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Dear Parent/Carer

**Lanark Grammar School
South Lanarkshire Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's school. Throughout our visit we talked to many parents and young people 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. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work including: the ongoing implementation of Curriculum for Excellence; how young people's views are taken into account to help improve learning and teaching; the impact of the different ways the school meets the needs of young people; raising attainment at S4; arrangements for young people as they move into S1 and as they prepare to leave school. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school was at improving children's education. I would now like to tell you what we found.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Young people have good learning experiences overall. At S5 and S6 young people achieve very well. The school recognises the need to further improve attainment at S4 for some young people.

Almost all young people listen attentively and behave well. They have a positive attitude to their learning and enjoy taking part in class discussions. Teachers support them well in their learning. Young people are engaged in an increasing range of activities to help them learn. At times lessons are too teacher-led and do not always allow young people to think for themselves. Young people need more opportunities to be independent and to take responsible decisions about their own learning.

Most young people in the additional support needs base are well behaved and successfully involved in their learning. They enjoy working with each other and are developing a range of skills as they learn to cooperate and take on more responsibilities. Across the school staff meet the care and welfare needs of young people very well. As a result, young people feel safe and well cared for in school. They feel they are encouraged to do their best. They would like to have more say in how to improve learning.

The involvement of young people, especially those at senior stages, in a range of activities helps them develop well, personally and socially. Activities include acting as buddies to younger children, organising a successful charity fashion show and assisting in classes.

¹ This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as this will not connect.

Young people from across the school benefit from trips, including international learning experiences. They are developing confidence and awareness of the needs of others through charity work in their own community and beyond. More opportunities for young people from S1 to S4 to take on leadership roles would further encourage them to develop their confidence and take responsibility. Across the school, including in the additional support needs base, young people's achievements are regularly recognised and celebrated. All young people would benefit from more formal recognition of their range of achievements.

At S1 and S2, young people, including those in the additional support needs base, are making appropriate progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. The school should continue to improve information gathered on young people's progress across the curriculum at S1 and S2. The school is not yet helping some young people at S4 attain as well as they could. At S5 and S6, young people achieve well at Higher and Advanced Higher and much better than in schools serving young people with similar needs and backgrounds. The school is taking appropriate steps to improve its approaches to tracking young people's learning to help improve attainment further.

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

The school supports young people to develop and learn well. Teachers are effective in meeting the learning needs of most young people. They need to extend the range of approaches they use to ensure all young people get the challenge and support they need to make suitable progress in their learning. There is strong pastoral support across the school. Staff across the school know young people well and take positive steps to identify and deal with factors which affect their learning. Young people appreciate the help they receive from their pupil support and class teachers. Additional support needs staff, along with behaviour support staff, give effective help to young people with additional needs. In the additional support needs base good specialist help is provided for individual learners.

Teachers are making progress in implementing Curriculum for Excellence. They are developing new courses which provide opportunities for a good range of learning experiences. Teachers are beginning to develop effective approaches to promoting literacy and numeracy across all areas of learning. The curriculum from S3 to S6 provides a range of courses to meet the needs of learners. Courses are available at various levels and the school tries to meet individual aspirations. The needs of a few young people are well met by courses provided by Motherwell College. The school works well with partners to support young people develop a range of skills. This includes the Get Ready for Work programme with local employers and work with Universal Connections youth centres to develop aspects of health and wellbeing. The additional support needs base provides a curriculum with an appropriate focus on developing personal and social skills and on preparing young people for life after school. Young people who spend all of their time in the base would benefit from greater subject choice at the senior stages. The school has very good arrangements for supporting young people as they move from primary to secondary. When young people leave school, most go on to university or college or are successful in gaining a training opportunity or employment.

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

Overall, we are confident the school will continue to improve the quality of its work.

The school is continuing to develop a range of well considered approaches to evaluating its work. The headteacher has placed a high priority on improving the quality and consistency of self-evaluation across the school. He has helped teachers take on leadership roles for various aspects of improving the work of the school. The school is now well placed to take a more focussed approach to improve young people's learning and achievement.

Young people take on leadership roles in the school including on the pupil council. More young people and partners should be involved in contributing to improvements in the life and work of the school. The views of staff, young people and parents are regularly sought. The next step is for the school is to improve communication so that everyone can see their role in making the school better.

This inspection of your school found the following key strengths.

- Young people who are well behaved and have a positive attitude to learning.
- The pastoral care of young people.
- Approachable supportive staff.
- Attainment in S5/6.
- The role of the headteacher in leading school improvement.

We discussed with staff and the education authority how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue to work with partners to develop a coherent curriculum.
- Continue to improve the quality of learners' experiences to more effectively meet the needs of all learners and raise attainment at S4.
- Continue to develop the school as a learning community which gives all young people a real and relevant role in its life and work.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The local authority will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

Carol McDonald
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=7760&type=3>

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact 01506 600200, or write to us at the above address or e-mail: feedback@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk.