



**STANDARDS & QUALITY REPORT
AND
IMPROVEMENT PLAN
(Summary)**

FOR

ALFORD ACADEMY



LAST UPDATED: October 2017

Aberdeenshire Council Education & Children's Services

"Education & Children's Services works to improve the lives of children and young people, families and communities through the delivery of high quality services across Aberdeenshire"

Introduction: National and Local context

This Standards and Quality Report and Improvement Plan is influenced by both Aberdeenshire, National and school priorities. These can be summarised as follows:

National Improvement Framework Priorities:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; and
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people;

National Improvement Framework Drivers:

- School leadership
- Teacher professionalism
- Parental engagement
- Assessment of children's progress
- School improvement
- Performance information

Aberdeenshire Priorities:

- To develop excellence and equity
- to embed the principles of GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child)
- to provide support in developing inclusive, vibrant and healthy communities

Alford Academy 3 Year Priorities (2017-2020):

- To develop our 3-18 inclusive, healthy and ambitious community through further development of leadership at all levels.
- To deliver consistently high quality teaching, learning and assessment of learner's progress.
- To support and enable our young people to be the very best learners with a particular focus on their health & wellbeing, equality and inclusion, our partnerships with parents/carers and family learning.
- To review and improve our curriculum, increasing achievement pathways through innovative partnerships and equipping all children and young with the skills required for their next phase of learning.

These priorities are reflected in all areas of this document and the actions that emerge from it. Please note that when work is undertaken on each of the improvements identified, opportunities for working and learning with Nurseries, Primaries and other Campus colleagues, will be maximised.

Additionally to support self-evaluation various quality indicators from the national evaluative framework How Good Is Our School?4 are referenced. Links to these sources are:

NIF- www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00491758.pdf

HGIOS?4 - https://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HGIOS4August2016_tcm4-870533.pdf

CONTEXT OF OUR SCHOOL

Alford Academy Vision, Values And Aims *“Working together to nurture, inspire and achieve”*

Mission Statement

Alford Academy recognises that one size does not fit all. Our young people are born individuals and should leave school as individuals. Alford Academy is committed to unlocking each youngster’s potential, raising their aspirations and helping them to be all they can be, in a safe, healthy and caring environment.

Our Values

The work and life of our school is underpinned by 5 values:-
Respect Wisdom Justice Compassion Integrity.

Our Aims

• Attainment and Achievement

To raise standards of educational attainment and wider achievement for all our pupils, especially through the skills of literacy, numeracy, health and well-being, information communication and technologies and working with others.

• Learning and Teaching

To promote the highest quality learning experiences for pupils by investing in professional development to create knowledgeable, confident and skilled teachers capable of raising the attainment and achievement levels of our pupils.

• Inclusion and Equality

To provide equality of opportunity to access education in a way that is engaging and appropriate to the pupils’ interests, physical and intellectual needs.

• Values and Citizenship

To work with pupils, parents and employees to promote self-respect, respect for others and interdependence within society. In turn our pupils will understand the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society.

• Learning for Life

To equip pupils with positive attitudes and expectations, encourage creativity, ambition and entrepreneurial skills that will help them prosper in our changing society.

Alford Academy is not just a school, it is a learning community that recognises teaching and learning does not start and stop at the school gates. Through developing our partnerships in and out of school, we work together to increasingly provide the very best learning and leadership experiences and opportunities for all. In turn we aim to support and furnish each individual youngster with the knowledge, skills, experiences, insight and drive that will set them on their path to a prosperous future, effectively contributing to life and work in Aberdeenshire, Scotland and worldwide.

Our Ethos

Alford Academy has a very positive inclusive ethos. We are a welcoming and caring, professional, ambitious and proud school. Through our approachable leadership style, culture of open dialogue and commitment to continuous improvement through self-evaluation, we encourage all to 'tell it as it is' and to work together to further develop our culture of ambition and achievement for all our learners.

We have an inclusive approach where all pupils are valued and supported in their learning by all staff. They are proud to belong to one of three houses: Craigievar, Kildrummy or Forbes. Pupils are known well by their Principal Teacher of Pupil Support and the Depute Head Teacher linked to their House group.

Our Community, Links and Partnerships

Alford Academy is a six-year non-denominational secondary school located in the Donside village of Alford, approximately 25 miles to the west of Aberdeen and within easy reach of the Cairngorms National Park. Our rural catchment area of approximately 600 square miles stretches from Echt in the east to Corgarff in the west. The village of Alford and surrounding area is rich in local culture and heritage, including the 'Doric' dialect, the famous poet; Charles Murray, the Sculpture Workshop at Lumsden, Craigievar Castle and Castle Fraser, local estates and Alford's Transport Museum and Heritage Centre.

