

19 May 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Invergordon Academy. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and The Highland Council. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in February 2024. 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 which 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.

Address challenging staffing issues and improve young people's experiences in learning, teaching and assessment to ensure their learning needs are met effectively across all curriculum areas.

Staff have made significant progress in this area for improvement. Staff should continue to work on their improvements on this area. More time is required to demonstrate the impact of this work on improving attainment and achievement for young people.

Senior leaders have acted successfully to address previously identified staffing challenges. As a result, staffing arrangements are now more stable across the school, contributing to improved continuity in learners' experiences during the current academic session. Senior leaders have worked very effectively to integrate new staff swiftly and well into the school's shared vision for learning and teaching. This has supported consistency in delivering the shared understanding of the 'Invergordon Strong Lesson' Teachers have embedded expectations in learning and teaching well across the school.

Senior leaders have ensured a well-considered programme of professional learning has been developed to support staff to develop key aspects of learning and teaching. This includes a focus on assessment approaches, effective questioning, restorative and nurture-informed practices such as circle training, and the increased use of digital technology. These are supporting staff to enhance their approaches; however, there now needs to be developed greater consistency of quality of learning experiences across all classrooms. Staff have recognised the need to further improve the quality of feedback provided to learners. Staff are well placed to take this forward.

In an important next step, teachers need to address the pace of learning and challenge for all learners. In the majority of lessons, this pace and challenge requires improvement to ensure all learners are appropriately engaged and challenged. This will be an essential next step to support improved outcomes for young people.

Further develop systems for tracking and monitoring young people's progress and attainment. These should support staff in providing appropriate interventions that help young people to maximise their opportunities for success.

Staff have made positive progress in this area for improvement. At present their systems are supporting identified young people to better progress in their learning. However, there have been new tracking systems and approaches introduced and staff need to continue to develop these to support maximum positive impact on outcomes for a larger cohort of young people.

Senior leaders use the system to track and monitor the progress of individuals, or different groups of young people, over time. Senior and middle leaders should continue with developing a shared and consistent use of grades which estimate a young person's progress and grades which young people set as a target with their teachers. This should allow teachers to more accurately identify, and support and challenge different learners, as appropriate.

Senior leaders are aware that increasing young people's attendance is a key contributing factor to help raise attainment. A range of tailored supports are in place which have improved the attendance of identified young people.

The recording and tracking of interventions at all levels in the school is developing. An important next step for teachers will be to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions in improving outcomes for young people. This should support all staff to maintain a focus on helping young people to maximise their opportunities for success.

Raise attainment, especially in relation to young people's literacy and numeracy qualifications and their attainment in S4.

The school has made improvements in this area, especially with regard to successes around literacy and numeracy. There have been very significant challenges to improving attainment in 2024/25, in particular. School staff have addressed these well and there is evidence of some improvement in 2025/26 so far, as a result. However, staff require more time to ensure that positive work on improving learning and teaching is reflected across a wider range of attainment outcomes.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy in S1 to S3 has continued a broad pattern of improvement since the original inspection. As young people move through S4 to S6, there has been some inconsistency in their attainment in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders demonstrate that improved outcomes have been generally achieved in 2025/26 in literacy and numeracy. As planned, teachers should now focus on developing further opportunities to attain and work on quality of attainment in full course awards.

In S4 to S6, young people's attainment in a range of other measures has been inconsistent. There have been declines in attainment for young people in S4 and S6 in 2024/25. Senior leaders can account for factors affecting this.

Teachers have expanded recently the range of courses for which young people are being presented. Current presentations to these courses are generally successful. Senior leaders are hopeful that this may support improved overall outcomes for young people. All teachers should remain mindful of the importance of appropriate challenge to all young people in their learning, regardless of the course they are following. Across S4 to S6, staff should continue with plans around widening access to qualifications for identified young people, but also ensure they plan further stretch and challenge to others.

As school staff continue to develop their approaches to assessment, it will be essential that the local authority engages in more robust and meaningful support and challenge with the school to more accurately help them benchmark progress and evaluation of young people's attainment.

What happens next?

The school has made further 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/setting within 18 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 M Brown
HM Inspector

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