

Summarised inspection findings

Oldmachar Academy

Aberdeen City Council

3 February 2026

Key contextual information

School Name: Oldmachar Academy
Council: Aberdeen City Council
SEED number: 5246237
Roll: 996

Oldmachar Academy is a non-denominational, comprehensive secondary school located in Bridge of Don, Aberdeen. There are five primary schools in the cluster: Danestone, Forehill, Glashieburn, Greenbrae, and Middleton Park. The headteacher has been in post for four years. She is supported by five depute headteachers, including one acting depute headteacher.

Attendance is generally above the national average. Exclusions are in line with the national average. In September 2024, 8.1% of young people were registered for free school meals. In September 2024, the majority of young people lived in SIMD 9 and 10. In September 2024, the school reported that 46.1% of young people had additional support needs.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher is very highly regarded and trusted by young people, staff, parents and partners. She has set a clear, strategic direction for the school based on a relentless focus on improving outcomes for young people. Young people and staff have a strong understanding of the school vision of 'Achieving Excellence Together' and the values of Compassion, Ambition, Respect and Equality (CARE). This underpins a positive school ethos based on respectful relationships. The headteacher, ably supported by senior and middle leaders, has empowered an effective staff team to collaborate effectively to take forward school improvement priorities.
- Young people discuss the school values confidently and how they relate to their learning and development. Staff and young people in the senior phase support each new S1 cohort to ensure they understand fully the values during their transition to secondary school. Senior leaders review the vision and values regularly with young people and staff to ensure they remain relevant to the school community.
- Senior leaders identify school improvement priorities through a well-planned approach to self-evaluation. They gather views from a range of stakeholders to reflect on progress in each school improvement plan (SIP) and to identify future improvement priorities. Senior leaders should consider how to increase the number of parents and partners who participate in these self-evaluation activities, including the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).
- Middle leaders, in collaboration with staff, identify improvement priorities to inform faculty improvement plans (FIPs). These are designed to align clearly with the SIP priorities while also having a specific focus on activities that will drive improvement within the faculty. Staff are actively involved in ongoing self-evaluation and agreeing priorities for improvement. This motivates them to lead improvement priorities and drive change across the school. Almost all staff actively participate in working groups and teacher learning communities which are fully aligned to school and faculty improvement priorities.
- Young people's views are sought extensively across the school to support school improvement planning. Most young people feel that their views are valued but they are not always clear about how the school takes their views into account. Staff should continue to embed their approach of 'you said, we did' to ensure that all young people fully understand how they are influencing school improvement.

