

12 March 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

**St Margaret's Academy
West Lothian Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well young people are learning and achieving and how well the school supports 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 approaches to improvement, the impact of professional learning of staff on improving learners' experiences and how well the broad general education is developing young people's skills. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving young people's education.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Young people learn and achieve very well within a very caring and inclusive learning environment. They are friendly, well-behaved and most engage enthusiastically in their learning. They respond positively to a very good range of practical and group tasks, leading learning in open-ended projects, presentations and performances. Young people are making increasing use of information and communications technology (ICT), for example using Glow and learning blogs as well as the 'anytime, anywhere learning' network. This is helping them develop research skills, share ideas and enhance their ability to work independently. Staff share with young people the purposes of lessons and their expectations of the standards of work they are looking for. As a result, young people are clear about the progress expected of them and what they need to do to improve. Young people, particularly senior pupils, contribute very well to improving the life and work of the school and to the wider community, developing and demonstrating their leadership skills.

Young people's achievements are of a consistently high quality. They are developing personal attributes and skills from an extensive variety of experiences including in the arts, culture, sports and enterprise. Many of these experiences build well on learning within subjects and curriculum areas for example through well-organised and focused school trips and events. Young people are developing very well as global citizens, with notable achievements relating to local, national and international communities. They demonstrate a strong commitment to raising significant funds for charities including the fundraising links with Malawi. This has resulted in the construction of the 'St Margaret's Kitchen' in a Malawian community. Young people are developing

enterprising attitudes and skills through involvement in Young Enterprise. Those who take part in the work of the Fair Trade group achieve a good understanding of aspects of international trade and ethical consumerism. Many young people have received recognition for their skills they have developed through an increasing range of accredited awards including The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Caritas Awards, Sport Leadership, and CREST Science Awards.

From S1-S3, most young people are making very good progress in their broad general education. From S4-S6, in almost all levels, school performance is improving and is consistently above national averages, and better than those schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds. Young people with additional support needs, including those with English as an additional language, are making very good progress in their learning. Almost all young people leave school to go on to further study, employment or training.

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

Young people across the school are very well supported to develop and learn. Staff know learners very well and use a wide range of well-judged approaches to meet their needs effectively. Specialist staff ensure a range of effective support for young people. All staff are committed to young people's welfare and achievement. They work well together to ensure that they meet the needs of every young person, especially the most vulnerable. The school has a commendable emphasis on promoting young people's mental health. Approaches such as the innovative nurture programmes in the 'Green Room' and counselling are effectively supporting young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs. Staff work well with a broad range of support agencies who make important contributions to young people's development. The school is continuing to develop its approaches to planning support, and to improving the pace and the level of challenge in learning for young people.

The school's teamwork approaches to taking forward Curriculum for Excellence are exemplary. Changes to the curriculum are the result of careful long-term planning, discussion and consultation with staff, parents, young people and partners. All young people are benefitting from a flexible curriculum which meets their individual needs. Staff are confidently and enthusiastically developing new courses and approaches for young people in S1 to S3, enabling them to experience a broad curriculum with opportunities for 'depth studies' in S3. The school is developing a good range of well-planned opportunities for learning through personal achievement and a growing range of innovative interdisciplinary learning. The curriculum from S4 to S6 provides an extensive range of flexible progression routes for young people, enhanced by the effective links with West Lothian College and other local schools. Curriculum and support as young people move from primary school to S1 are a particular strength. Through the Pathways Programme, teachers plan carefully to ensure all young people benefit from continuity and progression in their learning as they move from stage to stage.

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

The headteacher provides inspirational and outstanding leadership, empowering staff and young people to drive forward improvement. His approach to change

management is particularly commendable, ensuring staff across the school are fully involved. He is supported extremely well by his highly-effective depute headteachers and extended leadership team. Leadership is strong and highly effective, with staff across the school skilfully taking leadership roles in a range of school developments and activities. The comprehensive and systematic approaches to self-evaluation, professional learning for staff and leadership development are at the core of the school's success in improving learning, attainment and achievement. The SEAMS (Self-evaluation at St. Margaret's) programme, reviews at faculty and whole-school level, and 'learning rounds' have all been successful in improving learning and teaching. Good practice is developed and shared through teachers visiting one another's lessons, and also through visits to lessons by senior managers, teachers from other schools, and young people. The school has used self-evaluation and professional learning for staff exceptionally well to take forward Curriculum for Excellence and in ongoing curriculum development and review.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- The headteacher's outstanding leadership and skilful management of change.
- The commitment of staff and teamwork to improve young people's learning experiences and attainment.
- Young people's contribution to the life of the school, and the range of their achievements.
- The positive impact on young people of the school's spiritual life and inclusive ethos.
- Approaches to self-evaluation which are transforming young people's learning.

