

Summarised Inspection Findings

Larbert High School

Falkirk Council

SEED No: 5747031

21 March 2017

School Name Larbert High School
Council: Falkirk Council
SEED number: 5747031
Roll (Jan 2016): 1,652

Attendance is in line with the national average (93 per cent in 2014/15).

In February 2016 10 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2015 5-<10 per cent of the pupils lived in the 20 per cent most deprived datazones in Scotland.²

In September 2015 0-<5 per cent of the pupils were from minority ethnic groups.

In September 2015 the school reported that 16 per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

The school is located in 'Other urban areas' (population>10,000).¹

Until 2014, the school had a policy of presenting cohorts of young people for SCQF qualifications in S3. In line with national advice, the school has moved away from this policy. However, Insight does not provide data for young people presented for qualifications in S3. Where possible, the school has provided its own data. While this was not used to evaluate attainment it provided useful context.

1. Location is grouped into eight categories based on the size of the population the school is in. These categories are:

- Large urban areas (population >125K)
- Other urban (population >10K)
- Accessible small town (population 3-10K but within 30 minutes of 10K)
- Remote small town (population 3-10K and more than 30 minutes from 10K)
- Very remote small town (population 3-10K and more than 60 minutes from 10K)
- Accessible rural (population <3K but within 30 minutes of 10K)
- Remote rural (population <3K and more than 30 minutes from 10K)
- Very remote rural (population <3K and more than 60 minutes from 10K)

2. Data is based on SIMD 2012. Pupils whose address cannot be matched to an SIMD data zone have not been included in the calculation.

1.3 LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE

excellent

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- *Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community*
 - *Strategic planning for continuous improvement*
 - *Implementing improvement and change.*
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- The school's vision of "United in Purpose" has been developed and agreed in collaboration with Larbert cluster schools. This commendable collaborative approach, the result of consultation with stakeholders, is a key driver that underpins education from age 3 to 18 for the local community. It is leading to shared professional learning and curriculum development and improving the consistency of learning experiences for children and young people. In addition, transition arrangements are smooth and increasingly lead to continuity and progression across the curriculum. Throughout the Larbert High School community this vision is widely shared and exemplified in the strong moral purpose of improving outcomes for all learners which is at the heart of the school and wider community.
 - The HT, staff, young people and partners articulate a contemporary version of the values which are captured in the traditional long-standing school motto; "optimum sequi". These values such as achievement, respect, equality, trust and high expectations are now embedded within the vision and aims that very clearly and succinctly communicate the nature and purpose of the school. The inspection team found these values to be consistently embedded in relationships and behaviours across the school. These values are modelled and reinforced in a meaningful way as members of the school community fulfill their roles and responsibilities. This includes the ways that partners work with young people and the extensive leadership roles which young people from S1 to S6 fulfill.
 - Collaboration across the school, with the wider community and with partners nationally and internationally is a significant feature of the leadership and success of the school. The culture of the school reflects an inward, outward, forward looking approach to learning, leadership development and reflection. Through this, staff at all levels, including probationers, are engaged in practitioner enquiry, research and leading school improvement projects.
 - Members of the senior leadership team demonstrate very high levels of professional knowledge, skills and values which they apply to best effect for the good of the wider staff team and the young people. Staff at all levels demonstrate strong commitment to improving their practice and to sharing their expertise and ideas with others across and beyond the school.
 - The headteacher and other senior leaders successfully ensure the school is data rich. Analysis of statistical data is forensic and very well focused on understanding the needs and improving the experiences of individuals and targeted groups of young people. The information is clearly and succinctly communicated through systems which staff find easy to use. As a result, teachers and other adults working

with young people know the young people very well and use this data to plan and evaluate appropriate interventions. Staff and partners know the school context extremely well. Analysis of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data directs many aspects of school improvement planning and is a central focus of much of the school's work. This is evidenced at class teacher level as well as at middle and senior leadership levels. The school community should continue to extend this effective analysis and application of data to ensure all staff in the cluster benefit from the expertise that exists in the school. A particular focus on the broad general education (BGE) assessment data will be helpful and necessary in the short term, as staff across curriculum areas continue to develop their skills in this aspect.