- Middle leaders feel empowered to lead change in their faculties and support each other effectively through weekly meetings. Depute headteachers meet regularly with their link faculty heads to support them with improvement activities. Faculty heads ensure that progress on improvement activities is reviewed regularly. This is leading to improvement activities being completed on time and priorities being address within agreed timeframes.
- Senior leaders recently re-evaluated opportunities for young people to take on leadership roles in the school. A few young people from across the school contribute to school improvement and ethos through leadership roles such as School Captains, Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) and CARE ambassadors. A few young people from across all year groups have responsibility for promoting the school values actively. Young people from all year groups are involved in a range of other leadership opportunities across the school. This includes introducing and leading co-curricular clubs and activities. Senior leaders should now consider how to increase activities that will support young people at all stages to develop leadership skills and use them to support school improvement. Young people across all year groups are ready and willing to take on important leadership roles.
- Senior and middle leaders support staff effectively to implement change at a manageable pace. They ensure that career long professional learning is underpinned by their school vision, mapped to the school priorities. For example, improvements in learning, teaching and assessment have been well supported by a range of in-house professional learning activities. This coherent and strategic approach to building staff capacity supports all staff to improve their practice. As a result, almost all teachers state that they are supported to engage in professional learning which enables them to reflect on and improve their practice. Most teachers and staff feel that they are encouraged and given the opportunities to learn and share practice with colleagues outwith school.
- Senior and middle leaders carry out a range of effective quality assurance procedures to ensure improvement activities lead to improved outcomes for young people. Staff need to review the actions being taken to support the progress of improvement priorities more readily. They should be prepared to adapt their approach to ensure it achieves the positive outcomes sought.
- Senior leaders demonstrate a clear, strategic understanding of local and national Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) priorities. Senior leaders with responsibility for DYW meet key partners regularly. Key staff from across the school work to progress DYW priorities. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of partnerships since 2023. Staff's understanding of DYW and labour market intelligence has improved because of professional learning delivered by Skill Development Scotland (SDS). Senior leaders and staff work well with partners to ensure a wide range of pathways and options are available.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Staff and young people have developed very positive relationships and this has led to a calm and productive atmosphere across the school. Almost all members of the school community exemplify the school values of compassion, ambition, respect and equity. The values underpin practice across all faculties. Young people understand the values very well. In almost all lessons, there is a highly purposeful learning environment where young people are motivated and engage very well.
- In almost all classes, almost all young people focus well on their learning and remain motivated as they complete their work. In a few classes, a few young people engage in low-level off-task behaviour. This typically occurs when the pace of learning is too slow. Where this occurs, almost all staff respond effectively and sensitively and young people's learning is not adversely affected. The school's effective policy on mobile phones is one of the ways that teachers ensure that young people are prepared and ready to learn.
- Senior and middle leaders have supported staff very effectively to have a sustained focus on pedagogy across the school. Staff at all levels have collaborated on working groups and teacher learning communities, based on the principles of 'plan, teach, reflect'. As a result, teachers are increasingly confident in their understanding of high-quality learning and teaching. Teachers have gathered the views of young people to support this work. Staff, support colleagues through well-chosen and relevant professional learning. Almost all young people speak very positively about the increasing consistency in the quality of their learning experiences. Staff currently identify and share highly effective practice in learning, teaching and assessment.
- Most teachers plan appropriately challenging and enjoyable learning for young people. They have a thorough understanding of young people's learning needs. They put in place adjustments to support learners to overcome barriers and make appropriate progress. Almost all teachers create opportunities for young people to work individually and collaboratively. Almost all young people feel that their teachers know them very well and provide them with work at the right level of difficulty to enable them to make strong progress.
- Staff, young people, parents and partners have collaborated to create a set of skills for learning, life and work. In almost all lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning and the skills young people are developing. This helps young people to relate their learning to real-life contexts, such as the world of work. As a result, almost all young people can express clearly how they are developing skills that will be useful to them within and beyond school. Young

people receive clear advice from almost all teachers about how they can be successful in their learning.

- Almost all teachers have a clear structure to their lessons. There is scope for a minority staff to consider how reducing the amount of time spent on each starter activity would increase the overall pace of learning. In almost all lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Teachers use questioning well to check young people's understanding. In a minority of classes, teachers use questioning skilfully to support young people to develop their higher order thinking skills. As planned, teachers should continue to develop effective classroom methodology, such as the use of plenaries to check young people's understanding and progress during lessons. A few teachers empower learners to select their preferred method of receiving feedback, including through digital resources. Almost all young people feel that teachers know them well and provide feedback which supports them very effectively to make progress.
- Almost all teachers use a digital platform confidently to enable young people to access learning from home. Young people appreciate how this enables them to catch up on any work they have missed, to access resources and to revisit previous learning tasks for revision. A few teachers use digital technology highly effectively to enable young people to demonstrate their learning and to meet learners' needs. Senior leaders and teachers are now well placed to build on these examples of digital technology supporting motivating learning experiences.
- Almost all staff benefit from the guidance and expectation provided by the school's assessment policy. Teachers speak highly of the impact of the 'plan, teach, reflect' cycle and how this is having a positive impact on young people's engagement in learning. Almost all teachers assess young people's progress very well. Almost all teachers use appropriate formative assessment strategies to support almost all young people to engage more fully in learning activities. This enables teachers to check for understanding and responsively adapt teaching strategies. In the broad general education (BGE), teachers use a range of assessment evidence to plan learning and consider learners' progress in line with expectations as set out in a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Staff have established approaches to ensure that they have a shared understanding of standards. In the senior phase, teachers have a well-developed understanding of the assessment standards required for National Qualifications (NQs). Teachers across most subject areas undertake duties for the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and support faculty colleagues to understand national standards. Teachers work with colleagues from partner schools to increase their confidence in assessment judgements.
- Teachers plan effectively to provide coherent programmes of learning in the BGE and senior phase. In the BGE, teachers are using CfE experiences and outcomes and national Benchmarks to create comprehensive programmes of learning. In the strongest examples, a few teachers consider very well how young people's experiences in the BGE links to pathways in the senior phase. Increasingly, staff are embedding the use of the school's skills framework in both the BGE and senior phase.
- All teachers track and monitor the progress that young people are making in their learning towards agreed individual targets. This includes young people who may need additional support with their learning. Senior and middle leaders make very effective use of this information to identify individuals who are not making expected progress. They work with class teachers to identify appropriate interventions to support these young people to get back on track. Young people in the senior phase benefit from twice termly individual learning