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 improve the broad general education for young people from S1 to S3.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are extremely confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified aspects of innovative practice which we would like to explore further in order to share the practice with others. As a result we will work with the school and local authority in order to record and share more widely the innovative practice. We will ask the school, in discussion with the local authority, to let parents know the outcome of the innovative practice visit(s).

Mary Hoey
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.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/StMargaretsAcademyWestLothian.asp>.

If you would like to receive this report in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6AG.

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *How good is our school?*¹. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

Here are the evaluations for St Margaret's Academy.

Improvements in performance	very good
Learners' experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	very good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	excellent

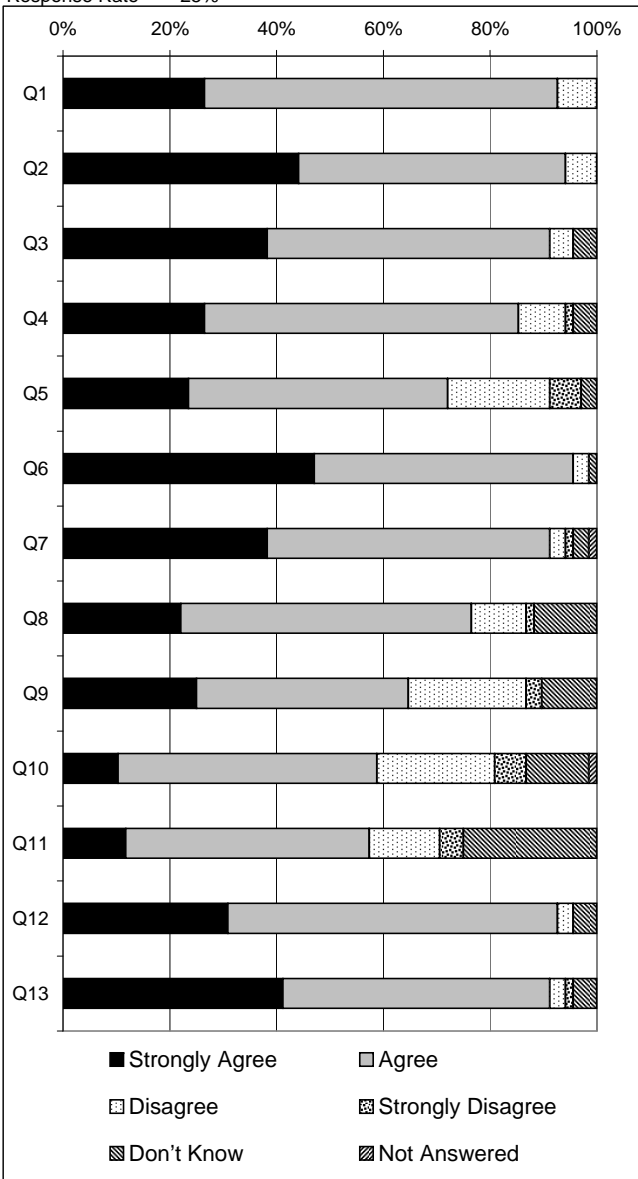
A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/StMargaretsAcademyWestLothian.asp>.

¹ *How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence: part 3*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf

A sample of parents, children and young people, and all members of staff were invited to give their views of the school using a pre-inspection questionnaire. Their views informed the inspection process, including the nature of discussions in a number of meetings. Strengths and issues identified were explored by the inspection team, and the findings are included in the inspection report. The following information gives the statistical detail from those that returned questionnaires.

Parent Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name St Margaret's Academy
 SEED Number 5512530
 Quest. Issued 272
 Quest. Input 68
 Response Rate 25%

