

Summarised inspection findings

Glenrothes High School

Fife Council

11 February 2020

School Name Glenrothes High School
Council: Fife Council
SEED number: 5406730
Roll (Sep 2018): 770

Attendance is generally in line with the national average. Exclusions are generally below the national average.

In February 2019, 24% of pupils were registered for free school meals.
In September 2019, 26.4% of pupils lived in 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.
In September 2019, the school reported that 40% of pupils had additional support needs.

Key contextual information

The headteacher has been in post for five years. She is supported by a senior leadership team comprising three depute headteachers and a business manager. At the time of inspection the school roll is 770. Glenrothes High School (GHS) hosts a local authority Department of Additional Support (DAS) for secondary aged young people with additional support needs from Fife. Currently, 43 young people attend the DAS.

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

- The headteacher is committed to developing an inclusive ethos throughout the school. The positive and supportive environment in the school reflects the core values of confidence, ambition, respect and resilience, equality and success (CARES). In almost all lessons, the relationships between staff and young people are strong and based on mutual respect. Almost all staff know the needs of the young people well. In most lessons, young people are engaged and demonstrate commitment to their learning. Almost all young people speak very positively about the strong support they receive from teachers.
- Most young people enjoy their learning and are motivated during well-planned learning activities. Most lessons are well structured and almost all teachers share the purpose of learning with young people. In the majority of lessons, teachers make explicit links to prior and future learning. Most staff share how learners will know when they have been successful in learning. In a few effective examples, learners work with their teacher to co-construct a shared understanding of the outcomes for effective learning.
- A range of approaches to learning are employed across the school. A majority of learning activities are teacher-led and directed to the whole class. Less than half of staff offer opportunities for young people to learn independently. Young people's learning would

benefit from this practice being extended more widely across the school. Teachers should continue to improve pace and challenge.

- As part of the school's '2020 Vision', staff and young people have worked together to develop a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching. This has been underpinned by a planned programme of career-long professional learning, self-evaluation and consultation to develop the learning and teaching strategy. All staff should continue to work together to achieve consistent high-quality learning and teaching. For example, in extending opportunities for pupil-led learning and greater differentiation.
- A few senior pupils are very effectively leading self-evaluation relating to learning and teaching. They have conducted pupil focus group discussions and contributed to school improvement targets. Young people's views are sought, valued and acted on in relation to learning and teaching. Teachers ask for feedback on learning and this is helping to improve learners' experiences. Most departments have 'you said, we did' visual displays to show how feedback from learners is being reviewed and improvements implemented.
- Learning is planned using the 'GHS Standards for Learning and Teaching', the school's 'CARES' values and 'Super Six Skills'. To help young people to understand the purpose of learning, senior leaders should review these learning frameworks. Streamlining the strategies used to support planning for learning should help staff have a clear and consistent approach to learning and teaching.
- In almost all lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Most teachers use questioning to establish young people's understanding and to engage them in learning. A few teachers use questioning to promote higher-order thinking skills effectively. Young people would benefit from this practice being shared more widely across the school. Plenaries are used at the end of most lessons to check young people's learning. In a few lessons, the discussions during plenaries are used well to inform the next lesson or are reviewed as starter activities.
- In the majority of classes in the senior phase, learners receive very effective verbal and written feedback on their learning. In the broad general education (BGE), in almost all curriculum areas, young people receive useful feedback on their learning. Less than half of teachers offer high-quality written feedback on pupil's work. Learning conversations feature in most departments at each stage and are supporting most learners to know their current level, targets and next steps to improve.
- The majority of staff use digital technologies to support the delivery of lessons. A few teachers employ digital learning effectively to enhance learners' engagement and experiences. Staff should use digital technology available within the school more creatively to enhance learning.
- In the BGE, all teachers employ experiences and outcomes and National Benchmarks well to plan learning and assessment. Most staff employ a range of effective assessment approaches. This is supporting teachers to make informed judgements about young people's progress in learning. In the senior phase, all staff have a strong understanding of assessment requirements within courses. They use approaches that support young people to make progress towards gaining National Qualifications. More than a few staff undertake Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) roles to strengthen their understanding of national expectations and share this experience with other colleagues.