Our new Alford Community Campus opened in October 2015. This shared campus is home to Alford Nursery, Primary and Academy, Community Learning and Development, Sports and Leisure, Library Services and a Design and Print satellite unit. Our indoor facilities include a swimming pool, sports hall, climbing wall and theatre. Outdoors we have an all-weather pitch, running track, grass pitches and dry ski slope. A short distance away is the school's own forestry plot, gifted by the Murray Park Trustees.

The school has 48.5 full time equivalent teaching staff. The school is led by a Senior Leadership Team of 4 (Head Teacher, three Depute Head Teachers) and a School Support Co-ordinator. There are nine Principal Teachers (Faculty), three Principal Teachers of Pupil Support and one Principal Teacher of Additional Support for Learners. The following faculties are currently in place: English, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Business Education and Computing, Science (Science, Biology, Chemistry and Physics), Enterprise and Creativity (Art & Design, Home Economics and Technical), PE/Health, Performing Arts (Music and Drama) and a Faculty of Humanities (RMPS, History, Geography, Modern Studies). There are 12.2 full time equivalent Additional Support for Learners (ASfL) teachers working across the Alford Cluster Schools. An extensive team of support staff, incorporating janitors, technicians, pupil support assistants and office staff, support the work of Alford Academy and cluster schools.

Alford Academy works together with its thirteen associated primary schools on a formal and informal basis to improve our 3-18 curriculum, pastoral care and welfare and to plan and deliver career long professional learning events and programmes.

The school is well supported by our active Parent Council, with members supporting the work of our Student Council and actively engaging in consultation.

We continue to work collaboratively with a range of agencies, business partners and organisations including:-

Our emerging 'flagship' partnership with Mackie's of Scotland
NESCOL (North East Scotland College)
SRUC (Scotland's Rural College)
Skills Development Scotland
RGU (Robert Gordon University)
DYW North East Scotland
Alford & District Rotary Club (working with our Interact club)
Our school chaplains (Rev J Cook and Rev E Glenn)
Our consortia schools:- Aboyne Academy, Banchory Academy, The Gordon Schools
SPE International (Society of Petroleum Engineers)
Cairngorms National Park
Local businesses

Our School Profile (including Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD))

Alford Academy is one of the smaller Aberdeenshire secondary schools with a school roll of 635 pupils in September 2017. 30 pupils attend Alford Academy through placing requests. Our Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), (the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying those places in Scotland suffering from deprivation with decile 1 being the most deprived through to decile 10 the least deprived) is as follows: 0% of our pupils are in the most deprived deciles 1,2 and 3 and the majority of our pupils (86%) are in least deprived deciles 8, 9 and 10. Details are as follows:-

Deciles 1,2, 3	Decile 4	Decile 5	Decile 6	Decile 7	Decile 8	Decile 9	Decile 10
0.0%	0.3%	9.4%	3.9%	0.2%	41.4%	25.5%	19.1%

Detail and Allocation of Pupil Equity Funding

Through our discussions at school and cluster levels and with our Parent Council, we have agreed to focus our additional funding on improving resilience and developing positive mental health in all our children and young people. We have planned new curriculum inserts for all our children and S1-S3 young people using a range of resources including 'Bounce Back, Mentoring for Violence Prevention (a new programme led and delivered by senior pupils) and mental health workshops delivered by Grampian Mental Health associates. Our Senior Phase students and all staff across our cluster schools will attend workshops delivered by Andy Cope, focusing on 'The Art of Brilliance'. These are interactive and thought-provoking, are front loaded with positive psychology and cultivate a 'can do' attitude.

We are also delivering motivational workshops to all pupils through Tree of Knowledge.

