

# Summarised inspection findings

**Bannockburn High School**

Stirling Council

29 April 2025

## Key contextual information

School Name: Bannockburn High School  
Council: Stirling Council  
SEED number: 5726131  
Roll: 520

Attendance is generally lower than the national average. Exclusions are generally in line with the national average. Exclusions have decreased in 2023/2024.

In September 2023, 23% of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2023, 33% of pupils lived in 20% of the most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2023, the school reported that 50% of pupils had additional support needs (ASN).

The headteacher has been in post for the past seven years. She is supported by three deputy headteachers, five curricular leads and six principal teachers of pupil support.

Bluebell House supports 16 young people across three classes. Young people attend the provision from across Stirling Council and have a range of additional support needs. A deputy headteacher and a principal teacher have lead responsibility for Bluebell House.

The principal teacher has been in post since June 2024. The headteacher of Bannockburn High School has overall responsibility for the Bluebell House provision.

There are five associated primary schools.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**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

- Across the school there is a supportive and nurturing learning environment. Young people settle quickly to work, demonstrating a willingness to learn. Relationships between staff and young people, and young people themselves are very positive. Almost all young people are well behaved and work purposefully on tasks and activities. Almost all teachers use praise well to encourage learners, helping to build young people's confidence. Young people are very appreciative of the time and effort their teachers put into helping them to achieve success.
- Almost all young people focus well on the tasks they have been set and participate well in learning. In a majority of classes, young people actively engage in tasks. In a minority of classes, young people are too passive in their learning. Young people would benefit from more opportunities to lead aspects of their learning.

- A well-considered learning and teaching framework has been introduced which outlines what young people can expect at the beginning, middle and end of each lesson. This effective work is impacting positively on the quality of classroom practice. For example, in most classes, teachers share the purpose of the learning and how young people can achieve success. In the majority of lessons, they return to these during the lesson to help young people understand their progress. Teachers should further refine their use of higher quality success criteria to enable young people to understand the next steps in their learning. This includes revisiting success criteria more frequently during lessons. In all faculties, teachers use plenaries at the end of lessons. In a few lessons, teachers use plenaries effectively to check for understanding and support the planning of future learning. School leaders should now consider how effective practice in this area can be shared more widely across all teachers.
- School leaders should continue to work with staff to explore ways in which young people's understanding of the skills they are developing, in and through the curriculum, can be built more explicitly into lessons.
- All staff have access to information about the individual needs of learners. Most staff use suggested strategies to support the learning needs of individual young people. In almost all lessons, teachers' support is the main source of differentiation. The majority of teachers set similar tasks for the whole class in both the Broad General Education (BGE) and in the Senior Phase. Senior leaders should work with staff to ensure that the needs of all young people are met well through appropriately planned learning activities set at the right level of difficulty.
- All young people have access to digital devices, and these are used well in most classes. For example, most teachers use an online platform to share resources, collect learners' work and to provide valuable feedback. This platform helps young people to access their learning and to reflect on their next steps. In a few classes, teachers make very effective use of digital technology to support peer assessment by sharing pupil exemplars. Young people who require additional support with their learning access assistive technology, as appropriate, to support their learning. There is scope for most teachers to develop increasingly effective ways to use digital technology to support young people with their learning.
- In most lessons, teachers offer a range of feedback strategies to support young people. Young people respond well to opportunities for self and peer assessment. All teachers support young people to understand the progress they are making in their learning through regular learner conversations. As a result, almost all young people across the school are confident in discussing their progress and how they can improve further.
- Young people respond well when skilful questioning is used to help them to develop their higher order thinking skills. Senior and middle leaders should continue, as planned, to share the most effective practice in questioning with all teaching staff.
- School leaders and teachers work very well together to consider how approaches to assessment can best support young people to make progress in their learning. Across the school, teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment to check for young people's understanding. As a result, almost all young people are clear about the next steps in their learning. Teachers should now consider ways in which assessment evidence can be used to inform the planning of learning, teaching and assessment to ensure that all young people are appropriately challenged in their learning.
- Almost all teachers are confident when making summative assessment judgements in the Senior Phase. They use strong verification procedures to ensure they are making sound judgements. Teachers who are Scottish Qualifications Authority appointees provide beneficial

expertise to colleagues about national standards. In the BGE, teachers are becoming more confident in planning learning using the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and using the national Benchmarks to monitor young people's progress. Across all faculties, teachers take a holistic approach when making judgements about young people's achievement of a CfE level. Teachers should continue to develop a shared understanding of standards in the BGE and should continue to link with colleagues across local authority subject networks to confirm standards of assessment at S1 to S3.

