

29 September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2026, HM Inspectors published a letter on Drummond School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and The Highland Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and young people, and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection and at other aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children and young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

In recent months, school leaders and staff have started making positive changes to improve the work of the school. They should keep prioritising these improvements, with help from the local authority, and by strengthening communication with parents.

Overall, the school has made insufficient progress in this area.

Following the initial inspection, staff focussed on improving learning and teaching across the school. Their work on what they termed 'remarkable learning' is beginning to improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching in most lessons. Senior leaders, with the support of the local authority, need to continue to support teachers to build on this positive start. Teachers need to ensure that all children and young people experience high quality learning which is motivating and engaging.

A number of local authority staff have been deployed into the school. These staff are supporting teachers by delivering professional learning in a range of areas including children and young people's individualised plans and risk assessments. Local authority staff have helped school staff to review and improve the quality of most children's plans. All children and young people now have a pupil information file detailing their needs and the plans in place to support them. Senior leaders, with the support of the local authority, now need to support staff to capture children and young people's needs within these plans more effectively. They need to ensure that all staff are fully aware of these plans and use them to support each child appropriately. As a matter of priority, a few children and young people's risk assessments need to detail clearly any risks they may face in school and how they will be supported by staff in order to minimise this risk. Children and young people's risk assessments need to be explicit as to the actions required of staff to ensure children and young people are safe at all times. Senior leaders need to check the quality of all children's plans regularly and ensure that all staff undertake the actions required to help meet the needs of children and young people and keep them safe.

Following the initial inspection, the acting headteacher held a few meetings with the Parent Council. From April 2026, the senior management team and interim acting headteacher established regular parent drop-ins to allow parents to speak directly to them regarding their child. Senior leaders need to re-establish regular, purposeful meetings with the Parent Council. They should ensure that the Parent Council contribute meaningfully to improving the work of the school. The local authority needs to support the incoming headteacher to build, establish and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with parents. The acting principal teachers have surveyed parents to gather their views on teachers' daily communications about their child's learning. Senior leaders now need to use parents' views to inform how they share children's learning with them.

Staff have developed a communication strategy which makes clear what information the school will share with parents and how they will share it. Senior leaders, with the support of the local authority, now need to embed this guidance to help rebuild parents trust in the school. As part of the communication strategy, senior leaders need to ensure that all staff respond timeously and appropriately to parents when they contact the school.

With support from the local authority, senior leaders need to ensure all children experience consistent high-quality learning and teaching across all classes. This includes reducing disruptions caused by staffing changes and giving teachers enough time to plan and prepare lessons. Senior leaders should support teachers to use outdoor and community spaces more often to make learning more engaging for all children and young people.

Overall, the school has made initial positive steps in addressing this area for development.

Senior leaders have developed a draft learning and teaching policy, which outlines the Drummond 'remarkable lesson' approach. They have provided teachers with feedback to help improve the quality of children and young people's lessons. Senior leaders need to build on this, ensuring their feedback to teachers is always meaningful. This should include feedback on how well teachers plan lessons. Senior leaders should also ensure that children and young people's views on learning and teaching are sought and reflected upon.

Staffing in the school has become more stable in recent weeks which has had a positive impact on children and young people's learning experience. It is crucial that senior leaders and local authority officers continue to ensure that staffing levels are appropriate to drive improvement in learning and teaching across the school. As a result of having more time to plan and prepare, teachers have started to introduce fresh methodologies into classroom practice. For example, in a few classes, teachers are delivering lessons that are more engaging and motivating for autistic learners. Senior leaders should continue to support teachers to plan learning which builds better on children and young people's interests and aspirations.

In the majority of classes, teachers provide activities that are at the correct level of difficulty for most children and young people. As a result, children and young people engage well in their learning. Teachers need to ensure that all children and young people are appropriately challenged in their learning.

With support from the local authority, senior leaders should ensure that children and young people's wellbeing is prioritised. They must ensure that all children and young people have appropriate plans in place to meet their wellbeing and additional support needs fully. As a priority, senior leaders now need to involve parents and partners in reviewing children and young people's plans.

The school has made insufficient progress in this area.

Staff are continuing to develop their understanding of learners' wellbeing. Almost all staff are promoting positive relationships in classes, the school and the wider community. All staff now need to develop a deeper understanding of their roles in promoting and protecting children and young people's wellbeing.

School staff, in partnership with the local authority, are reviewing pupil information folders. These contain a range of plans for each child and young person which target their learning, medical, health and care needs. Not all children and young people's plans are of the same quality. As a next step, the school now needs to develop these plans further to ensure all children and young people's plans are of consistently high quality. Teachers need to ensure that contributions from parents and partners are gathered and prioritised appropriately. Children and young people's views should be sought to promote their involvement in the decisions that affect them.

Senior leaders have developed support plans for those learners who have been identified as having 'unmet needs.' Targeted support strategies are now in place to minimise instances of dysregulated behaviour. The school and local authority note a decrease in reporting of dysregulated behaviour as a result. Senior leaders need to develop a better system for gathering and tracking appropriate data on incidents. Senior leaders try to provide staff and learners with opportunities to debrief and learn from incidents. However, the continuing challenges in staffing in the school make this process difficult to follow timeously. Almost all partners report they face challenges working with the school. Staff now need to include all partners fully in planning and reviewing approaches which place learners' wellbeing at the centre of the work of the school.

Teachers should develop robust approaches to check the quality of progress children and young people make over time for all curriculum areas. They should work to raise children and young people's overall attainment.

Overall, the school has made insufficient progress in this area for development.

The school needs to continue to raise children and young people's attainment across the broad general education (BGE) and senior phase.

In the BGE, teachers check most children and young people's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing twice annually. Their checks require further development as they remain at an early stage. Teachers do not yet use a consistent approach to tracking and monitoring children and young people's progress. Senior leaders need to plan regular



meetings with teachers to discuss learners' progress and attainment. Collectively, they need to ensure that data on children and young people's progress informs next steps in their learning.

In the senior phase, teachers are beginning to strengthen how they check young people's progress within National Qualifications. This is providing a clearer overview of attainment. Almost all young people in the senior phase are working towards achievement of National 1 or National 2 qualifications. Senior leaders now need to ensure that learners have greater choice of subjects within their senior phase curriculum.

Across the school, teachers use a wide variety of assessments to evaluate children and young people's skills and abilities. However, there is a lack of consistency in assessment approaches. As a result, information about children and young people's attainment levels is not always accurate, especially during points of transition. Senior leaders now need to work with staff to establish consistent approaches to assessment across the school. They need to ensure that pupil support assistants are more fully involved in assessment processes.

Senior leaders should ensure that all children and young people receive an equitable educational experience.

Overall, senior leaders have made insufficient progress in this area for development.

A few children and young people remain on part-time timetables for extended periods of time. While around half of these learners have experienced an increase in their time in education, too many do not receive their full entitlement to education. Senior leaders must prioritise action to reduce the use of part-time timetables.

Additionally, there are too many instances of class closures. These occur when senior leaders consider levels of staffing insufficient to meet learners' needs or keep them safe, either due to absence or unfamiliarity between staff and learners. In these situations, families are informed the evening before and children and young people are expected to remain at home. This limits children and young people's access to learning and leads to inequity. All children and young people who can attend full-time should receive their full entitlement to education, without unplanned class closures. Senior leaders, supported by the local authority, should minimise, and where possible eliminate, class closures through more robust contingency planning.

**HMIE**

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland
Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh airson Foghlam ann an Alba

What Happens Next?

The school has made insufficient progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with The Highland Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within three months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with The Highland Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Graeme Gordon
HM Inspector

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.