

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education
to Cabinet
of 17 June 2025**

Subject: Inspection of Ayr Academy: Education Scotland Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of the outcome of the Education Scotland Inspection of Ayr Academy.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

2.1.1 considers the contents of the National report by Education Scotland as contained in [Appendix 1](#); and

2.1.2 agrees that the main points for action will be addressed by the Headteacher and Quality Improvement Officer.

3. Background

- 3.1 Education Scotland inspectors inspected Ayr Academy in November 2024 and looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work. The inspection was carried out using the full inspection model. This involves inspectors evaluating leadership of change; learning, teaching and assessment; curriculum (learning pathways); partnerships (impact on learners/ parental engagement); safeguarding; ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion; and raising attainment and achievement across the school.
- 3.2 The report for Ayr Academy was published on 11 March 2025.
- 3.3 The inspection of Ayr Academy found the following key strengths:
- Relationships between young people, and young people and staff are positive and respectful. As a result, young people have a strong sense of pride in their school and community.
 - The wellbeing of young people lies at the heart of the school for all learners. As a result, young people feel safe, included and well supported.
 - All young people achieve a positive destination when they leave school as a result of ongoing support and advice on future pathways.

3.4 Education Scotland Inspectors agreed the following key points for action with the leadership team of the school and educational services:

- All staff should continue to ensure there is high quality learning and teaching in all lessons. This should include a focus on planning tasks and activities set at the right level of difficulty to meet the learning needs of all young people.
- Senior leaders should further develop approaches to evaluate the work of the school. This will help to ensure that staff at all levels are more confident at applying national standards to all aspects of change and improvement.
- All staff need to work together to raise attainment and aspiration at all stages across the school. This will help to ensure learners achieve outcomes in line with other young people in similar contexts across Scotland.
- Raise attainment in the senior phase, with a particular focus on English, maths and topquality passes across all subjects.

3.5 The Headteacher of Ayr Academy will link with the Quality Improvement Officer to build on the strengths identified in the inspection report and address the key points for action.

4. Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that the Cabinet notes the key strengths and points for action in the Education Scotland report and agrees to the Headteacher addressing these in conjunction with the Quality Improvement Officer.

4.2 As a result of the inspection findings, Education Scotland will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 18 months. This return visit will allow time for additional support to be provided and time to make the necessary improvements.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 ***Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations***

- 8.2.1 Educational Services may be downgraded as part of the Shared Risk Assessment process carried out by the Local Area Network responsible for scrutiny if the service does not address the main points for action.

9. **Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)**

- 9.1 The report does not involve proposals for policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, that affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

10. **Sustainable Development Implications**

- 10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. **Options Appraisal**

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. **Link to Council Plan**

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority Two of the Council Plan: Live, Work, Learn and Outcome One: Education and lifelong learning.

13. **Link to Shaping Our Future Council** Yes ☐ No ☒

- 13.1 Not applicable.

14. **Results of Consultation**

- 14.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this paper.
- 14.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor William Grant, Portfolio Holder for Education, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

15. **Next Steps for Decision Tracking**

- 15.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

Implementation	Due date	Managed by
Meeting to be arranged with the Headteacher to agree a plan to address the action points contained in the report and monitor progress in conjunction with the planned programme of visits	June 2026	Quality Improvement Officer

Background Papers **None**

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Date: **4 June 2025**



11 March 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Ayr 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.

- Relationships between young people, and young people and staff are positive and respectful. As a result, young people have a strong sense of pride in their school and community.
- The wellbeing of young people lies at the heart of the school for all learners. As a result, young people feel safe, included and well supported.
- All young people achieve a positive destination when they leave school as a result of ongoing support and advice on future pathways.

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

- All staff should continue to ensure there is high quality learning and teaching in all lessons. This should include a focus on planning tasks and activities set at the right level of difficulty to meet the learning needs of all young people.
- Senior leaders should further develop approaches to evaluate the work of the school. This will help to ensure that staff at all levels are more confident at applying national standards to all aspects of change and improvement.
- All staff need to work together to raise attainment and aspiration at all stages across the school. This will help to ensure learners achieve outcomes in line with other young people in similar contexts across Scotland.
- Raise attainment in the senior phase, with a particular focus on English, maths and top-quality passes across all subjects.

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 Ayr Academy

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
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:
[Ayr Academy | 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 South Ayrshire Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 18 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with South Ayrshire 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.

Carolanne Calderwood
 HM Inspector