

21 January 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Ellon Academy. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The positive and collaborative relationships developed well by the headteacher. Young people's learning is supported by a caring and inclusive environment.
- The increasing emphasis being placed on core values is supporting the school in promoting young people's expectations and wellbeing.
- Respectful, responsible and confident young people who are proud of their school and keen to learn. They are supported well by staff and almost all gain a place at university, college or employment on leaving school.
- Increasing numbers of young people attaining literacy and numeracy at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Aberdeenshire Council.

- Develop approaches to help the school to improve, which provide clear and achievable targets. These should be based on what the school is doing well and what it needs to do better.
- Continue to develop programmes and courses to promote challenge, provide flexibility and to meet the needs and aspirations of all learners. Senior leaders and partners should develop a strategy to implement fully the entitlements of the Career Education Standards.
- Develop a whole-school approach to improving the reliability of assessment information for S1 - S3. This should be supported by the development of a system which will allow a better understanding of young people's progress and achievement.
- Continue to implement and evaluate strategies to raise learners' attainment. Specifically, staff should continue to prioritise raising attainment in S5 and S6.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Ellon Academy

| Quality indicators | Evaluation |
|--|---------------------|
| Leadership of change | satisfactory |
| Learning, teaching and assessment | good |
| Raising attainment and achievement | good |
| Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion | good |
| Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale | |

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

<https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=2525>

What happens next?

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/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Kirsty Macnab
HM Inspector