

2 September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

Scottish Ministers requested that HM Inspectors conduct a special inspection of Fettes College, Edinburgh in accordance with section 66 (1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. In February 2025, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Fettes College. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers, children and young people and worked closely with governors, the headteacher and staff. We examined the college's provision in relation to approaches to ensuring equality and inclusion and for challenging discrimination or bias. We also looked at the college's approaches to curriculum development, improving the quality of learning and teaching, and measuring children and young people's progress. Approaches to safeguarding, child protection and pupil welfare including college policies, and the implementation of these policies was also included as part of the inspection.

Approaches to ensuring equality and inclusion and for challenging discrimination or bias.

Staff use well-developed approaches to promoting equality, inclusion and diversity. They recognise the need to ensure fairness and equality and to identify and mitigate against discrimination and bias in all aspects of the school's work. This is resulting in the school community having a better, shared understanding of approaches to addressing and challenging discrimination and bias.

Staff in the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion team are dedicated to improving inclusive practice across the school. Most teachers make skilful reference to the protected characteristics through and within learning. They employ a shared language that promotes inclusive practice. This helps almost all children and young people to make links to dignity and respect across their learning.

Children, young people and staff benefit from a range of highly effective opportunities to celebrate their own and others' cultural diversity. Staff encourage children and young people to share information regularly about their cultural heritage during learning, assemblies and whole school events. The school community participate in cultural events and observe religious celebrations together in an inclusive, respectful way. Children and young people speak very positively about their ability to recognise and value difference.

Children and young people report that there are occasions when prejudicial language is used by a few children and young people. They understand that this type of behaviour needs to be reported and addressed. Most children and young people feel that staff deal with these incidents well. The wide range of diversity, equality and inclusion work being undertaken across the school community is having a positive impact in reducing incidents of this kind.

Approaches to curriculum development, improving the quality of learning and teaching, and measuring children and young people's progress and achievement.

Children and young people benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum that is outstanding. Staff have successfully created a curriculum that supports children and young people to flourish in their academic and personal interests. Staff ensure the curriculum is strongly underpinned by an aspirational vision with a clear focus on academic excellence, building character and supporting personal wellbeing. Staff use this vision very well to provide a wide range of very high quality experiences across all areas of the curriculum. Children and young people benefit greatly from extensive opportunities for personal achievement and participation in the wider life of the school.

Children and young people are highly motivated to succeed, displaying very strong levels of engagement with their learning in almost all lessons. Almost all children and young people are highly focused when learning and are supported skilfully by staff. Children and young people's verbal and written responses to questions and activities are of an exceptionally high standard. Teachers deliver very well organised, motivating lessons which offer pace, challenge and further children and young people's learning and progress. They ensure that children and young people contribute successfully to lessons.

Senior leaders and staff have developed a substantial range of highly informative systems to measure children and young people's progress and attainment over time across all stages and curricular areas. Staff ensure the consistency of this data very well through a common approach to tracking young people's attainment and effort. Staff's judgments are reliable and based on a wide range of well-planned assessments. Senior leaders have robust approaches to maintaining an overview of the accuracy and effective use of this data.

Supported by the Board of Governors, senior leaders promote career-long professional learning as a key contributor to initiation of well-informed change. Staff's engagement in an extensive range of professional learning has had a significant impact on improving the curriculum offer for children and young people. Senior leaders have also developed a comprehensive range of approaches to improve the quality of teaching. This includes high-quality professional learning for staff, a clear learning and teaching strategy and staff-led, research-informed initiatives to improve practice.

Overall, children and young people's attainment is excellent. Almost all children and young people make excellent progress from prior levels of attainment and their academic achievement is consistently of an exceptionally high standard.

All children and young people achieve successes and develop key skills and attributes for life and work in an impressive range of interesting and worthwhile experiences. They develop significantly, their confidence and self-esteem. Through their achievements, children and young people are enabled to achieve their potential through taking risks and 'having a go' at numerous experiences offered across the school. As a result, almost all children and young people are developing a range of skills and achieve in ways which enable them to know themselves well. They have high expectations and aspirations for their achievements.

Approaches to safeguarding, child protection and pupil welfare including college policies, and the implementation of these policies.

Staff foster very nurturing and mutually respectful relationships with almost all children and young people. Staff are committed to supporting and improving children and young people's sense of wellbeing and are highly responsive to any emerging health and wellbeing needs of individual children and young people. House parents and tutors benefit from high-quality, bespoke professional learning to help support children and young people with their social, emotional and mental health needs.

Staff understand and apply very well their statutory responsibilities in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. They meet their obligations to child protection and safeguarding. The college's approaches align very well with national guidance such as *Getting It Right for Every Child*. This helps to ensure that learner's safeguarding and welfare is maintained and promoted. The school has been advised to address a few non-urgent matters related to their approaches to child protection and safeguarding.

Children and young people are developing a sound understanding of children's rights and how these can improve their lives and those of others. Staff should ensure children's rights are reflected fully in all policies and practice as they continue work in this area.

Board members provide regular and appropriate support and challenge to senior leaders on all aspects of college performance. They have a key focus on meeting the academic and pastoral needs of children and young people. Senior leaders speak very highly of the ongoing support and challenge they receive from board members. Board members and senior leaders should now ensure they are providing consistently high levels of support and challenge in all aspects of college performance. They should ensure staff's approaches to promoting positive behaviour are applied consistently across the whole school. Board members should ensure they are content that all policies and procedures are being adhered to by senior leaders and are in line with national guidance.

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 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 Fettes College

| Quality indicators | Evaluation |
|--|------------------|
| Curriculum | excellent |
| Learning, teaching and assessment | very good |
| Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion | very good |
| Raising attainment and achievement | excellent |
| 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) is available on the Education Scotland website at: [Fettes College | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)

What happens next?

We are confident that the Fettes College has the capacity to continue to improve and we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The Board of Governors will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for monitoring and reporting on the quality of provision in the school.

Stuart Cathro
HM Inspector