- The headteacher's outstanding strategic leadership of change and improvement, supported by a strong senior leadership team, is leading to continuous improvement and strong outcomes for almost all young people. Arrangements for self-evaluation, improvement planning, professional learning, leadership development and sharing practice at all levels are securely interconnected and rigorous. All staff are members of a school improvement group whose work is directly connected to one of the school improvement priorities which have been identified through ongoing robust self-evaluation. Staff at all levels feel ownership of the school improvement plan as a result of their opportunities to discuss and review the school's progress. Partners and young people also speak highly of their engagement in this process.
- A significant feature of the school's success is the strategic planning to ensure change is well-paced and well-measured in terms of the benefits for young people and the wider community. The headteacher is creative and forward looking. His relentless drive to secure additional resources and expertise to support his ambitious vision for the school have resulted in some bold and innovative partnerships. As a result, the school is a vibrant and innovative learning environment of which young people, staff and parents are highly appreciative. Importantly, at all stages, the safeguards put in place through risk assessment and continuous evaluation ensure positive impact on learners. Robust self-evaluation includes very effective systems for tracking and monitoring progress and early identification of underachievement. Sound arrangements for staff recruitment and selection and effective professional review and development have resulted in a largely cohesive staff team who work together very well.
- Young people benefit significantly from wide-ranging leadership opportunities across the school. Their increasing leadership skills are well utilised to support school improvement. Through the Leadership Academy they take responsibility for shaping many aspects of school life and develop a range of skills for learning, life and work. Impressively, the Leadership Academy involves young people from S1 to S6 with 12 working groups including STEM, sport and inclusion. Managed entirely by senior pupils, outcomes are linked to the school improvement plan. Many young people also achieve Saltire Awards through this engagement.
- An impressive range of wider achievement opportunities and activities further enhance leadership skills for young people. Young people at all stages are leading and taking responsibility for charity events, school shows and drama and music performances. They are leading learning through writing scripts and performing in music, dance and drama events. They are debating social issues such as domestic abuse and climate change. Young people have achieved many awards for the school in recognition of their skills and high levels of understanding of social justice, equality and human rights.

- Pupil voice across the school is very strong. Young people feel empowered to take responsibility across a wide range of learning opportunities. They understand the importance of learning across different contexts and are clear about the connections between the skills framework, electives and achievement.

2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Learning and engagement*
 - *Quality of teaching*
 - *Effective use of assessment*
 - *Planning, tracking and monitoring.*
- In almost all classes there is a calm, purposeful and supportive ethos, and relationships are extremely positive and respectful. Young people's rights are respected and promoted widely through the work of groups such as the Amnesty International group. Almost all young people are highly motivated by, and engage confidently with, a rich variety of creative learning experiences in classes and in the wider school. Although learners are challenged well, and there is an appropriate pace of learning in most classes, a few teachers could make better use of assessment to personalise all learners' experiences and meet their needs.
 - Almost all young people speak articulately about their learning in classes and their opportunities for wider learning. They show a strong understanding about their progress. More consistent use of pupil profiling would enable all young people to lead, set personal learning targets, and have ongoing understanding about the next steps in their learning. Young people have very good opportunities to lead and contribute effectively to the wider life of the school and community. For example, the Leadership Academy provides opportunities for them to 'have a say' in relation to school improvement, and they are involved in the appointment of all staff. Commendably, they also participate successfully in a range of national and international activities such as the China Scholarship, Young Americans and the South Africa school partnership.
 - Across the school, young people's learning is enhanced by the very effective use of digital technologies, including video analysis of performance, blogs and podcasts. The successful 'Bring your own device to school' policy is also helping to enhance learning, enabling young people to exercise choice in their learning, developing skills in research and independent learning. A new interactive virtual environment is used very effectively by teachers and young people in the majority of subject areas to enliven learning, teaching and assessment.
 - Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Almost all staff create a positive learning environment, underpinned by the school's vision and aims. They use cooperative learning very well, and they intervene skilfully to maximise the learning experiences of young people. Although almost all teachers give very clear explanations to assist learners, and use questioning well to challenge young people's learning, there is room for this practice to be developed more consistently. Learning intentions and success criteria are used very well in most lessons with evidence of innovative practice in mathematics. Almost all teachers provide high quality oral feedback to learners, although in a few areas written feedback is inconsistent. The newly updated learning and teaching policy is contributing well to the school's focus on learning, teaching and assessment. It is used widely and is helping to develop more consistent practice.