conversations about their progress with their teachers. They value these discussions as they support them to reflect more fully on their learning and progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders have developed a well-considered the transition programme for young people as they move from primary to secondary school. There is a well-planned project in place with a minority of faculties. A few young people experience a well-planned and effective enhanced transition offer which is supporting them as they transition into S1. Enhanced transitions are supported well by a transition teacher who works across cluster schools.
- Teachers develop BGE courses in line with CfE expectations. Young people choose from a series of masterclasses at the end of S1 and S2. Young people benefit from the clear focus on skills development through masterclasses. They are developing well their team working and communication skills. Young people in S3 experience a wider achievement offer including accreditation through a range of activities. A few young people, who require additional support with their learning, benefit from individualised learning pathways throughout the BGE.
- Young people receive their entitlement to modern language learning as part of the Language Learning in Scotland 1+2 approach in S1 and S2 only. A few young people receive their entitlement to learning a modern language in S3 if they choose to study French or Spanish. Young people receive their entitlement to religious and moral education. Young people receive two periods of high-quality physical education until the end of S4.
- Young people are supported well by pastoral staff as they make pathway choices. Support includes helpful pathway planning information events, conversations with teachers, and advice from SDS. Young people articulate well the pathways available to them. Those in the senior phase confirm that pathway decisions were well informed and they are supported to make appropriate choices.
- Senior leaders and teachers have revised the senior phase curriculum, offering a more comprehensive and extensive range of courses to enhance progression opportunities. This provides greater challenge for learners, is beginning to support improved attainment and is contributing to stronger stay-on rates. Curriculum planning reflects labour-market intelligence, regional skills assessments and employer feedback. As a result, pathways are aligned with local economic trends and support clear progression into key growth sectors.
- Young people in the senior phase access programmes across multiple establishments, broadening choice and increasing the flexibility of senior-phase pathway planning. The expansion of the curriculum offer to include more vocational courses is successfully meeting the needs of more young people.
- Teachers share a clear commitment to developing young people's literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as a responsibility of all. Collegiate working is supporting a shared understanding across staff of expectations about the learning, teaching and assessment of literacy and numeracy. Teachers' planning includes explicit reference to ways that lessons develop young people's literacy and numeracy and support wellbeing.
- The school has a well-resourced library. It is a welcoming, nurturing space for young people. The librarian works with teachers to support the planning of engaging learning activities.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders, staff and partners have worked well together to develop effective strategies to engage parents. These events are strengthening relationships between parents and staff and are helping parents to support their child more effectively with their learning.
- Almost all parents feel that staff are caring and supportive of children and young people. Most parents feel comfortable contacting the school if they have any concerns or questions. Parents feel that staff know young people very well and that staff are ambitious for all young people to do their best.
- The Parent Council is highly supportive of the headteacher and the wider work of the school. They are involved in supporting the school by fundraising to support a range of well-considered activities.
- Senior leaders consult with the Parent Council when agreeing the school's improvement priorities and use of Pupil Equity Funding. Parents feel that their views are considered and make a difference.
- Senior leaders should continue with plans to involve more parents and partners fully in supporting school improvement.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Staff have created a well-considered whole-school Wellbeing Strategy. This strategy ensures that all young people are included and that differences are valued and celebrated. As a result, young people's wellbeing lies at the heart of the school. They thrive in a caring and inclusive learning environment.
- Senior and middle leaders use a very effective single system to track wellbeing and the impact of subsequent interventions. This tracker allows staff to monitor changes in individuals' wellbeing across a range of characteristics and identify trends in wellbeing outcomes. Senior and middle leaders use the survey data very responsively to consider individual, class, year group and whole-school interventions and actions to support wellbeing. This includes targeting mental health interventions to young people affected by grief and low self-esteem. Positive outcomes for young people have increased. Senior and middle leaders use the information to inform increasingly effective partnerships to support identified young people's needs. Senior and middle leaders are beginning to link their tracking of wellbeing with the tracking of attainment.
- Almost all staff and young people share a strong understanding of the wellbeing indicators. As a result, most young people identify well their own wellbeing needs and how to support them. Young people talk confidently about how to maintain positive relationships and how to keep healthy. Almost all young people feel safe at school. Staff make frequent and robust use of wellbeing information. They are very well supported by the successful shared language of wellbeing across the school community.
- Staff have worked collaboratively to ensure that lessons relating to wellbeing and personal development are well-planned, progressive and relevant. Almost all young people in pastoral classes in the BGE benefit from reflecting on their wellbeing, improving peer support and access to at least one trusted adult. This programme has a clear rationale and benefits from regular reviews to ensure and increase its relevance. Teachers of BGE pastoral classes also work effectively as a first level of guidance and support for young people. They use wellbeing and other information specific to individuals or classes very effectively to intervene or plan to support identified young people. In the senior phase, leaders at all levels have designed a progressive personal and social education programme which focuses on planning for choices and change, relationships and parenthood, personal finances and health and substance misuse. This programme supports young people to make decisions which positively impact their wellbeing. As planned, staff should continue to work with young people to review the ongoing

