

23 September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Elgin Academy. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Moray 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.

Senior leaders should ensure that all teachers improve their understanding and delivery of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. This will help to provide greater consistency, and raise aspirations, for young people across all curricular areas.

Staff have made clear progress in this area for improvement.

Staff have revised approaches to learning and teaching. Most teachers use a framework effectively to support improvements in the consistency and routines of learning across the school.

There is still considerable variety in the quality of learning and teaching across different subject areas. In the best lessons, teachers make effective use of approaches that ensure young people are fully engaged in their learning. Senior and middle leaders should now consider how best to share stronger practice more widely across the school. Staff in the learning and teaching working group also needs to consider how to involve further the wider staff, pupils and parents in this process.

Senior and middle leaders have prioritised professional learning for all staff to support better their understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers speak confidently about how these opportunities are beginning to support them to share effective practice within departments and across the school. Senior and middle leaders need to consider how to evaluate the impact of professional learning. They should ensure that it results in improvements to the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in individual classrooms and departments.

The majority of teachers are beginning to use a wider variety of approaches to measure young people's progress in their subject areas. Teachers should ensure that they use this information effectively to plan for learning that builds on what young people know.

Staff should meet the needs of all young people by ensuring tasks and activities are appropriate for all. This includes ensuring that tasks are set at the right level of difficulty for all young people to maximise progress in their learning.

Staff have made some progress in this area for improvement.

Most teachers demonstrate an awareness of the needs of young people who require additional support with their learning. Teachers have access to helpful information about young people's learning needs. This is supporting teachers to better support the needs of more learners. Senior and middle leaders along with support for learning staff need to ensure all staff make better use of information provided to help them plan learning that meets the needs of all young people. Teachers need to use consistently the information available to them on young people's learning needs to more effectively plan tasks and activities set at the right level of challenge.

Senior leaders should work together with staff to raise attainment for all young people with a particular focus on numeracy across the school. They need to ensure systems and processes are in place to help more young people attain a higher level of qualification from S4 to S6.

There has been limited progress made in this area for improvement.

There has been an improvement in attainment in literacy and numeracy for young people by the end of S3. Senior leaders have prioritised an additional period of English and mathematics to allow for focused literacy and numeracy support for young people in S1. This is being extended to S2 in session 2025/26. Senior leaders and staff in English and mathematics need to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of this approach.

Focussed tracking meetings are planned at key points throughout the session. Senior and middle leaders are able to use this information to identify young people not on track at an earlier stage. For those not on track, teachers need to consider how to adapt their approach to better meet learner's needs. For example, by adapting planned learning and teaching, offering more targeted support or, for a few young people, offering more appropriate learner pathways to meet their needs. Teacher's predicted grades indicates that overall attainment across S4-S6 should increase. However, previous teacher estimates have not been robust. Teachers should continue to improve the reliability of their predictions of young people's attainment.

Although there have been some improvements in attainment in the senior phase, it is too early to state with confidence that this area for improvement has been overtaken. There remains a need to improve attainment for young people in the senior phase. A focus on a raising attainment strategy has given staff a very clear direction on improving young people's attainment. This has increased options and courses for young people as they move through the senior phase. There remains potential for young people to attain better.

Senior leaders should continue to review what young people are learning across the school, particularly for young people in S4 to S6. They should consider carefully how well new courses being introduced are meeting the needs of young people and the value they add to young people's outcomes.

The school has made some progress in this area of development.

Senior leaders have considered ways to improve the attainment of young people across S4-S6. Young people have had a wider number of course choice options for session 2025/26. This is providing more appropriate courses for young people. It is too early to

evaluate the impact of this work. Senior leaders should, as planned, carefully monitor the uptake and success of these courses.

Senior leaders plan appropriately to review the Broad General Education (BGE) curriculum to ensure it supports the attainment of all young people. The planned review of the BGE curriculum should focus on continuity and progression, building more effectively on what young people have learned and achieved at primary school.

Senior leaders should work with staff, learners and parents to develop an agreed strategic plan for what young people learn across S1 to S6. This should link closely with the school's plans to raise attainment and articulate clearly the headteacher's ambitious vision for what all young people achieve at school. Senior and middle leaders now need to monitor closely the effectiveness of the changes planned for 2025/26 and ensure this result in improved attainment outcomes for young people.

What happens next?

The school has made insufficient progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Moray Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 18 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Moray 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.

Susan McDade
HM Inspector