- In the BGE, effective planning sheets are used in all curricular areas, evidencing well integrated planning of learning, teaching and assessment. Faculties are working together closely to ensure that significant aspects of young people's learning are covered across curricular areas, with selected aspects of work identified and collated to contribute to young people's achievement of a level. Most teachers use assessment very well to determine and track young people's progress, including rich tasks and self and peer assessment. To ensure that all assessments take account of appropriate breadth, depth and challenge, it would be helpful if teachers developed greater consistency across the school in defining criteria for bronze, silver and gold assessments. While individual subjects have robust systems for moderation, it would be helpful if moderation could now take place across the faculties. This would help to develop a whole school approach to the setting of standards for achieving a level in the BGE. Pupils and parents speak highly of the school's comprehensive arrangements for reporting learners' progress.
- In the BGE and senior phase, the school has developed highly effective, cohesive systems for planning, tracking and monitoring progress across all subjects, including using standardised test data and Insight. Almost all staff use data highly effectively to track and monitor specific groups of young people, such as looked after children, young carers and school refusers. They are also adept at using data to plan interventions and evaluate the outcomes of their planning. This is practice worthy of sharing more widely. Learning conversations also play a key role in the school's moderation processes and are valued by young people. Based on effective tracking, these conversations enable rich dialogue to take place between teachers and young people, which assists learners to understand their progress and agree areas of development. Learners' skills for learning, life and work, achieved through the curriculum, as well as wider achievements, are also planned, tracked and monitored very well using the new skills framework.

2.2 CURRICULUM: Theme 3, Learning Pathways

- The curriculum framework is kept under regular review and is designed around meeting the needs of young people at Larbert High School. The design principle of personalisation and choice is key to the school's approach to ensuring all young people have learning pathways which give them the best possible opportunities to leave school for a positive destination.
- The curriculum provides young people with a broad learning experience from S1 to S3 with opportunities for specialisation and personalisation. S1 courses provide learning at third curriculum level for almost all young people. The school needs to keep under review the points in the learning pathways at which young people are making choices for specialisation within curriculum areas. Staff need to ensure there is reliable assessment evidence about achievement of third level before young people make choices to discontinue learning. In S2 and S3, young people progress to learning, mainly at fourth level. Courses are designed to provide learning which offers smooth progression to the senior phase and qualifications. Electives are linked to the school's skills framework and provide good opportunities for personalisation and choice. These courses aim to provide some "vocational" learning and young people's choices are discussed and planned to ensure that they maintain appropriate breadth in their curriculum.
- From S4 to S6, the school provides a commendable range of flexible learning pathways for young people. There is a wide range of courses leading to National Qualifications. Pathways provide progression from S3 to one year or two year learning experiences. Although all young people sit qualifications at the end of S4, for some this is just a "stopping off point" on a 2 year pathway. During S4, learners on a 2 year pathway to Higher have opportunities to learn at Higher level throughout the course. Courses leading to Advanced Highers and some Scottish Baccalaureates are available to S6.
- The range of opportunities in the senior phase also includes courses provided in partnership with Forth Valley College, community learning and development and neighbouring schools. The school has a clear focus on securing positive destinations for all young people and has engaged with a variety of partners to deliver programmes to meet the needs of young people. This includes National Progression Awards, Higher National Certificates (HNC), Foundation Apprenticeships and Skills for Work courses. Young people and their parents speak very positively about the broad range on offer and the support they receive to make informed choices about their learning pathways. The school, in partnership with Forth Valley College and Police Scotland, has successfully developed an HNC in Police Studies which is proving popular with young people.
- There are now several "Schools of..." which provide young people with the opportunity to have a focus on a given area of learning from S1 to S3. This provides young people with enhanced opportunities to progress skills developed during primary school. These Schools are part of the work being taken forward to develop young people's employability skills and further improve positive destinations, including the numbers of young people going to HE and FE. Young people are provided with a motivating learning context which provides challenge and enjoyment. It would be helpful to revisit the overall rationale for the 'Schools of..' and share this more effectively with pupils and parents.