effectiveness and relevance of these programmes of learning. The use of these personal support classes to support young people's wellbeing and inclusion is a major strength of the work of the school.

- Staff are meeting their statutory duties very effectively in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. A very clear, collaborative and well-structured approach from senior and middle leaders supports staff well to meet these duties. Staff robustly and timeously review plans to support identified young people.
- Senior leaders use highly effective methods to track and monitor the attendance of all young people. Staff also use well-considered and effective whole school and individual strategies to highlight the importance of attendance and timekeeping. For example, regular and positive reinforcement in assemblies and personal support classes. Middle and senior leaders analyse frequently data to identify early any potential lapses in attendance or late coming. Robust and proactive approaches by staff have contributed well to overall attendance being sustained positively and incidences of lateness to class have reduced. A few young people with lower rates of attendance are supported very well to improve their attendance to school. This support includes outreach work, targeted support from guidance staff, and part-time timetables where appropriate.
- Staff take positive action to support identified groups of young people who may have barriers to their learning, such as care-experienced young people and young carers. Senior and middle leaders have established clear rationales which identify effectively how these groups of young people can be supported to improved opportunities and outcomes. These rationales include an appropriate range of interventions and actions which improve understanding among almost all staff of how they can help young people. Senior and middle leaders monitor effectively the progress of these young people and consider appropriate interventions. All care experienced young people are considered for a coordinated support plan. Staff are increasing almost all young people's understanding of different life experiences, such as being a young carer. This improved understanding had led to an increasing number of young people now identify themselves as young carers and receive appropriate support.
- Specialist support teachers and staff have led effective professional learning on support for young people with additional support needs (ASN) in their learning. This has resulted in a better understanding among almost all teachers of challenges faced by these young people. Teachers from all faculties have been involved in work to create inclusive teaching processes. Almost all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities relating to meeting the needs of all young people. These needs include those of the growing proportion of young people who speak English as an additional language (EAL), who are supported well to feel included in the school. Most EAL learners attain well. All staff are supported very well in their knowledge of identified young people's learning needs. Staff use high-quality information regarding young people's needs and appropriate strategies to accelerate their progress. Staff in the support for learning faculty establish positive and constructive learning environments. Collectively, these actions have resulted in almost all young peoples' needs being addressed in mainstream classrooms.
- Almost all staff have benefitted recently from professional learning about nurturing strategies. Senior and middle leaders plan to develop and implement a wider approach to nurturing across the school.

