

Your Ref:

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21 December 2015

Education Services

Woodbank

30 Edinburgh Road

Dumfries DG1 1NW

To:

**All Parents and Carers of Pupils at
Moffat Academy**

Any enquiries please contact

Colin Grant

Direct Dial: 01387 260 400

Fax: 01387 260 453

E-mail: colin.grant@dumgal.gov.uk

Dear Parent / Carer

**LETTER REPORTING ON PROGRESS OF MOFFAT ACADEMY SINCE EDUCATION
SCOTLAND REPORT – DECEMBER 2014**

Moffat Academy was inspected by Education Scotland in September 2014. The inspection focussed on: 1) How well children learn and achieve; 2) How well the school supports children to develop and learn and 3) How well the school improves the quality of its work. Education Scotland awarded Moffat Academy, an evaluation of 'Very Good' for learners' experiences, improvements in performance, the curriculum, meeting learners' needs and self-evaluation. In the nursery class, evaluations of 'very good' were awarded for children's' experience and improvements in performance. Meeting learners' needs was awarded an evaluation of 'Good'.

As part of the quality reporting arrangements of Education Services, Dumfries and Galloway Council, I am writing to inform you of the progress made by the school since the publication of the Education Scotland report in December 2014. The report highlighted two aspects for development. This letter sets out actions taken by the school in addressing these.

**Further improve the balance of adult-led and child centred learning to meet
children's needs in the nursery**

Staff in the nursery have considered this recommendation carefully and addressed approaches to delivery in a number of ways. All staff have now attended authority training on the implications of 'Building the Ambition', a national practice guidance resource to support staff in providing high quality early learning and childcare. Staff have discussed a range of strategies to overtake the recommendations within this report. Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) staff now put a greater emphasis on embedding opportunities for pupil choice and child-led learning whilst retaining options for adult-led activities. This will ensure that children's needs are met effectively.

As part of the school's self-improvement processes, staff are constantly reviewing and reflecting on their practice and they now feel more relaxed and confident about following the interests and needs of individual children or small groups, whilst still taking cognisance of early level experiences and outcomes. In addition, the ELCC teacher has been involved in visiting another local nursery and has shared practice between the two, thus moderating provision.

Continue to develop the curriculum with an increased focus on skills for learning, life and work

Over the past session, a considerable amount of work has taken place in further developing the curriculum at all stages to have an increased focus on skills for learning, life and work. This has been included as an integral part of the school and cluster improvement plan for 2015-2016. Several members of staff have attended national and authority conferences looking at effective approaches to deliver and develop further this priority.

In the ELCC and primary, the initial focus has been on raising staff awareness of linking learning to the skills being developed. This will help build greater awareness of skills for learning, life and work. Resources have been purchased to ensure materials are available to develop these further. Contact has also been made with the technology and science departments in the secondary so that Science, Technology, English and Maths (STEM) skills are high on the agenda and they continue to prioritise knowledge and skills in science as a focus for their weekly P7/S1 transition programme. The school has also made contact with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and they have provided advice and suggestions about innovative approaches to developing construction and technology skills. Bespoke cluster planning sheets already identify the skills that need to be developed and the staff are currently auditing coverage of current programmes of study / contexts and teasing out the embedded skills to make them more explicit. An audit toolkit is due to be received from the authority in January 2016 and plans are in place to make use of this with all staff in the primary and across the cluster.

In the secondary department, a community engagement group has been involved in planning and implementing a whole school approach to employability. The group comprises school staff, Community Learning and Development (CLD) staff, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) advisers and local employers and volunteers. A key focus has been the development of a course targeting all S3 pupils to ensure they gain an accredited employability award by the end of S3.

A careers fair was held for all pupils and parents in November 2015, targeting over 30 local employers / FE and university representatives and their views have been sought in terms of the specific skills they are looking for to ensure positive destinations for all our young people.

The school has also looked outwards to share and develop practice with schools, both within the local authority and out with the authority. Working with three other school clusters in Annandale and Eskdale (Lockerbie Academy, Langholm Academy and Annan Academy), the Network East partnership has prioritised the recommendations from Developing Young Workforce to ensure skills for work are delivered for all. Current priorities include working with local employers to gauge local opportunities for employment / work placements and work shadowing, researching data to ascertain an accurate picture of local employment patterns and opportunities, liaising with Dumfries and Galloway College to plan high quality provision within the east of our region and pursuing funding to acquire school minibuses to help address inequity of provision caused by school size and rurality / isolation from the town of Dumfries. Looking further afield, plans are underway to formalise

a partnership approach across three comparable schools across three local authorities – i.e. Moffat Academy, Biggar High School and Peebles Academy.

During the inspection, Education Scotland identified aspects of innovative practice in the school's approaches to personal support for young people and in young people's transition from primary to secondary. In conjunction with Education Scotland, an event focussing on the development of a streamlined 3-18 science curriculum across the cluster was delivered by staff from the school and was well attended by teachers from across the country. The school's approach to the national guidance on Time for Reflection was also shared at events in the local authority and at national level.

In conclusion, the high level of staff commitment and effective leadership at all levels across the school, have ensured very good progress has been made in addressing the HMI recommendations. It is clearly evident that the school continues to thrive, be innovative in its approach and focus on delivering the highest quality of learning experiences for all children and young people.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Grant', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Colin Grant
Director of Children, Young People and Lifelong Learning