

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 4 FEBRUARY 2026
REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) RETURN VISIT – BALDRAGON ACADEMY
REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE
REPORT NO: 32– 2026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of the Education Scotland, His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMI), follow up inspection visit to Baldragon Academy in June 2025.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:
- a notes the contents of this report; and
 - b instructs the Chief Education Officer to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement outlined in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Education Scotland undertook a follow up inspection visit by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMI) in June 2025 in relation to the original inspection of January 2023, and subsequent follow up inspection visits in December 2023 and June 2024. They published a report of their findings on 11 November 2025.
- 4.2 The School Improvement Plan 2024/25 included a continued focus on the identified areas for improvement from the original inspection and follow up inspection visits. This is regularly reviewed, monitored and evaluated in line with both the school and the local authority's quality improvement procedures. The letter published by Education Scotland in relation to this return visit is attached in Appendix 1.

5.0 KEY RETURN VISIT FINDINGS

Key areas of progress

- 5.1 The school has made steady progress in improving young people's attendance, attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- School senior leaders have continued to strengthen the school's approaches to improving young people's regular attendance at school, including late coming to school and to class. This has been achieved through a revision of policy, implementation of robust systems of staged intervention and through more effective tracking and monitoring of attendance data.
 - Appropriate school and multi-agency supports are helping to identify and address barriers to attendance at school, including for those young people who are more at risk of poor attendance.
 - The school ethos continues to improve, and young people's behaviour is improving. The school's revised Relationships for Learning policy is having a positive impact on the culture and climate for learning across the school. The policy sets out clear expectations for all young people, and staff, who now understand better their roles and responsibilities in classrooms and corridors. The Relationships for Learning policy is supporting greater consistency in how behaviour issues are being addressed, and resolved, by staff.

- Young people respond better to adult instructions and interactions. This is resulting in a significantly calmer learning environment and is showing a decrease in behaviour referrals and school exclusions.

5.2 The school has made positive progress to plan tasks and activities that are relevant, motivating and set at the right level of difficulty for young people.

- Senior leaders have actively involved young people and all staff in developing The Baldragon Standard Classroom Approach. This approach is being used effectively to support improvements in the consistency and routines of learning and is having a positive impact on the motivation and engagement of young people.
- School staff work well together to share and discuss good practice in learning, teaching and assessment. This professional learning has influenced and improved their practice.
- Almost all staff demonstrate an improved understanding of the needs of young people requiring additional support in their learning. Staff have an improved access to information about learners, are using a wider range of inclusive classroom materials and are using evidence-based approaches to better support their learners.

5.3 The school has made sound progress to improving attainment across the school.

- Senior leaders and staff work well together to improve approaches to tracking and monitoring of learning, achievement and attainment through the Broad General Education and the Senior Phase. This includes a specific focus on different groups of learners and their needs. Learning data is analysed more rigorously through regular attainment meetings which are focused on young people's progress, next steps in learning and identification of interventions to improve attainment.
- There are clear signs of improvement in young people's attainment in literacy and numeracy which represents steady improvement from recent years.
- A new and more robust school presentation policy provides a clear framework for staff to support young people to undertake qualifications more aligned to their needs. This approach is supported by the progression pathways document which helps young people and parents to better plan their learning journey from S3-S6.
- Senior leaders and teachers are increasing the number of young people presented for National Qualifications. Senior leaders demonstrate positive indicators in improvement in attainment over time. Senior Phase data suggests that the approaches being used to raise attainment are having a positive impact on attainment outcome for pupils in S4 and S5. The significant improvement in attainment at National 5 and Higher in S4 and S5 from 2023-2025 is shown in Appendix 2.
- S4 breadth and depth attainment continues to improve across all key performance indicators. Notably and since the original inspection, the number of pupils achieving five or more National 5 (or equivalent) qualifications has increased by 150%.
- S5 breadth and depth attainment continues to improve across all key performance indicators. Overall, the number of pupils gaining one or more Higher (or equivalent) qualifications has increased by over 30% and pupils achieving three or more Higher (or equivalent) qualifications has increased by over 60%. Pupils achieving five or more Higher (or equivalent) qualifications has also increased by over 60%.
- S6 pupils achieving one or more Higher (or equivalent) qualifications continues to improve. In particular, the number of pupils in S6 achieving five or more Higher (or equivalent) qualifications has improved by over 50% when compared to recent years.

Areas for Improvement

Key areas for improvement include:

- 5.4 Continue to prioritise improvements to attendance to bring school data in line with national averages.
- 5.5 Continue to use the positive relationships that are developed with young people to promote consistently high expectations and to encourage young people to be ambitious in their learning.
- 5.6 Continue to focus on delivering, and evaluating, consistently high-quality, well-paced and inclusive learning experiences, designed to motivate young people.
- 5.7 Continue to review the presentation policy regularly to ensure it reflects the changing context of the school and needs of all young people and to maintain a relentless focus on ensuring young people achieve and attain to the best of their abilities.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Following the June 2025 follow up inspection, HM Inspectors wrote to parents and carers in November 2025 to report their view that the school has made good progress since the original inspection. As a result, they are confident that Baldragon Academy has the capacity to continue to improve so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
- 6.4 The School Improvement Plan 2025/26 Includes a continued focus on the identified areas for improvement from the follow up inspection visits. This is regularly reviewed, monitored and evaluated in line with both the school and the local authority's quality improvement procedures.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate Senior Manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None.