- Wider Achievement Opportunities (WAOs) are offered to young people in S5/6. WAOs lead to an accredited award recognising the skills for learning, life and work which have been developed. There is a wide range of options which include opportunities from across all curricular areas.
- Literacy across the curriculum: The school has a strong strategic approach to the development of literacy across the curriculum as a responsibility of all. There is evidence of effective planning by all departments for literacy in the BGE and senior phase, with certain departments taking the lead for moderating and assessing. This is being very well monitored by the team who has responsibility for this area and ensures that progression in literacy is strong and young people are aware of their progress.
- Numeracy across the curriculum: The school has an effective whole school numeracy policy. This is supporting teachers in their shared understanding of progress in numeracy. Departments have been identified to take forward the planning and assessment of numeracy skills across different contexts. Work continues across the cluster to share the understanding of standards and learning and teaching approaches. Involvement in work across the authority on numeracy is providing an outward look, with staff from Larbert closely involved at a local and national level in the sharing of standards.
- Health and wellbeing across the curriculum: Appropriate staff, working with partner agencies, plan health and wellbeing experiences that use relevant learning contexts and ensure that all contributions come together coherently. This results in experiences and programmes that build learners' knowledge, understanding and skills in a progressive way. As many of the experiences and outcomes are written to span two or more levels, they are regularly revisited through a wide range of relevant and realistic learning experiences that ensure young people are progressing in their development and learning.
- Children and young people's learning benefits from highly effective cluster and transition arrangements. These enable learners in several curricular areas, notably in PE and Music, to engage in very well-planned, coherent learning at all levels. This learning takes place in both primary and secondary environments.
- The Communities Along the Carron Association (CATCA) works closely with the school providing a strong community link. The group are instrumental in improving the local landscape whilst giving young people skills and experiences of outdoor learning.
- The school has recently introduced a new approach to delivering RME across S2 and S3 through a rota aligned to the school's Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical Wellbeing (MESP) programme. As this arrangement rolls out, the Faculty Head should ensure robust evaluation of its impact on young people's progress and attainment. This also applies to the integration of RME into the Humanities programme in S1. Overall, young people have very good opportunities to progress their study of religion and morality from the BGE into National Qualifications (NQs) in RMPS, philosophy and sociology. The school is at the early stage of planning to increase provision for core RME across the senior phase.

2.7 PARTNERSHIPS: Theme 3, Impact on learners – Parental Engagement

- The school is very proactive in attempting to increase parental engagement in learning. Staff provide a range of faculty and school workshops to help parents to support their children's learning. Parents are provided with strategies to support learning and are encouraged to learn alongside their children. For example, parents are encouraged to read the texts their children are studying in English.
- The school discusses improvements with focus groups of parents and approaches such as this have led to more effective parents evenings and improved support for parents. Parents receive quick responses to concerns and feel that communication is effective. The school app, social media feed and email are used effectively to support parents in helping their children to learn.
- For further information on parental engagement see the choice QI: 2.5 Family Learning.

2.1: SAFEGUARDING

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and where appropriate, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority

3.1 ENSURING WELLBEING, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

very good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
- *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
- *Inclusion and equality.*

As a result of the very high quality provision across the school, including very well managed universal and targeted support, inspectors found young people to be achieving the following outcomes:

- Young people understand their rights and responsibilities and respond to situations accordingly. Interactions between all members of the school community are positive and focus on the needs of young people. As a result, young people have positive working relationships with one another and staff.
- Expectations of high standards in every aspect of school life, based on the principle that 'only the best will do', is a hallmark of Larbert High School. The strong conviction that all young people have talents and the capacity to benefit from their educational experience results in a strong sense of pride in the school on the part of young people. They are confident about who they are, and feel valued.
- As a result of the approaches to ensuring the wellbeing of young people, the school is improving outcomes for almost all students. Young people are provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to, influence and lead on aspects of their learning within health and wellbeing. Consequently, they are acting as positive, credible role models for younger learners.
- The full engagement of staff is evident in the commitment of each faculty to elaborate their distinct contribution to learning in MESP, and in the participation of staff in Career-Long Professional Learning. Young people would benefit from greater support in recognising how they are applying their health and wellbeing skills in other areas, and understanding the links between their wellbeing and skills for learning, life and work.
- Young people recognise the positive impact initiatives such as the Leadership Academy, the discursive approach to MESP and the extensive access to physical activity are having on their wellbeing. A minority of young people reported that the school could do more to teach them to be healthy.
- There are a number of targeted interventions in place that are resulting in young people feeling safe, cared for and nurtured. Young people in the nurture base, Lily Pad, have shown an improvement in their attendance, developed social skills, and improved attainment. More widely, they have engaged successfully with their learning, and school more generally.
- The school builds confidence in young people which empowers them to confidently