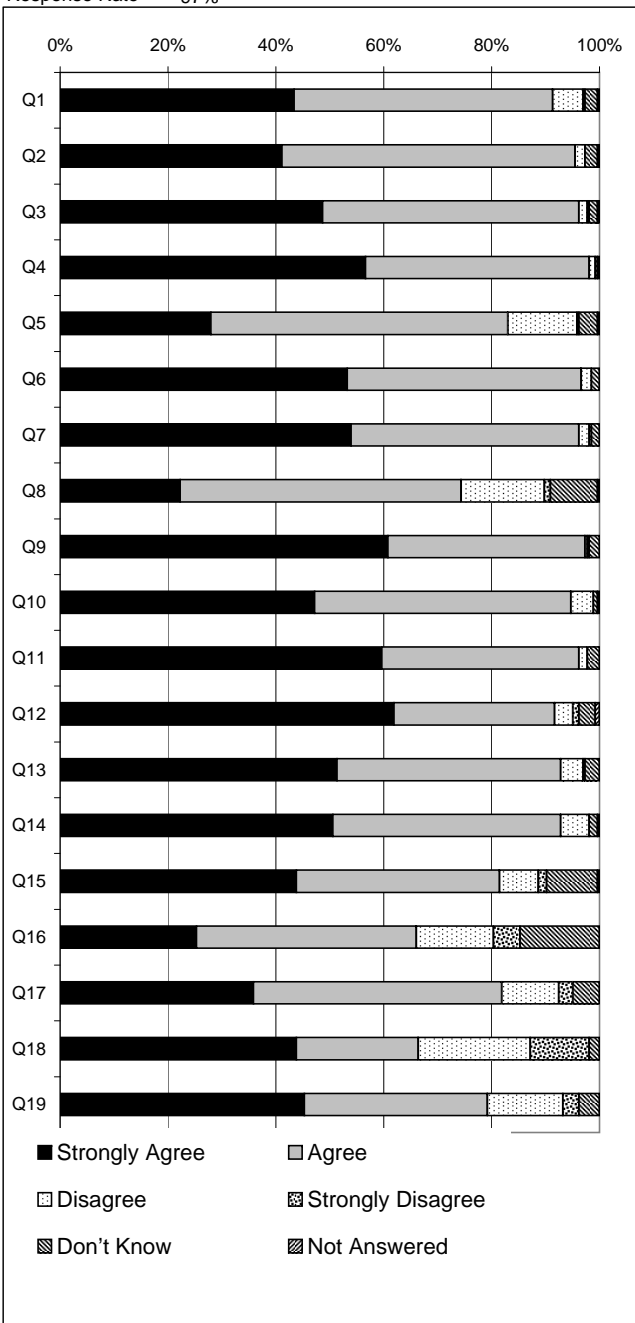


		Percentage %							
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Agree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
Q1	The school helps my child to be more confident.	26%	66%	7%	0%	0%	0%	93%	7%
Q2	My child enjoys learning at school.	44%	50%	6%	0%	0%	0%	94%	6%
Q3	My child's learning is progressing well.	38%	53%	4%	0%	4%	0%	91%	4%
Q4	My child is encouraged and stretched to work to the best of their ability.	26%	59%	9%	1%	4%	0%	85%	10%
Q5	The school keeps me well informed about my child's progress.	24%	49%	19%	6%	3%	0%	72%	25%
Q6	My child feels safe at school.	47%	49%	3%	0%	1%	0%	96%	3%
Q7	My child is treated fairly at school.	38%	53%	3%	1%	3%	1%	91%	4%
Q8	I feel staff really know my child as an individual and support them well.	22%	54%	10%	1%	12%	0%	76%	12%
Q9	My child benefits from school clubs and activities provided outside the classroom.	25%	40%	22%	3%	10%	0%	65%	25%
Q10	The school asks for my views.	10%	49%	22%	6%	12%	1%	59%	28%
Q11	The school takes my views into account.	12%	46%	13%	4%	25%	0%	57%	18%
Q12	The school is well led.	31%	62%	3%	0%	4%	0%	93%	3%
Q13	Overall, I am happy with the school.	41%	50%	3%	1%	4%	0%	91%	4%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

Pupil Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name St Margaret's Academy
 SEED Number 5512530
 Quest. Issued 272
 Quest. Input 265
 Response Rate 97%