- Senior and middle leaders track and monitor progress and wellbeing robustly across the school for identified groups of young people. This process helps staff evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and supports, alter them accordingly and undertake additional actions if required. This robust approach is leading to improvements in attainment, attendance and participation for such identified groups. For example, most young people with additional support needs are securing positive and improving attainment outcomes.
- Senior and middle leaders review regularly reports of bullying, concerns expressed in wellbeing surveys and analysis of bullying incidents. This supports staff to be very responsive to address successfully specific concerns around bullying. In addition to dealing with individual young people, teachers of personal support classes successfully address common issues relating to specific classes or year groups. An impact of this approach is that bullying incidents are reducing in the school.
- Almost all young people feel that the school helps them to understand and respect other people. For example, most young people value highly celebrations of diversity such as the very popular annual Culture Day. This is improving young people's sense of inclusion and supporting increasing numbers of young people to learn about cultures other than their own.
- Young people develop their knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity well through the personal support curriculum and in other subject areas. For example, humanities. All faculties have been involved in professional learning to increase teachers' understanding of how their lessons and courses can better reflect a more diverse population and experiences. Young people would welcome greater opportunities to further extend their understanding of equality across different life experiences and protected characteristics. As planned, teachers should continue to review the curriculum to support this.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of young people through food in school. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy Broad General Education (BGE)

- In 2024/25, almost all young people achieved CfE third level or better in literacy and in numeracy by the end of S3. In 2024/25, most young people achieved CfE fourth level in literacy by the end of S3. Almost all young people achieved CfE fourth level in numeracy by the end of S3. These high standards have been maintained over time for literacy and since 2022/23 for numeracy.
- Teachers with responsibility for literacy and mathematics have developed appropriate moderation activities to ensure teacher professional judgements of young people's attainment in literacy and numeracy are robust. They work well with colleagues in cluster schools regularly on moderation activities. This is leading to a greater shared understanding of assessment levels. Senior leaders demonstrate through rigorous data analysis that assessment data for literacy and numeracy is reliable.

Senior Phase

Leavers

Literacy

- Performance in literacy is a positive picture. Most young people left school with SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in 2023/24. This is in line with the virtual comparator (VC) but is a decline from 2021/22 and 2022/23 when it was almost all young people. Most young people attained SCQF level 6 or better in literacy in 2023/24. This is significantly much higher than VC and in the preceding year.
- Most young people who require additional support left school with SCQF level 5 or better in literacy and the majority with SCQF level 6 in 2022/23 and 2023/24. There is an increased pattern of attainment at SCQF level 6 from 2019/20 to 2023/24.

Numeracy

- Performance in numeracy at SCQF level 5 has shown an improved pattern of attainment over from 2021/22 to 2023/24. Most young people left school with SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy in 2023/24. This is now significantly higher than the VC having previously been significantly lower in 2019/20 and 2021/22 and significantly much lower than the VC in 2020/21. A minority of young people left school with SCQF level 6 or better in numeracy in 2023/24. Performance in numeracy at this level has increased from 2019/20 to 2023/24. It was

significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24 after being significantly much lower or lower than the VC in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

- The majority of young people who require additional support left school with SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy from 2021/22 to 2023/24. A minority of young people who require additional support left school with SCQF level 6 or better in numeracy in 2022/23 and 2023/24. This has increased since 2020/21 when no young person with an ASN left with a numeracy qualification at SCQF level 6.
- Senior leaders use robust tracking to identify young people who are at risk of leaving school without a literacy or numeracy qualification that reflects their attainment. Appropriate and considered support is put in place for these young people. This approach is leading to improved outcomes for identified learners.

Cohorts

Literacy

- As young people move through the senior phase, most achieve SCQF level 5 or better in literacy at S4. Almost all young people achieve SCQF level 5 by S5 and S6. This is generally in line with the VC for these year groups at this level from 2022/23 to 2024/25. By S5 and S6, most young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy in 2024/25. There is an improving pattern of attainment at this level. For young people by S5 this measure is significantly much higher than the VC for 2024/25 having been significantly much lower than the VC in 2021/22. For young people who leave after S6, this measure has shown steady improvement since 2020/21 when it was significantly much lower than the VC. It is now significantly higher than the VC in 2024/25.

