



7 February 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

**Perth Grammar School
Perth and Kinross Council**

In January 2020, Education Scotland published a letter on your child's school. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement, which we agreed with the school and Perth and Kinross Council. We published a further letter in December 2021.

As requested, Perth and Kinross Council has now provided us with a report on the school's progress. The progress report is available at:

[Final Perth Grammar School- Progress Report December 2022.pdf \(pkc.gov.uk\)](https://www.pkc.gov.uk/education-scotland/progress-report-december-2022.pdf).

After reviewing all of the evidence and in discussion with Perth and Kinross Council, we are now confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve. We will therefore make no further visits in connection with the inspection letter of January 2020.

As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, Perth and Kinross Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

HM Inspector



Education & Children's Services

Education Scotland – Follow through Procedures Progress Report to Parents

1 Introduction:

Perth Grammar School was inspected in November 2019. The report on the inspection by Education Scotland was published in **January 2020**.

The school, with support from the Local Authority, prepared a full plan for improvement.

In December 2021 the school was inspected again, and it was reported that staff have been successful in addressing the recommendations made in the original inspection. However, the report stated that the school required more time to fully implement its priorities for improvement, due to the disruption of the pandemic.

Both the Head Teacher and staff have worked collaboratively with authority staff to take forward the areas identified as requiring improvement in both inspection reports, and this report summarises the progress made by the school in these areas.

2 Areas for Improvement – Evaluation of Progress:

Area for Improvement 1:

Actions from 2020: Improve approaches to ensuring equity for all learners. To support this, senior leaders should make better use of data to target interventions appropriately. This includes monitoring planned interventions regularly to ensure they have the desired impact.

Actions from Letter: Continue to raise attainment, across all areas

How are we doing?

Senior leaders effectively identify gaps in attainment and organise timely interventions to support learners. For example, senior and middle leaders have identified those pupils entered for five Highers who are not currently on track to achieve expected passes and have arranged discussions with pupils and parents about their progress, and provided targeted supported study, enhanced learning conversations, and action planning opportunities. This

support sits within the school's targeted clinics for parents and carers aligned with the tracking reports produced four times each session.

The school have set ambitious, evidence based, targets for attainment for all groups of young people and all staff are aware of them and monitor pupil performance closely to ensure targets are met. As a result, there is a culture of raising attainment, in step with the school's ambition agenda, and their school value of 'ambition'.

School leaders have successfully created a whole school data set which includes a breadth of data about pupils. As a result, all staff can now easily access a wide range of key contextual information about learners, and this has increased their ability and confidence in the use of data to improve the quality of provision for pupils and therefore their attainment. The school are continuing to add more data to the whole school data set as it evolves and should now consider including Broad General Education levels achieved here, as well as in their attainment analysis and interventions records.

Senior leaders have planned and monitored the impact of the allocation of Pupil Equity and Covid Funding to support young people with attendance and attainment. An additional Pupil Care and Welfare Officer (PCWO) was appointed using Pupil Equity funding in December 2021 and another PCWO was appointed using Scottish Government Covid Funding in October 2022. Senior leaders have created a rigorous remit for the additional staff, and they play a significant role in supporting young people with attendance and punctuality. They attend and contribute to regular House meetings with pupil support colleagues and together the team plans interventions for identified young people. The PCWOs are empowered to meet with children and families to identify barriers and plan supports. As a result of their increased responsibilities in supporting engagement during lesson times, all young people with identified need are supported to attend all their lessons and engage in meaningful learning.

The school has established an Outreach Programme to target pupils with anxiety and emotional based absence and who make up the school's most disengaged learners. Attendance and engagement of these pupils has increased considerably as a result of this work

The school has very well-established structures and supports for those pupils at risk of exclusion, including effective alternatives to exclusion and, as a result, young people are less likely to miss out on their learning. Tailored curriculum work is provided for young people to complete, and the provision operates with very small numbers of pupils to best provide intensive support.