- In a minority of faculties, staff use moderation activities well to plan courses and lessons. An important step for school leaders is to support all teachers as they engage more fully with the learning, teaching and assessment cycle. This will help teachers to make sure that they develop a shared understanding of standards and expectations in the BGE.
- Across all faculties, teachers monitor the progress of young people. The quality of this is variable and senior leaders should support teachers by sharing good practice across the school. There are strong examples of classroom teachers monitoring and tracking the progress of their learners and adapting their planning to better meet their needs. They provide additional support and consolidate learning for young people who are off track and at risk of not succeeding.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

**satisfactory**

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

- In 2022/23, by the end of S3, almost all young people achieved CfE third level or better in literacy. Most young people achieved this in numeracy. The majority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in reading and a minority of young people achieved this level in writing, listening and talking and numeracy. There were improvements in attainment at both third and fourth level literacy and fourth level in numeracy in 2022/23.
- Collaborative working between middle leaders is developing well, with a range of strategies to promote and support learning in numeracy in place. Teachers work regularly with primary colleagues towards the development of a consistent approach to learning in numeracy. Their work with associated primary schools is enabling teachers to set appropriate expectations and standards in numeracy from S1. This approach has included planning, moderation and professional learning through a practitioner enquiry model. This practice could be extended to other curricular areas to better support understanding of national standards.

#### Senior phase

##### Leavers (literacy)

- Staff are sustaining their drive to ensure that all young people leave school with an award in literacy. Almost all young people achieved Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 4 or better in literacy over the past 5 years. The majority of young people leaving school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. This is significantly lower than the virtual comparator (VC) in 2018/19, 2019/20 and in 2022/23. The majority of young people left the school having achieved SCQF level 6 in literacy from 2018/19 until 2021/22. This was in line with the VC.
- The performance of young people with additional support needs shows a decline at SCQF level 5 or better from 2020/21 to 2022/23. Performance at this level is consistently below the VC over the five-year period, 2018/19 to 2022/23. A minority of young people leaving school achieved SCQF level 6 in literacy between 2018/19 and 2022/23. This is also consistently below the VC over the same five-year period.
- In 2024, the attainment of National 5 English at S4 is above the national average for A grades and is mainly in line with the national average in the previous four years.
- In S5, at National 5, A-C passes are above the national figure in two out of the last 5 years, and above the national average in 2023/24. In S5, higher results at A-C are in line with the

national over the past 5 years. In Higher English at S5, A passes have been broadly in line with the national average for 4 out of the last 5 years.

### **Leavers (Numeracy)**

- Since 2018/19, almost all leavers achieved SCQF level 3 or better in numeracy and in more recent years, this measure has been significantly much higher than the VC. In 2018/19, 2020/21 and 2021/22 almost all leavers achieved SCQF level 4 or better in numeracy.
- Over the past five years, the majority of leavers achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy, apart from 2021/22 when most leavers achieved at SCQF level 5. A few leavers achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy in 2019/20, 2020/21 and in 2022/23. Performance at this level is generally significantly lower or much lower than the VC. There is not yet consistent improvement at this level over time.
- There is a notable difference in the success young people have in gaining unit passes as opposed to an overall course award. It is important that young people are supported to achieve an overall quality award in numeracy.
- Since 2018/19, most learners with ASN achieved SCQF level 4 or better in numeracy. The minority achieved SCQF level 5 or better.

### **Cohorts (literacy)**

- At S4, the majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy between 2019/20 to 2023/24. There is improvement since 2021/22 at this level.
- By S5, based on the S4 roll, most young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy between 2019/20 to 2023/24. There is improvement since 2021/22 at this level. A minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better. This is broadly in line with the VC.
- By S6, based on the S4 roll, the majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better over the last 5 years, 2019/20 to 2023/24. A majority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy in 3 out of the last 5 years. This is in line with the VC.