Audrey May
Executive Director

Paul Fleming
Head of Education, Learning and Inclusion

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11 November 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Baldrigon Academy. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Dundee City Council. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in March 2024 and September 2024. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Senior leaders, with staff, should improve young people's attendance, attitudes to learning and behaviour.

The school has made steady progress in this area of development.

Senior leaders have continued to strengthen the school's approach to improving attendance through the introduction of a helpful attendance policy. In addition, a robust system is now in place to identify, track and support young people who are at risk of poor attendance. Support staff work well with young people and their families to help to improve attendance. The school's attendance data is steadily improving, as a result of well-considered support and interventions. Senior leaders recognise the importance of maintaining this area of focus to support further improvements.

Staff have also focused on reducing young people's late coming to school and class. Positively, there has been a reduction in late coming. Staff work with young people to identify and address barriers to arriving in school on time, and consequences for persistent late coming are working well. A few young people do not regularly attend all of their classes but are present in the school building. Staff work together effectively to redirect these young people back to classes. Staff should work closely with young people and continue to sustain their work to ensure all young people attend their designated classes.

The school's Relationships for Learning policy is having a positive impact on the culture and climate for learning across the school. Young people and staff now better understand their roles and responsibilities in classrooms and corridors. Senior leaders and staff are now developing a whole school approach to addressing the use of mobile phones.

The school ethos at Baldrigon Academy continues to improve. Young people's behaviour is improving and, as a result, they arrive at class better ready to engage in their learning. Teachers should now focus on delivering consistently high-quality learning experiences, designed to motivate young people. They should ensure learning is well-paced and meets the needs of all learners. Staff should continue to use the positive relationships that they develop with young people to promote consistently high expectations and to encourage young people to be ambitious in their learning.

Staff should work within their departments to plan tasks and activities that are relevant, motivating and set at the right level of difficulty for young people.

The school has made positive progress with this area of development.

Senior leaders have actively involved young people and all staff in developing The Baldrigon Standard Classroom Approach. This approach is being used well in most lessons. It is supporting improvements in the consistency and routines of learning experiences. Young people and teachers speak confidently about the whole school approach and report that it is having a positive impact on the motivation and engagement of learners. Young people appreciate the clear and consistent structure to their lessons.

Teachers are now working together well to share and discuss good practice in relation to learning, teaching and assessment. They value opportunities to work together with other teachers, and to access support from the local authority. The local authority has supported teachers by developing a wide range of helpful digital resources to support and enhance learning. Teachers would benefit from further professional learning focusing on meeting the needs of all learners.

Senior leaders correctly identified the need to improve how teachers plan learning, teaching and assessment. Staff adopted a consistent approach to planning learning as a result. It is important that senior and middle leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of approaches to planning. They should focus on ensuring it is improving the quality of learning experiences for all young people.

Senior and middle leaders should continue to develop how they monitor the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. This will help them to identify best practice and promote it widely across the school. They should also encourage teachers to continue to learn from practice happening in other schools, in the local authority and beyond.

Work with staff from the local authority to improve attainment as an immediate priority across the school, especially in S4, by S5 and by S6.

The school has made sound progress in this area for development.

Senior leaders and staff work together well to improve their approaches to monitoring the progress of young people. All staff are now using an agreed whole-school tracking system capturing information across all curricular areas from S1-S3. Staff review young people's progress and next steps in learning through regular attainment meetings with senior leaders. They also identify young people who are not on track in their learning and the approaches to be used to support their progress.

There are clear signs of improvement in young people's attainment in literacy and numeracy in S1-S3. Teachers with responsibility for literacy and numeracy are working closely with primary colleagues to improve the quality of the information provided at the point of transition to secondary school. They recognise that developing shared approaches to how they assess and plan will improve the accuracy of data provided, but also support teachers to accelerate the progress of young people in their learning.

Senior leaders have introduced a helpful course choice document. This helps young people and parents to plan their learning journey from S3-S6. A new school presentation policy ensures young people are being presented for an appropriate and challenging level of study. Staff should review the policy regularly to ensure it reflects the changing context of the school and needs of all young people.

Staff are offering young people a greater range of awards and courses, beyond National Qualifications. These provide young people with opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work, and improve their attainment. As well as this, senior leaders and teachers are increasing the number of young people presented for National Qualifications. This is a positive indication that teachers are being more aspirational and ambitious in the outcomes sought for young people.

Senior leaders demonstrate positive indicators in improvements in attainment over time. Data shows that the approaches used to raise attainment are having a positive impact on attainment outcomes, particularly for young people in S4 and S5.

What happens next?