Numeracy

- As young people move through the senior phase in years 2023/24 and 2024/25, most young people achieve SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy at S4, by S5 and by S6. This is generally an improving pattern of attainment. At S4 in 2024/25, this measure is now significantly higher than the VC. By S5 and by S6 in 2024/25 this measure is in line with the VC for these year groups. As young people move into S5 and S6, there has been a steady increase in the number of young people attaining in numeracy at SCQF level 6 or better from 2019/20 to 2023/24. By S5 and S6 in 2024/25 the majority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in numeracy. This is significantly much higher than the VC in 2024/25 for S5 learners and is significantly higher than the VC for S6 learners. Senior leaders and those with responsibility for numeracy have made good use of tracking information to identify young people at risk of underachieving. Appropriate supports are put in place to ensure young people achieve the highest award possible for numeracy.

Attainment in national qualifications

- Attainment in National 5 (N5) English has been above the national average from 2020/21 until 2024/25. It is now in line with average national attainment. Higher English is consistently above average national attainment. There has been an increase in the number of young people being presented for both levels.
- Attainment in Higher and N5 Mathematics and N5 Applications of Mathematics is below the national average. Attainment in Higher Applications of Mathematics is above the national average. Those with responsibility for mathematics must consider how to improve the quality

of passes at this subject. The number of young people being presented for all these courses is above the national average.

- Teachers with responsibility for English and mathematics track and monitor attainment well. They ensure that those at risk of not achieving a pass at N5 are presented for National 4 awards.

Attainment over time

BGE and Senior Phase

- The school reports that by the end of S3, almost all young people achieve CfE third level or better in almost all curriculum areas out with literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. The school reports that by the end of S3, most young people achieve CfE fourth level or better in most curriculum areas. Senior leaders should continue with their planned programme of moderation activities with cluster schools. This will support teacher assessment judgements across the curriculum.
- Staff track and monitor young people's progression through the BGE. Teachers' professional judgements are increasingly reliable and improving over time.
- Senior leaders identified that senior phase learners would benefit from improved course choice pathways. More appropriate pathways that better meet the needs of learners has contributed to an increase in the number of young people staying on beyond S4.

Senior phase

Leavers

- Overall, average complementary tariff scores over the last five years demonstrate no clear pattern of attainment for most leavers. The performance of the lowest attaining 20% of leavers has been broadly in line with the VC from 2019/20 apart from 2022/23 when it was significantly higher than the VC. The performance of the middle attaining 60% of leavers has improved from being in line with the VC for all years from 2019/20 to 2022/23 to being significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24. The performance of the highest attaining 20% of leavers is in line with the VC for the last three years. This represents an improvement in attainment from 2020/21 when this was significantly much lower than the VC.
- Based on average complementary tariff scores, young people with ASN attain well and above the VC from 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Cohorts

- Young people's attainment, when compared using average complementary tariff scores, has broadly improved over the last five years for the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people. As learners progress through the senior phase, their attainment generally improves. Staff should continue to consider ways to further improve attainment for young people at S5 and S6.
- At S4, average complementary tariff scores for the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% are all significantly much higher than the VC in session 2024/25. This represents a strong pattern of attainment for all three cohorts over the past three years.

- By S5, average complementary tariff scores for the lowest 20% of young people are significantly higher than the VC in 2024/25. This represents an improvement in this measure having been in line with the VC in 2022/23 and 2023/24. The middle attaining 60% of young people have attained in line with the VC for the past two years having been significantly much lower than the VC in sessions 2022/23 and 2020/21. In the last five years from, 2020/21, attainment for the highest attaining 20% of young people has been in line with the VC.
- By S6, the average complementary tariff scores for the lowest attaining 20% of young people are in line with the VC in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This represents an improving picture against the VC having previously been significantly much lower than the VC in three out of the past five years. The middle attaining 60% of young people attained in line with the VC in 2024/25 having previously been significantly lower and significantly much lower than the VC in the previous four years. The highest attaining 20% of young people attained in line with VC in 2024/25. This represents improved attainment for this group as this figure had been significantly lower than the VC in the previous three years.

