

## **To Madras College Parent Council**

### **Madras College**

#### **Fife Council Supported Self Evaluation – November 2012**

Recently, as you may know, a team of officers from Fife Council Education and Learning Directorate visited the school. The purpose of the visit was to offer advice to the school in the areas below and help them prepare for the anticipated visit from Education Scotland (school inspectors) some time this year. Throughout the visit, we talked to some parents and young people, school partners and we worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well young people were learning and achieving and how well the school supported young people to do their best.

#### **How well do young people learn and achieve?**

Across the school, including in the department of additional support unit (DAS), young people learn well. They achieve well in many aspects of their learning in and beyond the classroom. The school has a clear commitment to raising standards of attainment and the expectations of staff, pupils and parents in this context are high. Overall levels of attainment are high in fifth and sixth year, and above Fife and national averages. Attainment in fourth year, although in line with national averages and improving in some measures, could be improved further.

Young people are proud of their school. Almost all pupils are well behaved, confident and keen to engage in their learning. They enjoy school where they feel safe and well cared for. There is evidence of very good relationships and mutual respect between staff and pupils and between pupils. Young people generally work purposefully together on tasks and activities. They respond well to the expectations of behaviour, attitude and are involved in their learning. Teachers give clear explanations and are increasingly providing young people with a range of activities to help them learn. Young people are not always clear about their strengths and what they need to do to improve their learning.

The school provides significant opportunities to participate and achieve outwith the class based on e.g. clubs, sport, music, art, residential experience, foreign trips, community based projects, all of which enable young people to develop their confidence and self esteem. Young people and parents recognise and welcome the very good range of ways achievement is celebrated in the school. The school places a high value on charity work through whole school charity fundraising events and also the development of international work. The school use a very wide range of accredited award schemes to recognise wider achievement and target young people who can benefit. The systematic recording of achievement and achievement opportunities is being developed on the basis of the school performance tracking process. This will allow greater account to be taken of the extent of

young people's achievements, which young people are accessing through school opportunities and those achieving through partner organisations.

The school is very successful in supporting young people to move on after school. In 2012 92% all young people leaving the school moved to employment, training, further or higher education. This is above both national and Fife averages.

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

The school supports young people well to develop and learn. Subject teaching staff are, in the main, aware of pupils' support needs and have developed effective means of encouraging and supporting pupils in class. There is evidence of good pace and challenge and in some classes and teachers are providing tasks and activities which motivate young people. However In order to respond to pace and challenge, the school should build further capacity in learning and teaching to meet the range of learning needs.

There is strong pastoral support for young people. Support for learning staff work very effectively to ensure that all teachers are aware of the support needs of individuals. Staff across the school, including in the DAS unit, know young people well and take positive steps to identify and deal with factors which affect their learning.

Teachers are making good progress in implementing Curriculum for Excellence. New approaches and courses are in place across all curriculum areas in first, second and third year. These cover the eight curricular areas, and the relevant Curriculum for Excellence 'experiences and outcomes ( Es and Os) and design principles. In S1, all pupils have the opportunity to choose two electives. The S2/3 curriculum includes an interdisciplinary theme and elective classes. The electives offer opportunities for pupils to choose areas of the curriculum they wish to specialise in. In the Senior Phase (fourth, fifth and sixth year) the school will offer a range of national, higher and intermediate courses. Most pupils will follow a coherent two year course for S4 and S5 to ensure depth and progression. The school makes every effort to find suitable courses for learners to meet their individual needs and aspirations through links with other providers

The school has made good progress in supporting literacy across learning and giving it a high priority for young people and staff. Throughout the developments, staff, parents and young people have been regularly consulted. The school works effectively with a range of community partners to widen the range of opportunities available in the curriculum.

### **How well does the school improve the quality of its work?**

Madras College is committed to self-evaluation and the development of a reflective culture among staff. The Senior Leadership Team has a clear and detailed understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. Staff across the school are clearly committed to improving the quality

of young people's learning. Teachers reflect on their lessons and increasingly share good practice. Senior managers encourage staff to be innovative and share ideas. Departments regularly engage in discussions about improving the quality of their work. Staff contribute well to a range of working groups and regularly take part in activities and further training to improve their own knowledge and skills. A range of surveys, questionnaires (Pupilwise, Parentwise) and discussions have informed school improvement priorities. On line applications such as Survey Monkey have been used to gather pupil views.

Overall the school's self evaluation procedures are robust and as a result the school has made an accurate assessment of its strengths and areas for development. In our view the school has the necessary capacity for improvement.

Overall the following key strengths are evident:

- Leadership of the senior management team.
- Level of commitment from staff to young people.
- Opportunities to participate and achieve outwith the classroom.
- Positive and inclusive ethos.
- Well behaved young people who are proud of their school.
- Very positive relationships between staff and young people.

The following main actions were agreed:

- Improve levels of fourth year standard grade performance, in particular Credit Level, against Fife and National averages and comparator schools.
- Ensure a greater range of teaching approaches to support learning.
- Continue to move forward with Curriculum for Excellence ensuring all young people have their entitlements met.
- Continue to build on self-evaluation to ensure a consistent approach to improvement across the school.

For further information or clarification about the above please contact the Head Teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Les Fargie, Lead Education Officer , 18 January 2013