

5 February 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Vale Of Leven 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 recently appointed headteacher is establishing a sense of direction for the school. His approachability, along with his presence in the learning environment, is beginning to engage staff more directly in taking forward improvements.
- Young people and staff benefit from positive relationships which are underpinned by high levels of care. A committed staff team offer a range of groups and clubs, which young people find motivating.
- Staff, working with partners, have developed a range of vocational pathways to meet the individual needs and aspirations of young people. These are helping young people secure employment and progress to further education on leaving the school. A very high-quality careers fair provides young people, and their parents, with first-hand information on a range of opportunities beyond school.
- There is effective support for identified groups of young people, both in the school and the communication base.

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

- Develop more effective, ongoing arrangements for self-evaluation which are integral to all of the school's work. Evidence gathered should inform the school's improvement processes and allow for planning of well-paced change.
- Information on attainment needs to be used in a more meaningful way to make well-timed improvements to the curriculum. This should result in all young people making the best possible progress. Prompt attention should be given to developing the curriculum to meet national expectations, with coherence in young people's learning as they move through the school.
- Build on the most effective practice to develop a shared understanding of the features of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers need to make better use of assessment to plan learning which meets the needs of individuals. There also needs to be increased pace and challenge. It would be useful to review how progress is reported to parents so that they have better quality information.

- Strengthen further the strategy for partnership working. Partners should have regular opportunities to work together with staff on identifying priorities for the curriculum, planning, evaluating and sharing experiences.
- Develop further the strategic overview of additional support needs to evidence more clearly that all young people who face barriers to their learning are making appropriate progress. There needs to a clearer focus on improving outcomes for care experienced young people and those with protected characteristics.

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 Vale Of Leven Academy

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
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/inspection-reports/west-dunbartonshire/8304831>

What happens next?

We will ask West Dunbartonshire Council for a report on progress with the agreed areas for improvement within 12 months of the publication of this letter. Taking account of the progress report, we will then decide whether further engagement with the school is required. This may involve another inspection visit. West Dunbartonshire Council will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action that we intend to take, as agreed with West Dunbartonshire Council.

Joan C. Esson
HM Inspector