### **Cohorts (Numeracy)**

- In 2023/24, most young people at S4 achieved SCQF level 4 or better in numeracy. Almost all achieved numeracy at this level in 2019/20. The majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy 2023/24. This is an improvement from the previous three years where a minority of young people achieved at this level. This is now broadly in line with the VC. By S5 based on the S4 roll, the majority of leavers achieved SCQF level 5 or better which in the recent year, 2023/24, is significantly higher than the VC. Over the 5 years until 2023/24, a few young people achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy by the end of S6 based on the S4 roll. This is consistently significantly lower than the VC in the last five years.
- Staff introduced National 5 Applications of Maths in 2021 to provide more numeracy pathways for young people. In 2022/23 and 2023/24, the percentage of entries of S4 learners is higher than the national figure. In 2023/24, the percentage of learners achieving a grade A or B is higher than national figure, which is an improvement on previous years. Overall, the percentage achieving an A-C grade is lower than the national figure.
- The percentage of young people entered for National 5 Mathematics in S4 is lower than the national figure. This has been the pattern over the past four years. Apart from 2021/22 and 2022/23, the percentage of young people achieving at SCQF level 5 in mathematics with a grade A–C is higher than the national figure.



## Attainment over time

### BGE

- Established tracking and monitoring processes in the BGE (S1 to S3) enable senior leaders to have a clear overview of the progress young people are making over time. Middle leaders discuss this progress at attainment meetings with senior leaders across all curricular areas. These take place three times per year. As a result, young people are identified who require additional support to make better progress and those young people who may need additional challenge in their learning. The school can evidence improvements over time in all but two curricular areas, where they have had significant staffing issues.
- There is a high percentage of young people, nearly half the S4 cohort, being dual presented for both National 4 and National 5. Around a fifth are being dual presented for one course and two courses. Senior leaders should continue to review their approaches to monitoring and tracking the progress of young people in the BGE to ensure that young people are appropriately presented for National Qualifications.

## Senior Phase

### Improving attainment for all Leavers

- When compared using average complementary tariff points, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20% is in line with the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23, having been significantly lower in 2018/19 and 2020/21 and much lower in 2019/20. The attainment of the middle attaining 60% is variable and is significantly lower than the VC in 2022/23, having been in line with the VC in the previous three years. For the highest-attaining 20% of young people, attainment is significantly lower than the VC in the past 4 years, from 2019/20 till 2022/23. This is an area which the school recognises as requiring significant improvement. Senior leaders are taking measures to focus on this area.

### Cohorts

- At S4, when compared using average complementary tariff points, the attainment of all groups is generally in line with the VC. By S5 and by S6, there is a need to improve attainment for the highest 20% of learners, which is generally significantly lower than the VC.

### Breadth and depth

- At S4, most young people achieved 5 or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better from 2019/20 to 2023/24. At SCQF level 5C or better, there is a need to improve attainment, including top quality passes. Although performance is generally in line with the VC over the last five years from 2019/20 to 2023/24, senior leaders recognise the need to improve performance.
- By S5, based on S4 roll, attainment at SCQF level 6C or better does not demonstrate consistent improvement. Performance at SCQF level 6A or better is generally significantly lower or much lower than the VC.
- By S6, based on S4 roll, attainment at SCQF level 6C or better shows overall improvement over the five-year period and is generally in line with the VC.
- School leaders and staff should continue to review and refine the curricular offer for young people in S6. This should support young people to make course choices in order to maximise their potential to achieve and attain well.
- Senior leaders and staff have introduced a variety of pathways to support the attainment of young people. They should continue to review the number of courses young people are



presented for. Young people in S4 are presented for a higher number of SCQF qualifications than the national average. It is important for senior leaders to identify the value added through additional courses to young people's attainment, learner pathways and experiences. They should review their aspirations and ambition for, and with, young people to ensure success at the appropriate SCQF levels. In addition, curriculum leaders need to continue to strengthen their approaches to monitoring and tracking young people's progress over time in the BGE. This will support them to determine confidently the most appropriate SCQF presentation level for all young people to maximise their success and life chances.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Principal teachers of pupil support track and monitor young people's achievements both within and out with school. Their tracking of in-school events that are on offer for young people supports senior leaders and staff to carefully monitor levels of participation. The achievements of young people are celebrated well and are recognised through praise cards, award ceremonies and social media posts. Young people develop a wide range of skills through participation in wider achievement activities. Young people have a strong sense of pride in their achievements and are able to link these to Bannockburn's ASPIRE values of being ambitious, supportive, proud, inclusive, resilient and giving full effort. Young people gain a number of important life skills through their participation in achievements including communication, teamwork, problem solving and creativity. They also contribute to the wider life and work of the school. Senior leaders and other key staff work with young people who are not participating in wider achievement to identify activities that they would like to participate in.
- Young people benefit from a range of activities including sports clubs, Skills Afternoons, the City Music Project and Bikeability. Senior staff encourage and promote the use of guest speakers to enhance the achievement offer and broaden the experiences of young people. There is an enhanced community programme for young people in Bluebell House which develops well their confidence and problem-solving skills.
- Young people contribute well to their wider community. A few young people are trained in Mentors in Violence Prevention and support individual younger pupils who benefit from regular one to one interaction. Mentors describe how this helps them to adapt and develop their communication skills. Young Leaders of Learning, Social Justice Ambassadors, Pupil Improvement Teams and the Youth Voice Charter are all leadership activities available to young people which support the further development of important skills. A few young people participate in Pupil Improvement Teams. They work with key members of staff to evaluate and advise on school improvement priorities. Young people value these opportunities. Pupil Support learner conversations enable young people to discuss their wider achievements with a teacher they know well. The majority of young people feel that their views are sought and valued.
- A few young people in S6 achieve SCQF level 6 certification for their work as sports leaders across the wider school community. A few young people receive external accreditation for volunteering. Senior leaders should consider formalising this procedure as there is scope for many more senior pupils to receive similar accreditation. Senior leaders should ensure that accreditation reflects the wide variety of volunteering activities that young people participate in. Senior leaders should continue to consider how to include young people who have any barriers to participation.