take on roles in support of others, for example leading work to raise awareness of Amnesty International, writing and producing a drama highlighting domestic abuse or undertaking training in Mental Health First Aid to support peers' wellbeing.

- The school is making very good progress in gathering evidence and analysing available information which identifies improving outcomes for young people and their families through their approach to wellbeing. For example, work on attitudes to risk taking behaviour show a positive improvement in most areas as well as reported improvements in associated behaviours.
- Almost all young people feel that there are members of staff who know them well and to whom they can go with any concerns. Changes in the pupil support structure continue to develop well. Most young people who spoke with HM Inspectors report that they are better known and have someone they can turn to when needed. Senior leaders should continue to evaluate the impact of the restructure on young people's outcomes.
- Young people trust adults in school to respect confidentiality but also appreciate that they will share information appropriately to ensure they get the help they need. They are confident that professionals work together effectively on their behalf.
- Consistent approaches to monitoring, recording and tracking achievement across key aspects of learning ensure that appropriate progress is being made by young people facing additional challenges. There is outstanding practice in the way the school monitors attendance, late-coming, exclusions and progress for particular young people facing additional challenges such as looked after children, and those from the most deprived areas. This is resulting in improved outcomes for young people.
- Targeted groups of young people are achieving and feel well supported. For example, all young carers, with their consent, have mentors who track performance and wider wellbeing to ensure that they are nurtured, included and achieving at the school. There are innovative programmes in place to support young people that are resulting in improvements to their wellbeing.
- Young people with additional support needs are very well monitored and tracked across the school. They are achieving personal targets documented in support plans. Senior leaders should evaluate the deployment and impact of support staff in ways that demonstrate the 'added value' to young people.
- The school welcomes all parents and is particularly sensitive to the needs of minority groups and makes sure, wherever possible, that particular factors do not become barriers to participation. As a result, young people are participating well and gaining personal achievements within and beyond school.
- There are effective approaches to inclusion that result in young people achieving real and meaningful success in their school lives. Young people report an authentic sense of achievement where they feel their successes are valued and celebrated. Young people develop self-confidence, self-esteem and positive views about themselves and their school, through taking part in an extensive and varied programme of activities both within and out of school hours.
- Young people understand that they are responsible for their actions and that actions

have consequences. Young people who display behavioural issues are supported very well and are developing skills to manage their emotions and make better choices when responding to new challenges.

- The approaches adopted to support young people focus strongly on equipping them with the necessary skills and attainment to prosper on transition to their next placement or when leaving school to take up their place in the community. Young people are optimistic about what they can achieve.
- As a result of very well-planned and targeted partnership working, young people act as responsible citizens who show respect for others, who understand different beliefs and cultures, and who are developing informed, ethical views of complex issues. They are knowledgeable about equalities issues, and are confident in challenging discriminatory attitudes that openly and tacitly legitimates some form of exclusion. The school should proceed, as planned, to further develop their approaches to LGBTI+.
- Almost all young people feel that bullying is dealt with effectively. They know where to go for support when things go wrong and have the confidence to report incidents, they feel that these are not always effectively resolved. The school should continue to support the review by young people of its anti-bullying policy and include information gathered from young people on their experiences of prejudice based bullying and barriers to reporting.
- The school's compliance with statutory requirements and codes of practice is improving outcomes for young people.
- The school's provision for RME in the senior phase does not meet statutory requirements. However, plans are developing to improve this over time. As the planning for this provision is further developed, staff and senior leaders should implement robust evaluation to measure the impact of the new approach. There is a need to ensure all young people continue to deepen and extend their understanding of religion and belief within the local, national and global context and experience more challenging learning experiences as they move through senior phase.
- The school has appropriate arrangements for religious observance (RO) which is delivered in partnership with the chaplaincy team. There is scope to further develop this aspect of school life through self-evaluation and review. Senior leaders, with school partners and young people, should ensure RO takes good account of Scottish Government guidance and Curriculum for Excellence Briefing no. 16 and meets the diverse spiritual needs of the school community.