The Core Areas of Our Practice

This report summarises the strengths of our school, our recent improvements and what we plan to improve next session. We gather this information throughout the year in a variety of formal and informal ways to make sure our report is as accurate as possible. These include

- analysing factual data and information including attainment results, tracking data, leavers destinations at all levels across our school
- seeking the views of our learners at classroom, Faculty and Whole School levels
- our Student Council actively seeking the views of pupils
- our Parent Council sharing and seeking the views of parents and working together with the school on policy development
- actively seeking views at Parents Evenings, Information Evenings and via our website/blog
- gathering the views of the staff, the local community and school partners
- learning together with staff across our cluster primary schools
- comparing what we do with local and national examples of best practice
- visiting each other's classes to share standards in learning and teaching
- looking at learner's work to see how they are progressing

National Improvement Framework Quality Indicators (NIF Qis)

Quality Indicator	School Self Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Satisfactory
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good

Our overall capacity for continuous improvement is good. This is based on the following factors:-

- Our ethos and highest aspirations for all
- Highest levels of commitment by staff and leadership development at all levels
- Our learning environment potential on and outwith our campus
- Our positive relationships and partnerships with young people, our parent forum and wider community
- Our progress in raising attainment
- Positive feedback about the school from learners, parents and visitors to the school
- Positive feedback from activity leaders and members of the public, when learners are out of school at competitions, events and activities

Our Key Strengths

- Our positive inclusive school ethos, working together in a climate of mutual respect and ambition for every individual. We know our pupils.
- How well we listen to our young people and their parents and discuss and plan with them to improve their wellbeing and future.
- Strong attainment in literacy and numeracy at National 4 level.
- Attainment in most measures has increased over time and is strong.
- Wider achievements including Duke of Edinburgh awards, in performing arts and volunteering and participation in sport at National and International levels.
- Our celebration of our pupils' wider achievements.
- Our quality of support provided. Staff, pupils and parents work closely together and share any circumstances which might affect our young people and their learning.
- Our wide ranging partnerships; working with pupils, parents, businesses and organisations, further and higher education, to support learning and the wider life of the school.
- The many and varied opportunities for staff and pupil leadership.
- Our innovative learning in, through and about technologies.

Our Improvements Last Session

- Improved consistency in Self Evaluation through our increased focus on data analysis and focus on the impact of improvement priorities and interventions at Faculty and classroom levels.
- Increased professional dialogue focussing on teaching, learning and assessment through establishment of our 3-18 Teacher Learning Communities.
- Campus Staff Health & Well-Being team established and events planned and delivered.
- Emerging Parent Council and Student Council partnership working.
- Development and implementation of Pupil Punctuality Policy and reduction in pupil lateness for classes.
- Improvements to our Mentoring for Effective Learning (MEL) programme.
- Increased opportunities for learners to regularly review their progress in learning and set targets.
- Increase in Parental Engagement events (Tree of Knowledge 3-18 Parent Forum workshops, ShowMyHomework- demonstrations, Cluster Parental Engagement Events – Mental Health and Internet Safety)

Our Priorities for Improvement Next Session

To raise attainment and achievement :-

Leadership and Management

NIF Priority/Priorities: All

NIF Drivers: School leadership, Teacher professionalism, School improvement

We plan to

- continue improving approaches to self-evaluation at class, faculty and whole school levels.
- continue improving the consistency of highest quality learning and teaching and assessment through a range of collegiate learning approaches including 3-18 Teacher Learning Communities.
- consult on and 'bring to life' our school vision and values.
- develop a Digital Learning strategy to include 'Bring Your Own Device'.

Learning Provision

NIF Priority/Priorities: All

NIF Drivers: Teacher professionalism, School leadership, Parental engagement, Assessment of children's progress

We plan to

- improve the validity, reliability and moderation of assessment in the Broad General Education.
- develop our 'learning walkthroughs'/class visits programme.
- increase parental engagement with a clear focus on supporting parents/carers to support learning.
- research and plan alternatives to reporting.
- further develop and increase learning pathways through collaborative planning within school, across schools and out with school.
- review our curriculum structure and content and
 - plan improvements to skills development and work relevant learning throughout the BGE. (including implementation of the Career Education Standard)
 - plan our Learning for Sustainability strategy
 - refresh our whole school literacy initiatives
 - plan a cluster schools numeracy strategy and health and wellbeing strategy.

Successes and Achievements

NIF Priority/Priorities: All

NIF Drivers: Assessment of children's progress, School improvement, Performance information

We plan to

- further develop the skills based Mentoring for Effective Learning(MEL) programme.
- continue planned Rights Respecting School developments.
- implement and evaluate Restorative Practice approaches.
- review and further develop how we promote equality and celebrate diversity.
- establish a whole school Health & Wellbeing strategy and team of young leaders.
- develop and pilot opportunities for Family Learning.
- develop, implement and evaluate a Tracking and Monitoring Strategy and digital tracking solution (LEAPs - BGE tracking tool).
- audit and evaluate wider achievement opportunities, uptake and the development of specific skills.