Teachers offer a comprehensive and impressive range of after school and lunchtime study support throughout each session, and this is widely publicised throughout the school community in several creative ways. The school shares the offer with parents/carers and

gaining their support in ensuring their young people attend. This is also contributing to increased confidence and performance in SQA examinations.

How do we know? (Evidence)

A wide range of senior phase attainment measures exceed the school's virtual comparator and there has been a strong trend of improvement in the last three year period. Session 21-22 saw many attainment measures their highest of the last five years.

The presentation policy of the school has changed with more pupils being provided the opportunity to attain at a more ambitious level, due to stronger tracking, monitoring and interventions, with a secure fallback position available for pupils, if required.

The school has responded to the changing needs of their pupils by introducing a fully integrated S4 - 6 senior phase curriculum model which means all young people have access to a broader range of courses to choose from, including a range of vocational qualifications, providing enhanced pathways. All young people in the senior phase now choose six courses as their main curriculum. However, various opportunities are now embedded for additional certification, including being presented for Application of

Mathematics in addition to Mathematics, Scottish Studies, and a range of qualifications as part of senior core Health and Wellbeing and Wider Achievement programmes.

School attainment targets are well known by staff and informs their close tracking and monitoring of pupils' attainment.

Attendance at class level has improved for learners who previously opted to attend particular lessons only and exclusion incidents have significantly decreased over time. This improvement in the attendance picture for the school is evident for those learners who are from the most deprived backgrounds relative to other schools and exclusions for this cohort show a sustained and significant trend of reduction.

The school has made significant gains in reducing the poverty related attainment gap with the biggest improvement seen in 2021/2022.

Improvement area 2:

Actions from 2020: Raise attainment and achievement for all young people. To support this, improve approaches to assessing and monitoring young people's progress, particularly in S1-S3.

Actions from letter: Further improvements to planning and assessing in the BGE in a few faculties.

Consistency of conversations with YP to set goals and targets.

How are we doing?

Assessment approaches across the school have been strengthened through engagement in the Moderation Cycle during collegiate, INSET and faculty meeting time. Colleagues review pupils' work, including in the BGE, and use SQA and Education Scotland Benchmarks to reach a shared understanding of standards at each level of achievement in each subject. This is supporting colleagues' capacity in assessing with accuracy.

School leaders, including the Principal Teachers of English and Mathematics, have prioritised literacy and numeracy for improvement through leading the coordination of planning, teaching, and assessing literacy and numeracy across all faculties.

- . The school have successfully embedded a new approach to tracking, monitoring, and reporting in S1-3 and now use the *Progress and Achievement* module on SEEMiS. All subject teachers now report on levels achieved and the progress pupils are making towards achieving the next level, in step with

Perth and Kinross Council Education and Children's Services guidance. Staff have participated in significant professional learning with colleagues across the local authority around moderation of their assessment judgements using the new model and terminology of emerging, enhancing, and extending to describe progress towards the next level. This has resulted in a greater degree of colleagues' shared understanding of what constitutes performance at each CFE level. Staff confidence has improved in making the judgements and pupils are taking more responsibility for their learning and are better able to articulate their progress in their Broad General Education subjects and their areas for development. SLT use management reports from the module to identify where young people are not on track to make expected progress and share these with Principal Teachers during the termly Attainment Reviews. Interventions are agreed and implemented by the appropriate staff.

House meetings are held weekly with key members of the staff team. Attainment is a standing item on the agenda and pupils at risk of not meeting attainment expectations are identified and discussed. This collaborative approach ensures that any unmet needs are addressed and that pupils are provided with additional support to help ensure they make good progress.

Pupils regularly review their tracking reports, issued four times annually, in their Personal and Social Education lessons and are supported to set meaningful targets for improvement through learning conversations ensuring young people are clear on their strengths and areas for development.