3.2 RAISING ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

very good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*
- *Attainment over time*
- *Overall quality of learners' achievement*
- *Equity for all learners.*

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

BGE

- The school provided the following data: In 2016, by the end of S3 all young people (100%) achieved third curriculum level in reading, writing, listening and talking. All young people (100%) achieved third curriculum level in numeracy. Over half of young people achieved fourth curriculum level in reading (66%), writing (57%), listening and talking (69%) by the end of S3. Over half (69%) achieved fourth level in numeracy by the end of S3. Standardised tests are used to demonstrate added value. However, this is not effective in demonstrating progress over time through the BGE for groups of learners. Over the next few years, the school's BGE tracking and monitoring system will be able to do this.

Senior phase

Leavers

- **Attainment of young people in literacy by the time of leaving school:** the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF levels 4+, 5+ and 6 in literacy has increased between 2011 and 2015. Trends are positive over the 5 year period at SCQF levels 3+ to 6. The school performs in line with the virtual comparator (VC) at SCQF levels 3+ , 5+ and 6 in the latest year. The school performs significantly higher than the VC at SCQF level 4+ in the latest year.
- **Attainment in numeracy by the time of leaving school:** the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF levels 4+ and 5+ has remained stable and at level 6 has declined slightly between 2011 and 2015. There is not a consistently improving trend over the 5 year period at SCQF levels 3+ to 6. The school provided data for leavers to show that young people performed strongly at levels 3+ and 4+ and 5+ in the latest year.

As young people move through the school from S4 to S6:

- In S4, the percentage of young people attaining **literacy** at SCQF level 3+ and 4+ is significantly higher than the VC between 2014 and 2016. Almost all young people attained literacy at SCQF level 4+ in S4 in 2015 and 2016. By S5 most attained at SCQF level 5+ in 2016. Generally, the school is performing in line with the VC across stages and SCQF levels in 2016.
- In S4, the percentage of young people attaining **numeracy** at SCQF levels 3+ and 4+ is significantly higher than the VC in 2016. Almost all young people attained at SCQF level 4+ in S4 in 2016. By S5, most attained at SCQF level 5+ (just under half as a course). The school performs generally in line with the VC across S4 and S5 and across SCQF levels in the latest year. By S6, the school provided data to show young people perform strongly at SCQF levels 3+ and 5+.
- The school has an effective strategy in place to ensure teachers plan for young

people's progression in literacy and numeracy skills to ensure that these skills continue to be developed throughout the senior phase.

Attainment over time

BGE

- The school has developed a very rigorous system to track progress across all areas of the curriculum in the BGE. Data on achieving levels in all subjects is collated effectively and analysed to establish intervention strategies. Other data from standardised assessment is used well to measure what value the school is adding for young people. The system has been evolving. However, there is not yet sufficient data to demonstrate progress over time and improvements in performance for groups of young people. The attainment data on literacy and numeracy from primary schools is beginning to be built into the secondary school monitoring and tracking system. This development should continue.

Senior phase

- Between 2011 and 2014, the school presented cohorts of young people for SCQF qualifications in S3. Insight does not provide data for young people presented for qualifications in S3. The school provided data which shows consistently high levels of attainment over time but there was no noticeable improving trend.
- The school continues its rigorous approaches to tracking and monitoring into the senior phase for young people in S4 to S6. This very effective system enables staff to set targets and regularly tracks whether young people are on target. Clear systems are in place to ensure there are effective interventions for young people who are in danger of not meeting their targets. These planned interventions are monitored very well by the PT Performance Information. Young people with ASN are performing above the VC.
- The average total tariff scores and average complementary tariff scores of all leavers has fluctuated over the last five years but showed improvement in 2015. The average complementary tariff score is generally above the national average. The school provided data which included those young people who had participated in early presentation. This data showed that young people performed consistently above the VC.
- There has been steady improvement in complementary tariff scores as young people move through the school from S4 to S6. In S4, complementary tariff scores for the lowest attaining 20% have been in line with the VC in the latest year. They have been in line with the VC for the middle attaining 60% and significantly higher and significantly much higher than the VC for highest attaining 20% in the past 2 years. In S5 the school performs generally in line with the VC.