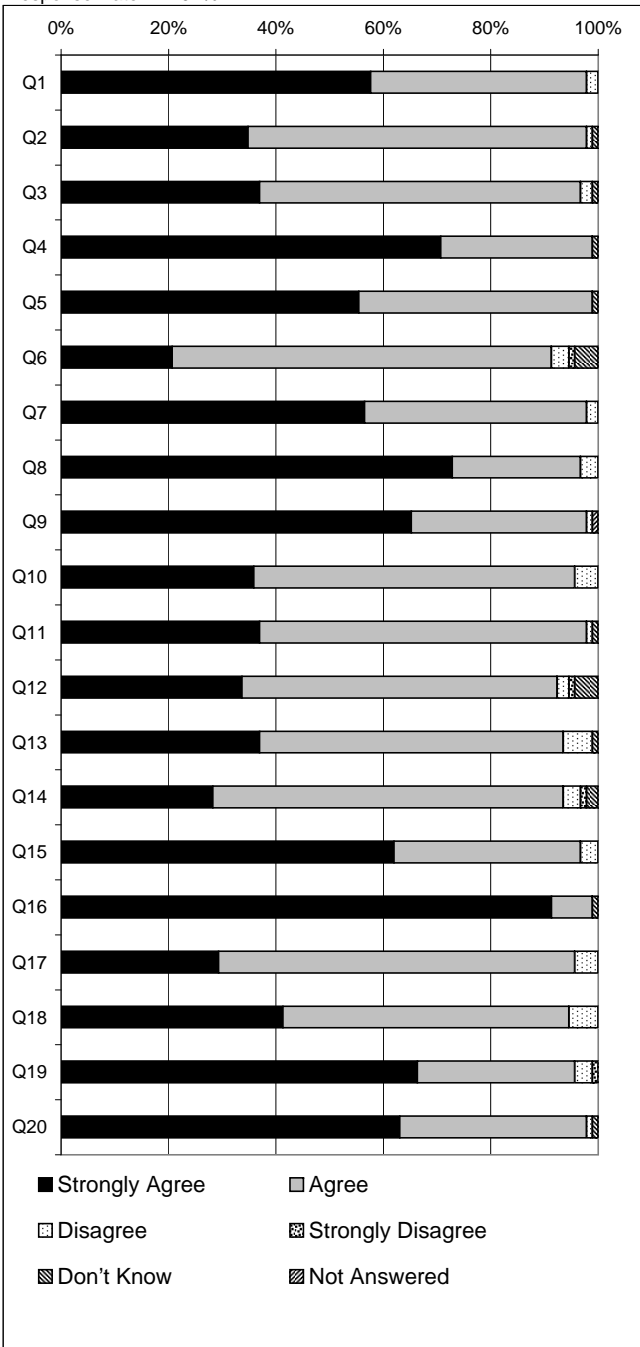


		Percentage %							
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Agree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
Q1	The school is helping me to become more confident.	43%	48%	6%	0%	2%	0%	91%	6%
Q2	I enjoy learning at school.	41%	54%	2%	0%	2%	0%	95%	2%
Q3	I am getting along well with my school work.	49%	48%	2%	0%	2%	0%	96%	2%
Q4	Staff encourage me to do the best I can.	57%	42%	1%	0%	0%	0%	98%	1%
Q5	Staff talk to me regularly about how to improve my learning.	28%	55%	13%	0%	3%	0%	83%	13%
Q6	I get help when I need it.	53%	43%	2%	0%	2%	0%	97%	2%
Q7	Staff listen to me and pay attention to what I say.	54%	42%	2%	0%	2%	0%	96%	2%
Q8	I have a say in making the way we learn in school better.	22%	52%	15%	1%	9%	0%	74%	17%
Q9	Staff expect me to take responsibility for my own work in class.	61%	37%	0%	0%	2%	0%	97%	1%
Q10	Staff and pupils treat me fairly and with respect.	47%	48%	4%	0%	1%	0%	95%	4%
Q11	I feel safe and cared for in school.	60%	37%	2%	0%	2%	0%	96%	2%
Q12	I have adults in school I can speak to if I am upset or worried about something.	62%	30%	3%	1%	3%	1%	92%	5%
Q13	I find it easy to talk to staff and they set a good example.	51%	42%	4%	0%	3%	0%	93%	5%
Q14	Staff make sure that pupils behave well.	51%	42%	5%	0%	2%	0%	93%	5%
Q15	Staff are good at dealing with bullying behaviour.	44%	38%	7%	2%	9%	0%	82%	9%
Q16	The pupil council is good at getting improvements made in the school.	25%	41%	14%	5%	15%	0%	66%	19%
Q17	The school encourages me to make healthy-food choices.	36%	46%	11%	3%	5%	0%	82%	13%
Q18	I take part in out-of-class activities and school clubs.	44%	23%	21%	11%	2%	0%	66%	32%
Q19	I know what out-of-school activities and youth groups are available in my local area.	45%	34%	14%	3%	4%	0%	79%	17%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

Teacher Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name St Margaret's Academy
 SEED Number 5512530
 Quest. Issued 98
 Quest. Input 92
 Response Rate 94%