Breadth and depth

- Most young people achieved five or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better from 2021/22 to 2024/25.
- At S4, attainment at SCQF 5C or better has been broadly in line with the VC each year since 2022/23. Attainment at SCQF 5A or better is generally in line with the VC for most measures from 2022/23 to 2024/25. Attainment at three or more or five or more awards at SCQF 5A or better was significantly lower than the VC in 2024/25. This represents a decline in attainment as previously this measure had been in line with the VC in 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- Staff track and monitor young people's progress well. They are identifying young people at risk of underachievement at an early stage and use a variety of supports to address this. Senior leaders are confident that this will lead to improved outcomes for young people.
- By S5, attainment at SCQF 5C or better is broadly in line with the VC. Young people's attainment at SCQF level 6C or better was broadly in line with the VC for one or more, three or more and five or more awards at this level in 2023/24 and 2024/25. There has been a steady improvement in attainment from 2020/21 when these measures were significantly much lower than the VC. Attainment at SCQF level 6A or better has been in line with the VC for all measures over the past two years.
- At S6, attainment at SCQF 6C or better at one or more and three or more awards at this level is significantly lower or significantly much lower than the VC from 2020/21 to 2024/25. There has been no improvement in attainment at one or more awards in the past five years since 2020/21. For three or more awards, this figure has been broadly significantly lower than the VC over the same period. Attainment at five or more awards at SCQF 6C or better is in line with the VC in 2024/25. This is an improvement from session 2023/24 when this measure was significantly lower than the VC.
- Young people's attainment at SCQF level 7C or better for one or more awards is significantly lower or much lower than the VC over the last five years. There is no clear pattern of improved attainment at SCQF level 7.

- Most young people in S4 are presented for 7 National Qualifications. In 2024/25, a majority of young people in S4 gained 9 or more awards at SCQF level 5. Senior leaders should consider how much value these additional awards are contributing to the overall attainment of young people.
- Teachers should continue to focus on developing courses that support the needs of young people and raise attainment, especially for young people in S6.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people describe confidently how the five Oldmachar Skills helps them to progress through their learning journey and develop their skills both in and out of school. Young people use digital matrix codes to regularly update their skills profiles. This supports them to have respect for their own achievements and to take ownership of their learning. Senior leaders engage effectively with parents to gather additional information about young peoples' achievements and interests. Achievements are celebrated at events such as assemblies and through achievement certificates.
- As they progress through the school, young people increasingly take responsibility for their achievements whilst giving back to their local community. Many young people recognise the skills they are achieving through for example The Duke of Edinburgh's award, Youth Philanthropy Initiate (YPI) and volunteering. The annual Cultural Day is a well-attended event involving parental input. It celebrates diversity within the school community and promotes understanding and respect for different cultures. The event strengthens relationships between school and home and supports young peoples' achievements by sharing their heritage and learning journey.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic context of the young people and their families. The school's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation has been used to reduce the cost of the school day. Senior leaders have used PEF to support a number of aspects of school life. This session PEF has been allocated to specific projects. These projects are aimed at enhancing the co-curricular offer and working with targeted young people to re-engage with school. Senior leaders should ensure that each aspect of PEF is evaluated to include the outcomes on targeted groups of young people.
- Senior leaders should continue to track and monitor the attainment of specific groups of young people facing financial challenges but who are not in SIMD deciles 1 and 2. This would include, for example, young people who are in receipt of free school meals.
- Attainment for young people in SIMD 10 has been significantly lower in 2019/20 and each year from 2021/22/ to 2023/24. Senior leaders should consider how best to support these learners to ensure their attainment improves.
- Almost all young people who left school between 2019/20 and 2023/24 moved to an initial positive destination. This is generally in line with the VC for all year groups over this period. Most young people leave school to higher or further education. A minority move to employment from school while a few enter training programmes.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

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