Breadth and Depth

- Between 2011 and 2015, the Insight data is impacted negatively by the school's policy of early presentation.
- **At S4**, the percentage of young people attaining 1+ to 10+ courses at SCQF levels 3+ and 4+ is generally significantly above the VC in 2016. The percentage of young people attaining 1+ to 6+ courses at SCQF level 5C+ declined in the latest year and was significantly below the VC for 6+ courses in 2016. The percentage of young people attaining 4+, 5+ or 6+ qualifications at SCQF 5A+ in the latest year is significantly lower or much lower than the VC.

- **By S5**, the percentage of young people attaining 1+ to 6+ courses at SCQF levels 5C+ improved well in 2016 and is in line with the VC. The percentage of young people attaining 1+ to 6+ courses at SCQF level 6C+ is showing overall improving trends. The school performs in line with the VC.
- **By S6**, the percentage of young people attaining 1+ to 5+ courses at SCQF level 6C+ is overall in line with the VC and there is generally an improving trend. The percentage attaining 1+ courses at SCQF level 7C+ is in line with the VC in 4 of the past 5 years. There has been an increasing trend over the last 5 years.
- **In S4**, at National 4 in 2016 the school performs significantly higher than national figures in around half of subjects. At National 5, in 24 subjects, most young people presented passed at A-C. In 2 subjects, (Spanish and hospitality: practical cookery), school performance is significantly higher than national performance. Young people's attainment is significantly lower than national performance in drama, geography and engineering science.
- **In S5/6**, at National 5 and at Higher in 2016 the school performs in line with national figures across almost all subjects.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- The school has very strong links with partners to support young people's achievements. Skills development is tracked very well and the relevant staff have a clear overview of young people's achievements both within and outwith school. High numbers of young people benefit from achieving through participation in over 70 school clubs and activities which take place out of school hours. Almost all young people develop confidence through participation in sporting, cultural and musical events. There are a number of young people who excel in sporting activities such as gymnastics, water polo, sailing and judo. Sporting participation is increasing year on year. Football, rugby, cheerleading and dance teams have great success in local competitions. The sporting 'Schools of..' build team working skills, enhance confidence and provide young people with links to local and national opportunities to develop their skills and achievements further. A group of young people, who require additional support with their learning, developed their confidence and increased their resilience through gardening and winning a Royal Horticultural Scotland Award for garden innovation.
- Almost all young people gain leadership skills and make important contributions to the local community through participation in the Community Council, working with Forth Valley Hospital and a range of local partners such as Communities Along the Carron. Particularly effective are the school captains whose leadership is a credit to the school. The Leadership Academy helps young people from all year groups to develop confidence, resilience, organisational and team working skills. Young people develop an understanding of those less fortunate than themselves through volunteering and fundraising for many charities. They develop their awareness as global citizens through participation in such things as Inspiring Purpose and Amnesty International. The wide range of residential trips develops a broad range of social skills.
- Overall, young people develop a broad range of useful skills through participation in out of school hours activities, electives and outstandingly well-planned and accredited wider achievement opportunities across the curriculum. In 2016, this

resulted in over 400 young people gaining a total of 1034 accreditations through the SQA, coaching programmes, Saltire Awards, NPA units, Youth Achievement Award, John Muir Award and CREST Award. These opportunities are providing young people with a rich breadth of learning. The school has a comprehensive understanding of the accreditations that are happening across the school and uses it to analyse how they can intervene to support young people to further achieve.

