Kilmarnock Academy

Introduction

In April 2018, Kilmarnock and James Hamilton Academies merged which brought about the need and desire to review current and best practice in both schools. It was also a good opportunity to refresh the curriculum offer available to our young people. Using labour market information, alongside projected and actual leaver data, we knew that we needed to offer alternative opportunities to support all our young people into positive destinations.

We worked closely with our partners including Ayrshire College, DYW Ayrshire, East Ayrshire Council and Prince's Trust to devise new vocational pathways.

Our aims:

- Courses should reflect labour market information.
- Qualifications should be valued by local and national employers.
- There should be a focus on progression and skills development.
- Young people should become more employable.
- Young people should secure positive destinations.

We currently have four pathways running which cover Hospitality, Early Education & Childcare, Sport & Fitness and Cycle Maintenance. Within each pathway, there are a number of other awards such as Steps to Work, Events Management and Employability, to name a few.

Courses begin with taster sessions in S2 and S3, followed by courses at SCQF levels 4-7 in the Senior Phase, with progression on offer each year.

Pupils gain industry-recognised qualifications, which help them go onto full-time college or university courses, as well as full-time employment.

Early Education & Childcare Pathway

Progression Pathway

| S2/3 Childcare **Vocational Burst** | S4 Early Education & Childcare Level 4 | S5 Early Education & Childcare Level 5 | S6 Social Services, Children & Young People (FA) Level 6 |

Good practice has been our one-year level 6 Foundation Apprenticeship in Social Services (Children & Young People), including a work placement supported by East Ayrshire Council. Every pupil who completed this course last session is currently in a positive destination, following either level 7 HNC at College or attending University to do Primary Teaching.

"I chose the Foundation Apprenticeship as I really want to work with children. I did the level 4 course in S4 then went to Ayrshire College to do level 5 as part of the school-college offer. I really enjoyed the FA as I got the chance to learn from assessors who also work in ECCs and who have current knowledge and experience. I have gained a place on the level 8 HND at College and I am looking forward to starting."

(Foundation Apprentice 2020-21)

Sport & Fitness

This session, we have started up a level 7 HNC in Sport & Fitness, supported by Ayrshire College. We have fifteen pupils doing this course, which leads onto level 8 HND or second year on some university courses.

"I decided to take the HNC because of the opportunities that it can offer me when I leave school. I did Higher PE last year and did well. I'm enjoying getting to know the college lecturers and learning at a more advanced level although I know I have the support of the school if I need it. By doing this course, I can move onto college or university and go into coaching or P.E. teaching. I've not decided yet but this will allow me to keep my options open."

HNC Student 2021

SCQF Ambassadors

Our SCQF Ambassadors are trained each year and they play a key part in ensuring the validity of these courses is clear. They speak to pupils and parents about our whole-school offer and ensure they flag up the levels of each course, highlighting progression pathways.

Ambassadors show how meaningful these courses are and we often have young people speaking to parents and pupils about their own experiences to highlight the positive impact they have had.

The Results

We are now three years into our journey and progression has been quick yet steady thanks to the ongoing support of our partners. Our leavers' destinations have improved each year and we have seen a huge improvement not only in pupil attainment but also in pupil confidence, which has flourished due to them having a real sense of achievement and pride in their work. We have achieved Bronze level SCQF School Ambassador status and hope to meet the criteria for Silver level later this year.

For more information on Kilmarnock Academy [visit the website](#).