

23 April 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Berwickshire High School. 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 enhanced provision department, which is very effective in meeting the needs of young people with severe and complex additional support needs. Highly personalised learning and teaching engages young people successfully and supports them to attain and achieve. The clear shared vision of staff is based on promoting independence, social inclusion, healthy attitudes and positive behaviours.
- The well-designed school facilities, supported by a striking outdoor setting, offer strong opportunities to develop creative learning activities across the school.

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

- There is an urgent need to improve leadership at all levels across the school. This includes engaging all young people, parents and staff in reviewing the vision, values and aims with a view of developing a strong identity, with clear attention given to the direction and expectations for Berwickshire High School.
- Senior leaders should ensure that, as a key priority, there is a whole school focus on creating a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment which is conducive to high quality learning. This strong focus should include fostering positive relationships across the school and ensuring that there is much greater consistency in the promotion of high expectations at all times with clear boundaries set.
- All staff should develop an agreed shared understanding of what high quality learning, teaching and assessment looks like and ensure they apply these standards consistently across the school at all times. Further development of approaches to tracking and monitoring young people's progress, especially in the broad general education, are needed. This will enable staff to put in place clearer next steps in learning for young people to enable them develop the skills and attributes needed for life and work.
- Staff should develop curriculum pathways, as already agreed, at all stages, including with partners, to promote challenge, provide more flexibility for learners and meet their needs and aspirations. The addition of well-considered vocational pathways is key to enable some young people to succeed. This will take account of national priorities and learner entitlements.
- The wellbeing indicators, such as being safe, nurtured, achieving, respected and responsible need to be embedded in the everyday work of the school. Young people need

support to understand their relevance, and to use them well to enable learners to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

- All staff should continue their work to raise standards of attainment and provide wider opportunities for achievement to improve outcomes for young people. This includes identifying those young people who may miss out, through taking part in few or no wider achievement activities.

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 Berwickshire High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	unsatisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
Raising attainment and achievement	weak
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	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:

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/scottish-borders/5647339>

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 Scottish Borders Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within a year of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Scottish Borders 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.

Aileen Monaghan
HM Inspector