### **Equity for all learners**

- When compared using average complementary tariff points, in 2022/23, attainment is significantly higher than the national average in 2022/23 for young people living in deciles 3, 5 and 6. For all other deciles, attainment is below national average.

- Attendance is a high priority for all staff. There has been an increase in attendance rates in session 2023/24. Senior leaders and pastoral staff track and monitor the attendance of young people, including those who find staying in class challenging. Young people at risk of underachieving due to low attendance are supported effectively to attain a SCQF level 3 and 4 qualifications in literacy and numeracy. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used to support attendance and engagement of young people at risk of underachieving. Senior leaders should continue to involve parents, carers and partners more robustly in decision making processes about the PEF spend.
- The number of exclusions has reduced in recent years. Senior leaders and pupil support staff monitor closely any exclusions and have developed approaches and supports to reduce the likelihood of further incidents.
- A majority of young people stay on at school beyond S4 and continue to the end of S6. Staff work with a wide range of partners to support young people as they approach the point of leaving school. Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, most young people entered a positive destination on leaving school.

### Context

Bluebell House supports 16 young people across three classes. Classes are temporarily housed within Bannockburn High School until a new building is completed. The designated area includes small classrooms, break out spaces, toilet facilities and one-to-one working spaces. Young people attend the provision from across Stirling Council and have a range of additional support needs. At the time of the inspection, all young people were in the BGE stages of school. A few young people access mainstream subjects and a few access opportunities to engage socially with peers in the mainstream school. A deputy headteacher and a principal teacher have lead responsibility for Bluebell House. The principal teacher has been in post since June 2024. The headteacher of Bannockburn High School has overall responsibility for the Bluebell House provision.

### QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Young people display positive behaviours. They share learning spaces and cooperate with each other on tasks and activities. A few young people disengage from learning, mostly as a result of their additional support needs. Led by the principal teacher, staff have improved total communication approaches and developed predictable learning and classroom routines which is helping most young people to understand what is being asked of them. This is supporting them well to engage in their learning, regulate their emotions and manage their behaviour better. Episodes of dysregulated behaviour have decreased since the introduction of this way of working across the provision. Staff should continue to identify ways to reengage all young people in their learning and support them to make the best possible progress.
- A few young people successfully access learning alongside their peers in the mainstream school. Young people experience positive and nurturing relationships with staff and peers. Staff consistently model respectful interactions with young people and with each other. All staff have engaged in useful professional learning to better understand young people's wellbeing and learning needs. Staff have created calm classroom environments and helpful spaces to support young people self-regulate if they become overwhelmed. Staff are skilled at recognising disengagement and providing support to help young people manage their emotions and behaviour. As a result, most young people feel safe and understood. Young people feel well supported and able to express their views and feelings with trusted adults.
- Individual learner profiles are supporting mainstream teachers to understand better the additional support needs and strategies to support young people in their learning. Bluebell House and Bannockburn High School leaders should continue to work together to ensure that where possible, young people have more opportunities to learn together with their peers in mainstream. This will provide young people with greater opportunities to use their social communication skills in a wider context and allow them more access to specialist areas as they move through the BGE into the senior phase of schooling.
- Newly introduced planning frameworks are better supporting teachers to plan learning more consistently across curriculum areas. Teachers now set learning more appropriately to the needs of young people. Teachers use a small range of helpful base line assessments with young people. They assess learning predominantly through observation and professional judgement. Senior leaders should continue to involve teachers in moderation activities to build their confidence in making accurate professional judgements about learners' progress and attainment through the CfE levels. Teachers would benefit from using national Benchmarks more consistently across all curriculum areas to evidence young people's progress better. This will help teachers create a shared understanding of standards. Young people's progress and