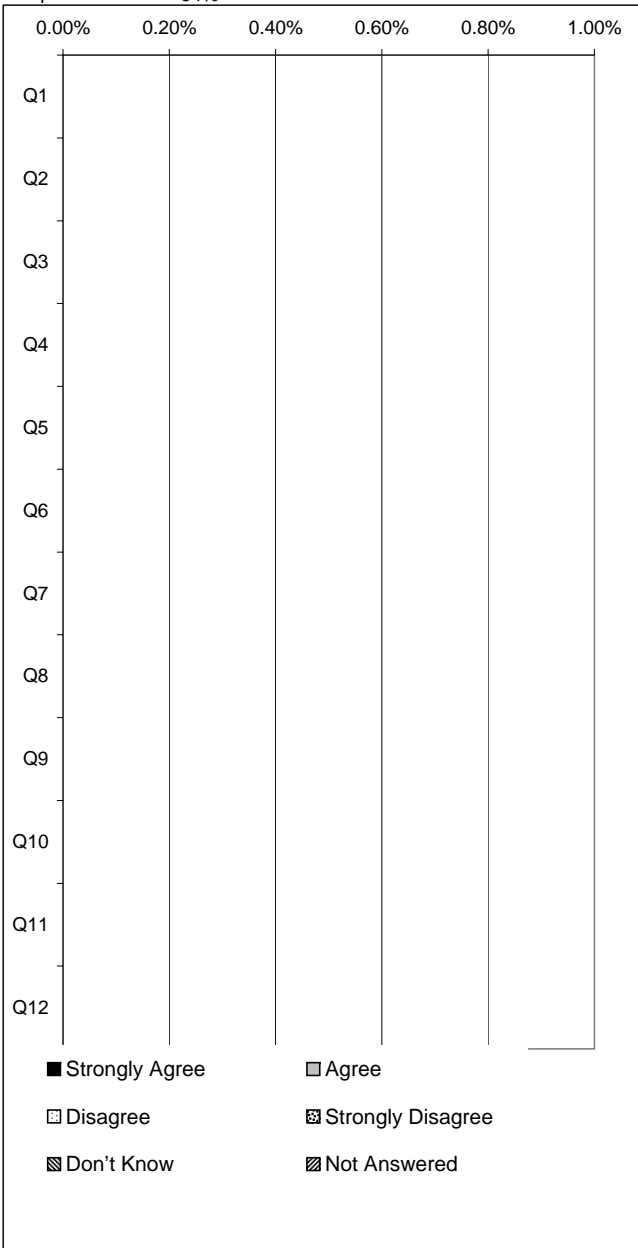
		Percentage %							
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Agree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
Q1	Staff regularly discuss how to improve achievement for all pupils at both stage and whole-school level.	58%	40%	2%	0%	0%	0%	98%	2%
Q2	All pupils are given activities which meet their learning needs.	35%	63%	1%	0%	1%	0%	98%	1%
Q3	Pupils are involved in setting learning targets.	37%	60%	2%	0%	1%	0%	97%	2%
Q4	Pupils are provided with regular feedback on what they need to do to improve.	71%	28%	0%	0%	1%	0%	99%	0%
Q5	Pupils are provided with opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others.	55%	43%	0%	0%	1%	0%	99%	0%
Q6	Staff regularly ask for pupils' views on how their learning experiences could be improved.	21%	71%	3%	1%	4%	0%	91%	4%
Q7	Pupils take an active part in their learning.	57%	41%	2%	0%	0%	0%	98%	2%
Q8	Staff treat all pupils equally.	73%	24%	3%	0%	0%	0%	97%	3%
Q9	Staff and pupils respect each other.	65%	33%	1%	0%	0%	1%	98%	1%
Q10	The pupils are well behaved.	36%	60%	4%	0%	0%	0%	96%	4%
Q11	Support for pupils with additional support needs is effective.	37%	61%	1%	0%	1%	0%	98%	1%
Q12	Parents are fully involved in the school and their children's learning.	34%	59%	2%	1%	4%	0%	92%	3%
Q13	I have been actively involved in developing the school's vision and values.	37%	57%	5%	0%	1%	0%	93%	5%
Q14	I am actively involved in setting priorities to improve the school.	28%	65%	3%	1%	2%	0%	93%	4%
Q15	I have regular opportunities to help shape the curriculum by having staff discussions and working groups.	62%	35%	3%	0%	0%	0%	97%	3%
Q16	I am aware of the school's procedures for protecting children.	91%	8%	0%	0%	1%	0%	99%	0%
Q17	Leadership at all levels is effective.	29%	66%	4%	0%	0%	0%	96%	4%
Q18	Staff communicate effectively with each other.	41%	53%	5%	0%	0%	0%	95%	5%
Q19	I have good opportunities to take part in continuing professional development.	66%	29%	3%	1%	0%	0%	96%	4%
Q20	Staff across the school share good practice.	63%	35%	1%	0%	1%	0%	98%	1%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

Non-Teaching Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name St Margaret's Academy
 SEED Number 5512530
 Quest. Issued 14
 Quest. Input 9
 Response Rate 64%

Fewer than 10 responses received therefore the data has not been published.



