people and have involved young people in these processes.
- Staged intervention plans support learners well with relevant next steps in learning identified.