

14 May 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Portlethen 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.

- Most young people are motivated to learn and enjoy good relationships with staff and each other. This is leading to positive learning experiences across most of the school.
- Partnership working supports young people to develop skills leading to positive destinations. Young people are proud of their achievements and enjoy opportunities to show case these.

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

- Senior and middle leaders need to provide clear leadership and direction to support all staff in driving improvements in attainment.
- All staff need to work closely together to develop a shared understanding of what high-quality learning looks like. This includes creating a culture of high expectations so that young people achieve more.
- All teachers need to use information more effectively about how well young people are making progress in their learning to plan for groups and individuals. This should lead to learning that is set at the right level of challenge, so that more young people achieve the success of which they are capable.
- Senior and middle leaders, working closely with teaching staff, need to develop more consistent approaches to the ways they monitor and record how well young people are making progress, based on sound approaches to assessment. This will provide the basis of support that will enable all young people to achieve to their full potential.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using 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 Portlethen Academy

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
Raising attainment and achievement	weak
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: [Find an inspection report | Education Scotland](#).

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 Aberdeenshire Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within six months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Aberdeenshire 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 Gallagher
HM Inspector