- The school's approach to raising achievement is very well planned and managed. Links between the skills framework, electives, wider achievement opportunities and the Leadership Academy are very well organised. This is leading to increased achievement across the school. The school's skills framework is used very well to track and monitor effectively the development of young people's skills across the curriculum. In the Education Scotland questionnaire 96% of young people took part in wider achievement activities.

Equity for all learners

- The school has rigorous and highly effective approaches to monitoring and tracking the equity of provision for young people across the school. SIMD data is used very effectively to monitor uptake of 'Schools of..' residential opportunities and the attainment and achievement of young people in the BGE and senior phase. The school has successfully tackled the level of exclusion across the school, with only 15 incidents of exclusions in 2015/16. The school should continue to keep the 'Schools of..' programme under review to ensure as wide access as possible.

Attainment vs Deprivation

- The SIMD distribution is quite broad. According to the 2012 SIMD data the majority of young people in the school are in deciles 6 and 8-10. There are few young people in deciles 1 and 7. Overall, the total tariff and complementary tariff scores of leavers in each of the deciles is in line with the national figures and very occasionally significantly higher than national figures in deciles 6, 8, and 10.

Destinations

- Over the past 5 years, almost all young people have entered a positive destination on leaving school. There has also been an improving trend. The percentage going to higher education has increased over the latest 3 years and is in line with the VC in 2015. The percentage of young people leaving school for employment is generally in line with the VC but was significantly higher than the VC in 2013. The percentage leaving for FE has improved from significantly lower than the VC to be in line with the VC over the last 3 years. The percentage of young people leaving school for training is generally significantly much higher than the VC. Over the last 5 years, the percentage of young people staying on at school after S4 has increased.

SCHOOL CHOICE OF QI: 2.5 FAMILY LEARNING

This indicator focuses on increasing the positive impact of working with families to improve learning and achievement. The emphasis is on schools working in partnership with others in the community to support families to secure better outcomes through programmes which enable them to improve literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

- *Engaging families in learning*
 - *Early intervention and prevention*
 - *Quality of family learning programmes*
- The school is starting to develop Family Learning approaches. They recognise the importance of both universal and targeted support to families. The school piloted a new approach to the S2 parents' evenings that involved the young people in leading the discussions about their learning. However, this met with a mixed response from parents. There is scope for further work on this. Close working between Pupil Support staff and other teachers is helping to positively target families requiring support.
 - Parents and carers are involved in learning with their children as part of the *Flourish* programme. School staff are making good use of data to target those families in need of support. Activities are focussed around health and wellbeing, for example cookery and sport. Although numbers are small, this is a positive start to involving parents in joint learning activities. Feedback from parents and young people include improved communication skills and confidence. There are some early signs of improvements in literacy. There is scope for school staff to explore Family Learning in other contexts and to involve parents and carers in planning programmes. Engagement with cluster primary schools could also help build on existing transition arrangements. Options for organising activities with partners outside of the school should also be considered. The school should use the locality plan more to understand the needs across the community.
 - The school has established an Agency Led group to plan and develop Family Learning approaches across the school. A recent curriculum information evening was extended to partners such as CLD, Social Work and SACRO. This is a good start to promoting partnership working and developing Family Learning initiatives.

PARTICULAR STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

- Collaborative approaches to developing and implementing a shared vision across the school and cluster. This includes a shared approach to professional learning and curriculum development. As a result the school can demonstrate very effective planning for continuous improvement and an appropriate pace of change.
- Outstanding strategic leadership of the headteacher and the culture of purposeful leadership at all levels. The school community provides a vibrant learning environment and ensures positive outcomes for young people.
- High levels of staff engagement in professional learning which is leading to continuous improvement in learning and teaching. As a result there are examples of innovative and creative practice across the school. This is supported very well by the increasingly consistent use of well-planned assessment and moderation to ensure young people make appropriate progress in their learning.
- The strong outcomes in relation to wellbeing and highly effective approaches to inclusion, equity and equality result in almost all young people feeling very well supported and able to achieve.
- The positive attributes and skills that young people develop as a result of their extensive participation in opportunities for achievement. This is very well supported through robust planning, tracking and monitoring against a skills framework which ensures progression and success for almost all young people.

AGREED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL

- Continue to implement developments identified in the school improvement plan.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE 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. Falkirk Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.