

8 September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2025, HM Inspectors published a letter on Castlebrae Community High School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and The City of Edinburgh 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 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 young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Continue to raise the attainment of young people at all stages across the school, in line with national expectations. Senior leaders should ensure that they make available increased, relevant opportunities for more young people to consider school-based pathways to stay on in the senior phase.

Overall since the initial inspection, senior leaders and teachers are making positive progress to ensure this area of the school's improvement work can improve at pace. They are developing and embedding robust systems to allow them and teachers, to monitor closely young people's progress. This is beginning to show signs of improved outcomes for young people at all stages. These important developments require more time to fully demonstrate improved outcomes for young people.

Middle leaders and teachers are clearer about their role in improving whole-school attainment. They are quickly becoming more confident in their use of more reliable data to monitor young people's progress, as well as putting in place appropriate interventions to support them to achieve more. Moving forward, senior leaders should continue to improve young people's attendance at school. This is a key driver in improving attainment and achievements. This will also help young people engage with increased challenge that is more aligned to national expectations at each stage.

Since the initial inspection, young people's attainment in literacy and numeracy is showing signs of improvement in S1 to S3. There are improved approaches to monitoring young people's progress which are supporting improved attainment. By the end of this session, almost all young people achieved CfE third level or better in literacy. Most young people now achieve in line with local authority and national figures. Attainment at CfE 4th level by the end of S3 is also improving. This continued, should allow more young people to be successful at nationally expected levels into and beyond S4.

Continue to develop approaches to promoting high quality learning and teaching and assessment across all areas of the school. This includes continuing to develop consistently robust approaches to monitoring young people's progress in their learning. Staff need to capitalise on opportunities to look outwards and benefit from best practice nationally.

There are positive and respectful relationships between young people and staff. This is contributing to calm and purposeful learning environments in almost all areas of the school. This is supporting almost all young people to participate well in their learning. A few young people exhibit behaviours that result in low level disruption to learning, this includes the misuse of mobile phones across the school. The City of Edinburgh Council's recent directive on the use of mobile phones in schools should support young people's' increased engagement in their learning.

Teachers are monitoring young people's progress more effectively by developing consistent procedures to check for understanding, for example. They should continue to use these approaches to gather information on young people's understanding and progress. This should help to inform next steps in their planning to meet the needs of all young people at all stages.

This session, senior leaders have developed a clear whole-school approach with staff to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school. Teachers now have a better understanding and language of high quality learning and teaching. As a result, young people now experience more consistent learning and teaching of an improved quality across the school. As planned, senior leaders and staff should continue to work collaboratively to improve further the quality of learning and teaching. They should continue to focus on providing young people with appropriate challenge in their learning at every stage. They should also continue to plan purposeful opportunities for teachers to look outwards at highly effective practice locally and nationally to support these improvements.

What happens next?

The school has made progress since the original inspection. We will ask for a report on progress within 18 months of the inspection. This report will inform any decision made by HMIE regarding further engagement. This may include another inspection visit. When such a decision is made, we will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action, agreed with The City of Edinburgh Council that we intend to take.

JohnPaul Cassidy
HM Inspector

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