The school has made good progress since the original inspection. 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. Dundee City Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

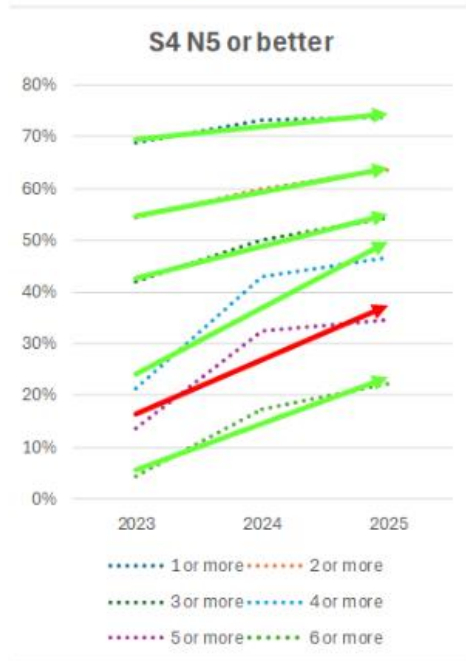
Teri McIntosh
HM Inspector

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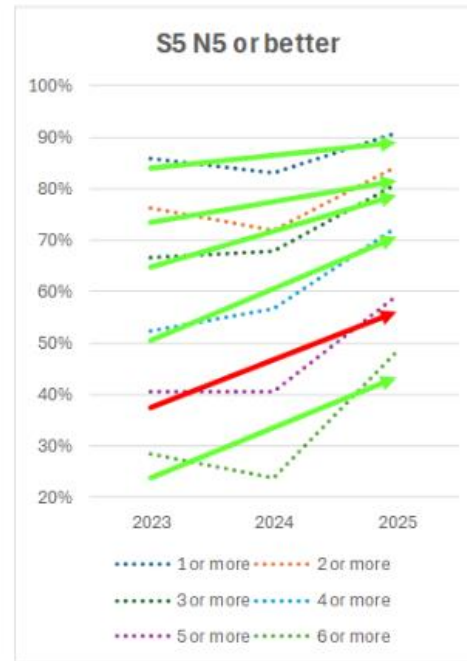
APPENDIX 2

Source: SEEMiS BI SQA Analysis, accessed 13/01/26

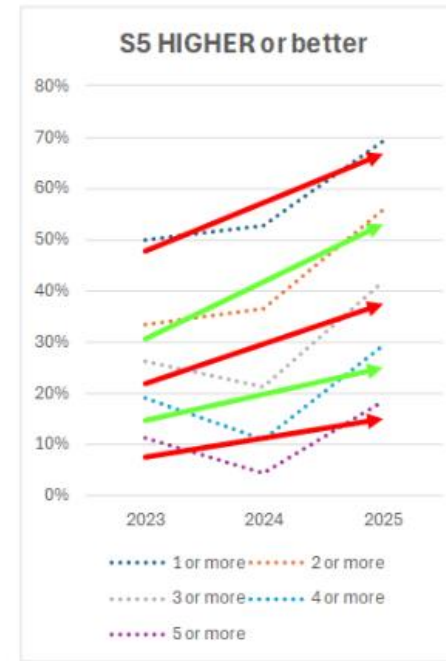
Green	= year to year increase
Yellow	= 2% tolerance (lower)
Red	= KPI Measure



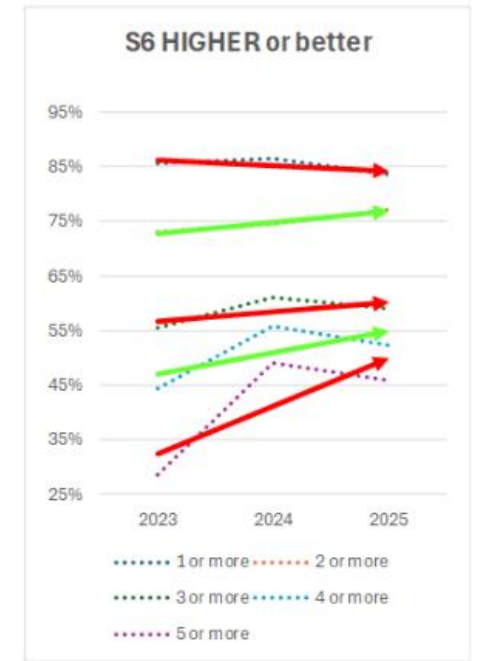
Awards at A-D	2023	2024	2025
1 or more	69%	73%	74%
2 or more	54%	60%	64%
3 or more	42%	50%	54%
4 or more	21%	43%	47%
5 or more	14%	33%	35%
6 or more	4%	17%	22%



Awards at A-D	2023	2024	2025
1 or more	86%	83%	91%
2 or more	76%	72%	84%
3 or more	67%	68%	81%
4 or more	52%	57%	73%
5 or more	40%	41%	59%
6 or more	29%	24%	48%



Awards at A-D	2023	2024	2025
1 or more	50%	53%	69%
2 or more	33%	36%	56%
3 or more	26%	21%	42%
4 or more	19%	11%	29%
5 or more	11%	4%	18%



Awards at A-D	2023	2024	2025
1 or more	86%	86%	84%
2 or more	73%	75%	77%
3 or more	56%	61%	59%
4 or more	44%	56%	52%
5 or more	29%	49%	46%

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