achievements are recorded and shared with parents through learning journals and during review meetings. Parents would welcome more opportunities to understand better their young person's learning and progress. New tracking and monitoring approaches are beginning to support teachers to better evidence young people's attainment across the curriculum including the levels of support they require to be successful.

### **QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement.**

- Overall, almost all young people in Bluebell House are making appropriate progress in their literacy and English, communication and in numeracy and mathematics. A few young people could make better progress.
- Almost all young people listen and contribute well using gestures, phrases and sentences when engaging with others and contributing to discussions. They appropriately respond to questions being asked by staff and share their views and opinions. Almost all young people understand and use information to complete tasks and activities in class such as finding key pieces of information in text. Most young people enjoy engaging with books and being read to. A few young people read across a range of genres. Young people use their digital skills to search websites and research facts based on their interests. A few young people are improving their communication skills through the use of newly established total communication approaches and improved use of Alternative and Augmentative Communication strategies. They use core vocabulary boards well to express their views and feelings. Teachers should continue to develop further approaches to reading and writing. This includes developing better young people's use of digital applications and tools to extend the range of texts and writing available to them. This will support young people to develop better their thoughts and ideas in the work they produce.
- Most young people are working appropriately with number in a range of contexts. Young people use their understanding of number and money well in a range of practical and meaningful contexts such as shopping. They can use visual schedules and timetables to understand routines and time throughout the school day. Young people can use a range of charts and diagrams to sort data and extract information. Staff should continue to support young people to develop numeracy skills in practical and day to day contexts. Across all areas young people require more opportunities to practise their numeracy and mathematics knowledge in real life contexts. A few young people have advanced numeracy skills and require further opportunities to achieve as well as possible.
- Young people are working within CfE levels from pre-early level to second level. A few young people have increased access to mainstream classes and are now being introduced to work at third level.
- Through reviewing reports, carrying out classroom observations and reviewing class work, staff identify any adjustments that are required to maximise the learning for young people. Almost all young people are making appropriate progress from prior levels of attainment. There is scope for a few young people to attain and achieve more with improved differentiation and increased pace of learning.
- Senior leaders should continue to embed the recently established tracking and monitoring system to measure young people's progress more systematically over time across all areas of the curriculum. This will also capture better the progress young people are making in relation to their individual learning and wellbeing needs.

- Young people across the BGE benefit from a range of wider achievement experiences provided in collaboration with the school's partners. Young people demonstrate confidence and independence while developing a range of life skills through participation in activities such as sporting events, Bikeability and engaging in community events. Senior leaders have recently introduced a system to track learners' participation in these experiences. This is beginning to help them ensure that no learner is at risk of missing out. Senior leaders should continue to track the progression of skills and the young people's understanding of them. This will support young people to develop and use these important skills in day-to-day life.
- Overall, most young people's attendance at Bluebell house is above the national average. Senior leaders should continue to monitor the attendance of a few learners whose attendance is currently low and required to improve.
- All staff have a good understanding of young people's social, economic, and cultural context. They understand and take account of the impact of a range of other factors such as additional support needs, wellbeing and family circumstances. Senior leaders use PEF to support young people's participation in a small range of activities to support their wellbeing. These interventions are having a positive impact on their social experiences and wellbeing. Senior leaders should continue to review the impact of these interventions to evidence how well they have contributed to closing any gaps young people have in their learning as a result of socio-economic factors. Senior leaders should continue to involve parents in making decisions about PEF.

## Additional evidence

- Young people experience two hours of high-quality physical education each week. They also receive their entitlement to religious and moral education.
- Staff have a strong understanding of the social, cultural and economic context of the school. Staff have developed ways to support young people and families with the cost of the school day. Sanitary products are easily accessible from various locations around the school. Young people feel that this removes any concerns regarding period poverty. A well resourced uniform bank provides a variety of items. Pupil support staff sensitively work with young people and families to identify where there may be a need for uniform items. Senior leaders should consider how to make this available more universally.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.