How do we know? (Evidence)

In both literacy and numeracy there were improvements in performance in terms of S3 Achievement of a level. Staff report increased confidence in reaching assessment decisions on Achievement of a Level and moderation is supporting evidence to demonstrate increased accuracy in this area. Attainment reviews evidence discussion and interventions agreed on pupils in S1-3 who are not making expected progress.

Most pupils are aware of the levels they have achieved in their subjects and what their next steps are to reach the next level.

Improvement Area 3:

Actions from 2020: Further develop a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching to improve the motivation and engagement of young people. Ensure appropriate challenge for all young people to maximise progress in their learning.

Actions from the letter: to continue to promote the good practice that is evident in certain subject areas to ensure greater consistency across all learning.

Once fully developed and embedded across all areas of the curriculum, this will provide senior leaders and principal teachers with a rich source of information to inform Priorities and plan improvements.

How are we doing?

The school values of Pride, Respect and Ambition remain key drivers of change at Perth Grammar School and feature consistently in policy and procedures.

They are highly visible on displays in school and the school community demonstrates the values in its work. Staff reference school values in conversations with young people, school awards and assemblies, ensuring they are embedded.

School leaders have, since the original inspection, ably led the significant development of an agreed approach to learning, teaching, and assessment – The Perth Grammar School Five (PGS5). The approach was co-created with all in the school community, and this has ensured its effectiveness, as all stakeholders understand its rationale and contributed to its development. The approach prioritises pedagogy and equity. The five aspects of high-quality practice identified for the school's unique context are: Effective Communication, Clear Expectations, Positive Relationships, Accessible Learning and Everyone Engaged. They are highly visible in the school through PGS5 posters displayed, references in lessons and they are highlighted and explained in assemblies with pupils.

Since the last inspection visit the school has developed a new system which allows all staff to send positive messages home to families about their young people to recognise their achievements. This is supplemented by the introduction of Strive awards as part of the school's 'Ambition Agenda' and enables termly recognition of Pride, Respect and Ambition.

The school learning community has evolved post pandemic. All teachers use Microsoft Teams for all subject communication out-with classroom learning. This platform is used regularly to communicate with learners for whole school and classroom communications, information sharing, assigning of work and tasks, and in some areas, still used to feedback to learners on their progress. School staff are currently working together to improve the consistency of approach and most effective use of the digital platform.

How do we know

Classroom environments are attractive, clean, and organised. Most classrooms have been organised using inclusive principles. In almost all classrooms' resources on the walls are used to help embed and exemplify important skills in each subject area. Learners appreciate these and are able to explain how they help in their learning.

Learners identify with PGS5 and can articulate where they see this in their learning. Learners feel that their voice was heard in the school, and many appreciated the implementation of 'you said we did' boards in each faculty.

Learners report they received very good feedback in most of their classes which helped with their progress. Teacher feedback is evident in jotters and on virtual learning spaces and this supports pupils understanding of their progress.

Staff value the work around PGS5. The agency devolved to teachers as leaders of learning was appreciated. Leaders of learning felt reassured that they were following a cohesive and structured programme. The pace of this was felt to be at the right level to create effective change that can be sustained.

All staff were aware of pupil profiles in respect of deprivation and barriers to learning and there was confidence and enthusiasm to ensure that these were overcome. A whole school tracking tool and dataset is helping them to identify those young people who needed the most support in their classes.

Tutor time is well supported with resources and appropriate activities and the opportunity for meaningful learning conversations was seen as a key feature of this time by all staff.

Conclusion

There is confidence in the school's capacity for continued improvement. In preparation of this 'further information', senior education officers have visited the school on several occasions to sample learning and teaching, meet with staff and pupils, and to support and challenge colleagues in raising attainment and achievement. The school's ambition agenda sets out unambiguously an agreed approach to improve outcomes for young people so that all staff, and groups of staff, are clear on their individual and collective roles and

responsibilities. Perth Grammar has made significant improvements in all areas identified in the original inspection of November 2019, and we will continue to monitor progress through local quality assurance processes.

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