

20 January 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2025, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited James Gillespie's High School, Ard-sgoil Sheumais Ghilleasbuig. 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 headteacher provides calm and aspirational leadership to the school community. He supports staff effectively to maintain high standards and improve young people's wellbeing and attainment.
- Staff and young people have developed inclusive, positive and respectful learning environments in which young people thrive. Young people are highly motivated as a result of their learning experiences, which are underpinned by the school values.
- Young people sustain very high levels of attainment across the senior phase. Senior leaders have supported staff well to develop effective approaches to improve further all young people's attainment. Young people who require additional support with their learning and wellbeing are making very good progress and are attaining well.
- Staff have worked well with a range of effective partners to increase young people's learning pathways and opportunities for achievement. As a result, more young people experience success and achieve very well.
- Across the senior phase, young people achieve highly in Gàidhlig, with nearly all securing National Qualifications at appropriate levels. These outcomes reflect the collective leadership and drive of staff and young people to promote and sustain the language.

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

- Senior leaders should continue to develop the capacity of staff at all levels to embed recent improvements. Young people should be more effectively involved in decisions about their school.
- Staff need to ensure that young people experience a greater consistency of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment across the school. This includes young people experiencing more appropriate levels of pace and challenge in their learning.
- Senior leaders should develop a more coherent and strategic approach to immersion education, with a focus on broadening the curriculum leading to qualifications and awards through the medium of Gàidhlig.

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 James Gillespie's High School, Ard-sgoil Sheumais Ghilleasbuig

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	very good
Raising attainment and achievement	very 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: [James Gillespie's High School | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The City of Edinburgh Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Patricia Cameron
HM Inspector