		Percentage %							
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Agree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
Q1	I have access to the information I need to carry out my work.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q2	All staff and pupils respect each other.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q3	Pupils are well behaved.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q4	I am involved in staff discussions about how to achieve school priorities.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q5	I have good opportunities to be involved in making decisions.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q6	Staff communicate effectively with each other.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q7	Staff treat all pupils equally.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q8	Support for pupils with additional support needs is effective.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q9	Parents are fully involved in the school and their children's learning.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q10	I am aware of the school's procedures for protecting children.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q11	Leadership at all levels is effective.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q12	I have good opportunities to take part in training activities.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

DISCLOSURE CONTROL APPLIED

Additional inspection evidence

Selected attainment information

Inspectors use this information together with a wide range of other information gathered during the inspection to evaluate and report on young people's overall achievement. It helps inspectors and schools to understand how successful young people are in SQA qualifications compared to young people nationally and to those in other schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds¹. However, this is only one aspect of young people's achievement, and it is only by blending these results with a wide range of other information, including achievement in the four capacities of curriculum for excellence², the quality of learning in lessons and other activities, the impact of the curriculum, and the extent to which learning needs are being met, that a well-informed evaluation of achievement can be made. You can find this evaluation of young people's overall achievement in the report on the school, published on this website.

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:

7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C

6: Higher at A-C

5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2

4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4

3: Access 3 Cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6

Percentage of relevant S4 roll gaining awards by end of S4

		2010	2011	2012 ³
English and Mathematics @ Level 3	St Margaret's Academy	87	92	93
	Comparator schools¹	97	96	97
	National	93	93	94
5+ @ Level 3 or better	St Margaret's Academy	96	96	98
	Comparator schools	94	95	96
	National	92	93	94
5+ @ Level 4 or better	St Margaret's Academy	88	80	89
	Comparator schools	83	82	82
	National	78	79	80
5+ @ Level 5 or better	St Margaret's Academy	42	41	50
	Comparator schools	38	38	39
	National	36	36	37

Percentage of relevant S4 roll gaining awards by end of S5

		2010	2011	2012 ³
5+ @ Level 4 or better	St Margaret's Academy	83	90	86
	Comparator schools¹	85	85	86
	National	80	81	82
5+ @ Level 5 or better	St Margaret's Academy	60	60	61
	Comparator schools	54	56	56
	National	49	51	52
1+ @ Level 6 or better	St Margaret's Academy	58	53	58
	Comparator schools	48	50	50
	National	43	45	46
3+ @ Level 6 or better	St Margaret's Academy	39	30	32
	Comparator schools	29	31	27
	National	25	26	27
5+ @ Level 6 or better	St Margaret's Academy	15	10	17
	Comparator schools	12	14	12
	National	11	12	13

Percentage of relevant S4 roll gaining awards by end of S6

		2010	2011	2012 ³
5+ @ Level 5 or better	St Margaret's Academy	57	63	62
	Comparator schools¹	55	58	61
	National	50	53	55
1+ @ Level 6 or better	St Margaret's Academy	55	63	58
	Comparator schools	51	54	56
	National	47	50	52
3+ @ Level 6 or better	St Margaret's Academy	41	49	45
	Comparator schools	37	42	40
	National	33	35	36
5+ @ Level 6 or better	St Margaret's Academy	29	32	30
	Comparator schools	25	29	30
	National	22	24	25
1+ @ Level 7 or better	St Margaret's Academy	12	19	19
	Comparator schools	15	17	16
	National	15	16	16

More attainment information and other statistics for this school can be found on the Scottish Schools Online Website <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/scottishschoolsonline/>

¹ The comparator schools taken into account in HMIE's evaluations are those schools (up to 20) which are statistically close enough to the school in terms of the key characteristics of the school population.

² The four capacities are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors.

³ 2012 Pre Appeal