

4 February 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Harlaw 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.

- Young people in the school are articulate, motivated and keen to participate in the school's improvement.
- Senior leaders and pupil support staff, working with partners, support well those young people who benefit from specialist help with their learning.
- Most young people in the senior phase have access to a wide range of courses in National Qualifications, vocational learning and Open University modules. They benefit from a range of opportunities for achievement including youth award programmes and The Duke of Edinburgh Award. These help young people to become successful learners, gain leadership skills, improve their confidence and learn to work as part of a team.

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

- Streamline approaches to improvement so that self-evaluation activities clearly identify priorities which will make the biggest difference to outcomes for young people.
- Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment so that young people's experiences engage them and meet their needs. Develop more fully an ethos for learning with high expectations and mutual respect.
- Strengthen approaches to monitoring young people's progress across all subject areas so that staff at all levels have a clear overview of learners' progress. Continue to raise the attainment of young people at all stages.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#). 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 Harlaw Academy

Quality indicators	Evaluation
<b>Leadership of change</b>	<b>weak</b>
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Raising attainment and achievement</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion</b>	<b>weak</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a>	

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=2888>.

### What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. We will liaise with Aberdeen City Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within eighteen months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Aberdeen City Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

Jacqueline Nimmo  
HM Inspector