

20 May 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Perth Academy. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Perth and Kinross 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 a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting young peoples' learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

The local authority should continue to work with the headteacher to stabilise school leadership and support school improvement further. All key stakeholders, including learners, should be engaged more effectively in agreeing improvement priorities.

The school have made progress in this area for development.

Senior leaders are driving forward change at pace across all areas of the school. The leadership at senior level within the school is now more stable. The senior leadership team currently comprises the headteacher and four depute heads. This stability is leading to important developments in the quality of teaching and learning in Perth Academy.

The initial inspection identified a need for leadership to be developed which included and involved everyone across the school community. Led by the headteacher, the senior leadership team are working together better to develop key aspects of the school's work through their strategic remits. Senior leaders should ensure they focus on further developing a collaborative culture where all members of the school community feel valued, empowered and respected. It is important that the school values are demonstrated by all members of this school community.

Middle leaders report that they feel empowered to develop and improve their departments and faculties. This includes through the addition of more robust approaches to monitoring and evaluating their work. In addition, middle leaders are more actively sharing good practice across the school.

Leadership by young people has improved since the initial inspection. The Pupil Voice leaders, Equalities group and Rights Respecting ambassadors are strong examples of where this is working well. Senior leaders should continue to develop this further in the school to ensure that all young people are consulted and involved in developing school improvement priorities, processes and policies which directly impact on them. Actions taken as a direct result of consultation should be clearer to young people. This will support all young people to recognise that their views are listened to and taken into account, strengthening their sense of belonging and pride in their school community.

Staff need to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the school. They should plan tasks and activities that are more motivating, relevant and set at the right level of difficulty for young people.

There has been good progress in this area for development since the initial inspection.

There has been a clear focus on improving the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school.

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) working group, in partnership with young people and parents, have developed 'Our Learning' - a Perth Academy approach to learning, teaching and assessment. This supports well improvements in the consistency and routines of learning. Young people and teachers speak confidently about this approach. They report that it is having a positive impact on the motivation and engagement of the majority of learners.

As part of 'Our Learning' the school has focused on improving how teachers share the purpose of learning with young people and check for understanding. Most teachers are now consistently using starters, the purpose of learning and how young people can recognise successful learning within a lesson. Most teachers are now more effectively supporting young people to better reflect on their learning.

Senior leaders and staff are at an early stage of ensuring lessons are planned carefully to take account of the needs of all young people. Too often young people in classes undertake the same tasks and activities when some young people require more difficult tasks. Teachers need to consider fully how they plan and provide learning activities that take better account of the needs of all young people, including those who require more challenge in their learning.

Senior leaders and staff should review approaches to improving wellbeing, attainment and achievement to enable all young people to maximise their potential and achieve success. All stakeholders should contribute to improving wellbeing for the whole school community.

There has been insufficient progress in the area of wellbeing.

The school's relationship policy is evident across the school and in most classes, relationships between staff and young people are positive. The school should now consider a range of strategies to ensure young people feel they are treated fairly and equitably. This may include a whole school focus on children's rights as part of their drive towards Gold, Rights Respecting Schools accreditation. A few young people are not yet demonstrating the school values in all classrooms.

The behaviour of a few young people in corridors and classrooms continues to cause concern to others. The recent pupil voice conference discussed this issue, and a 'Corridor Charter' has been drafted. This is yet to be launched, and senior leaders should use this and other strategies in consultation with all young people to address their concerns. It is important that staff continue their work to ensure a calm and purposeful environment across all areas of the school.

A minority of staff and young people continue to report that their wellbeing is not well supported. Senior leaders need to ensure that resources are used appropriately to support the wellbeing of staff and pupils.

A minority of staff are not yet fully aware of the needs of young people in their classes and their responsibilities in relation to meeting their needs. The online system to inform staff of the needs of young people and strategies to support them, should now be streamlined for teacher use. Senior leaders should ensure all staff are now more confident in how to better support all learners and monitor how this is leading to improved outcomes for young people.

Staff have engaged in training on wellbeing and agreed a shared understanding of the language of wellbeing. It is currently not evident that this is leading to successful outcomes for all young people. All staff need to be clearer about their responsibilities in ensuring the wellbeing of all. Senior leaders should ensure all staff robustly support the wellbeing of young people through their planning for learning.

There remains a need for improvements in attainment and achievement. Senior staff should consider how they support this improvement through an appropriate curriculum for equity and excellence.

The local authority should continue to support staff as they improve Gàidhlig and implement their vision for change. Young people should be encouraged further to continue with Gàidhlig (Gaelic) Medium Education as they move from primary to secondary stages and through the senior phase to gain qualifications. All staff across the school should play their part in developing a positive ethos for Gàidhlig that promotes equity and equality.

The school has made appropriate progress towards addressing this area of improvement.

The headteacher demonstrates positive commitment to continuing to develop and promote Gàidhlig Medium Education within Acadamaidh Pheairt - Perth Academy. The recent appointment of lead teachers for Gàidhlig primary and secondary schools within the local authority helps to provide a clearer vision for Gàidhlig Medium Education and Gaelic (Learners). The detailed improvement plan priorities are resulting in a clearer vision for this area of work. The local authority should continue to engage with the school to meet outcomes in the council's own Gàidhlig Language Plan.

Senior leaders involve all school staff in professional learning specific to Gàidhlig. As a result, teachers' understanding of the principles of Gàidhlig Medium Education has improved. They are aware of the statements for Gàidhlig in the General Teaching Council of Scotland's (GTCS) professional standards and acknowledge their responsibilities. A few teachers are beginning to promote an understanding of Gàidhlig into their subjects for example, through songs within Scottish music and creating Gàidhlig text within technologies. Gàidhlig lessons are being offered for interested staff. This promotes a more positive and inclusive Gàidhlig ethos throughout the school.

Senior leaders and teachers with responsibility for Gàidhlig work well together to implement relevant priorities within their department improvement plan. This is leading to positive

change and Gàidhlig improvements for young people within the school. Young people are proud of the increased visibility of Gàidhlig throughout the school. The school's vision and values have recently been rebranded, with Gàidhlig text included on posters displayed within classes. Children's rights are also displayed in Gàidhlig. Senior leaders should increase information about its Gàidhlig provision on the school's website and within the school handbook. This should include that the school's Gàidhlig provision serves the whole of the city, references the benefits of bilingualism, and details of the curriculum. There remains capacity for more young people to choose Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig Medium Education.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Perth and Kinross Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 23 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Perth and Kinross Council the details of this inspection and how the local authority is supporting improvement. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Teri McIntosh
HM Inspector