

29 September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In July 2025, HM Inspectors published a letter on Turriff Academy. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Aberdeenshire Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to 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. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

There is a significant need to improve strategic leadership at all levels in order to secure positive outcomes for young people. All staff should develop the approaches used to plan, implement and evaluate school improvements.

Overall, supported effectively by the local authority, the school community has worked well together to make good progress in this area. The headteacher is enthusing staff to lead change and is clarifying successfully the direction of planned improvement across the school.

Senior leaders have strengthened the clarity and shared ownership of the school's vision and values. They use these increasingly well to inform decision-making and to underpin improvement actions. Senior leaders have implemented more focused, effective approaches to school improvement. Leadership across the school is developing well, with senior leaders modelling to staff how to identify and progress planned change. Staff increasingly feel empowered and supported in their roles, with a greater number leading effective change. The Parent Council is also taking a greater role in school improvement.

Senior leaders are developing the right conditions for change. They are supporting staff well to gather and use a range of self-evaluation evidence to inform and review planned change. This is helping staff to understand their role in identifying and taking forward whole-school priorities. Senior leaders support staff effectively through well-considered professional learning and leadership opportunities which are aligned well to achieving improvement priorities. This work is improving outcomes for young people. Senior leaders have strengthened their approaches in how they monitor improvement work across the school. Consequently, there is now greater consistency in practice across the school, and this is having a positive impact on young people's experiences.

Staff should build on this progress by developing further the quality of all areas of improvement. Senior leaders should support middle leaders to set clearer measures of success so that the impact of improvements can be evaluated more effectively. While

leadership opportunities for young people in the senior phase are well developed, young people in S1-3 need meaningful and impactful leadership roles. Senior leaders acknowledge the need to develop further their approaches to show young people how their views and feedback have helped to bring about change.

Staff should continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching. They should develop their approaches to assessment and how they measure young people's progress over time. Senior and middle leaders need to develop the confidence of staff in making accurate judgements of young people's achievement of a level.

Overall, staff continue to make appropriate progress in improving learning, teaching and assessment. Senior leaders and teachers have worked collaboratively to embed the 'Turriff Lesson' across faculties, resulting in a more consistent structure to learning. These improved approaches are helping young people to understand better their learning. The increasing and impactful use of digital technology is enhancing further young people's learning. Most teachers are developing confidence in using national guidance to plan and assess learning.

Staff collaboration, both within the school and across the local authority, is strengthening the reliability of their judgements about young people's progress. Senior leaders have implemented stronger approaches to monitoring young people's progress in learning. Staff are using information from these systems increasingly well to identify and support more consistently young people who are at risk of not making appropriate progress in learning. Senior leaders and staff have strengthened approaches to identifying and supporting young people's additional support needs. This is leading to most young people feeling supported in their learning.

Staff should build on the positive progress already made by further strengthening the impact of their learning, teaching and assessment strategy. Senior leaders should continue to identify and share the most effective practice in learning and teaching across the staff team. They should continue, as planned, to focus on improving the pace and levels of challenge in lessons so that all learners benefit from consistently high-quality experiences. Staff should continue to work with colleagues beyond the school and embed systems to monitor young people's progress over time. Senior leaders should monitor regularly staff's use of information about young people's additional support needs to ensure it is used consistently and effectively.

Staff need to develop their understanding of their statutory duties relating to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Senior leaders need to improve how staff at all levels meet the needs of young people who require additional support with their learning.

Overall, senior leaders have made strong progress in improving wellbeing, inclusion and support for young people. Senior and middle leaders are developing effective approaches to improve young people's wellbeing. Most young people feel safe in school and are supported effectively with their wellbeing. Staff use information from wellbeing surveys to help them to respond better to young people's needs. Senior leaders and pastoral staff have improved learning about wellbeing through the personal and social education programme and CREW.



As a result, young people now find this learning more relevant and helpful. Staff across the school have improved the processes for identifying and addressing young people's wellbeing and learning needs. Most parents are increasingly confident in how the school supports young people who require additional support. Senior leaders and staff have improved successfully how they support and promote young people's attendance. Overall, these improvements are supporting young people to feel included across the school.

Senior leaders should continue, as planned, to build on this positive progress by improving the consistency of meeting young people's additional support needs. They should continue to implement their new anti-bullying strategy to improve the school community's understanding of how staff respond to bullying. Senior leaders should continue to support all staff to build consistently positive relationships across the school.

Staff need to raise young people's attainment across S1-3 and with identified aspects of the senior phase.

Overall, senior leaders and staff continue to improve young people's attainment. Senior leaders have introduced clearer systems, pathways and interventions which are improving attainment, particularly in the senior phase. Staff use more reliable and valid data about young people's progress to identify and support more effectively those who are not making expected progress. This is raising attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy. In the senior phase, staff are increasing learning pathways to support a greater number of young people. In addition, staff are improving how they recognise and celebrate achievement. This is helping to motivate young people and build their sense of belonging to the school.

Senior leaders should embed these improved processes to ensure their long-term impact. They should continue to support staff to use data well to plan effective interventions for young people. Senior leaders should also use data to confirm the ongoing reliability and validity of their assessment judgements and to monitor young people's progress over time. There is also a need to finalise and implement the numeracy strategy fully to ensure a consistent approach across the school. While attainment is improving, senior leaders and staff need to focus on young people who may face additional barriers or disadvantage as they are not yet attaining as well as peers nationally.

Senior leaders should continue to embed these improved approaches to demonstrate sustained raised attainment for all young people over time.

What happens next?

The school has made good progress since the original inspection. We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Aberdeenshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Patricia Cameron
HM Inspector

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