- All faculties are using moderation and verification procedures well to ensure assessments are reliable and to improve consistency in teacher judgement. Less than half of departments across the school are involved in working in collaboration with other local secondary schools. Senior leaders have identified the need to re-establish moderation with associated primary schools.
- In the senior phase, parents receive three tracking reports and two parents' evenings per session. Staff use the reports to outline data relating to a learner's progress. This allows parents' evenings to focus on in-depth discussions about progress, next steps and how parents can support learning. Senior leaders need to monitor this approach to ensure all parents are accessing timely, high-quality feedback on their child's progress.
- Departments are using a variety of approaches to monitor and track young peoples' progress very well. This is allowing teachers and middle leaders to identify young people who are not progressing well with their learning and implement effective support strategies.

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

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 BGE data, including data for 2019, which shows an improving trend in attainment in literacy and numeracy by the end of the BGE. In 2019 by the end of S3, most young people achieved Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level in reading, writing, listening and talking. Most young people achieved third level in numeracy. Senior leaders consider data linked to professional judgement of a CfE level as becoming more robust and reliable.
- Data supplied by the school shows that, by the end of S3 in 2019, the majority of young people achieved fourth level in listening and talking. The data suggests improvement in reading, writing and numeracy since 2017. The school has deployed a range of additional support, resources and interventions to improve literacy in the last session, including providing more intensive support to groups of learners. The school has been successful in helping to improve the reading ages and abilities of S1 and S2 learners who have been using a programme to support reading at an appropriately challenging level.
- The headteacher and her staff are aspirational for all young people. Teachers have been engaging more with internal moderation of their programmes of work and making links with aspects of literacy and numeracy more explicit. This is helping to improve achievement and attainment.
- Teachers use their professional judgement, Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSAs), other standardised assessments and a range of other information, to monitor improvement in young people's attainment. Staff track and monitor closely young people's attainment and achievements across the BGE and senior phase. Senior leaders have supported staff through professional learning. This has assisted in improving teachers' skills in analysing and making effective use of data. This is helping teachers to identify individual and groups of young people within the data sets. Staff are now clearer about the actions required to raise the attainment and achievement of young people.
- The school has developed helpful policies which outline the responsibility all teachers have to improve young people's skills in literacy and numeracy. Staff are increasingly taking responsibility for developing young people's literacy and numeracy across all areas of the school. New courses in S1 and S2 have been introduced following self-evaluation which included seeking out young people's views. The S1 course focuses on science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The S2 course focuses on literacy, research skills and career management skills. Senior leaders should evaluate the impact of these on young people's ability to make better transitions into the senior phase.

Senior phase

Literacy and numeracy

- Almost all young people leaving school in the three years from 2015/16 to 2017/18, have achieved literacy at SCQF level 3 or better. In 2017/18, almost all leavers achieved at SCQF level 4 or better and most leavers achieved literacy at SCQF level 5 or better. Almost all young people leaving school in the three years from 2015/16 to 2017/18, have achieved numeracy at SCQF level 3 or better. In 2017/18, almost all leavers achieved literacy at SCQF level 4 or better and the majority at level SCQF level 5 or better.
- There are improving trends in the last five years in the percentages of young people leaving school with literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better and level 5 or better through a course award. In 2013/14, performance at SCQF level 4 or better in numeracy is significantly higher than the virtual comparator (VC). In 2015/16 at SCQF level 5 or better, in numeracy performance is significantly much higher than the VC. In 2016/17 at SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy, performance is significantly higher than the VC. The trend, for young people leaving with additional support needs, attaining SCQF level 4 or better and level 5 or better in literacy and numeracy has been an improving one since 2015/16.
- Between 2014/15 and 2018/19 in S4, the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 3, level 4 and level 5 or better in literacy has been improving over time and is in line with the VC. By S5 from 2015/16 to 2018/19, the percentages of young people attaining at SCQF level 5 or better in literacy has increased.
- Between 2014/15 and 2018/19 in S4, the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 3 and level 4 or better in numeracy has improved and was significantly higher than the VC in 2015/16. By S5 at SCQF level 5 or better, the percentage of young people attaining was significantly higher than the VC in 2016/17 and significantly much higher than the VC in 2015/16. By S6, the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 5 or better was significantly much higher than the VC between 2015/16 and 17/18. At SCQF level 6, there has been an improving trend and performance has been significantly higher than the VC in 2018/9.

Attainment over time

BGE

- Senior leaders have a strategic overview of progress over time in the BGE. Staff are making use of data from primary schools. Senior leaders believe that staff have improved their judgement of young people's progress through and achievement of CfE levels. Teachers are able to show the progress of learners through the BGE, updating the tracking system. Senior leaders and teachers are able to benchmark over time. The system allows staff to compare the attainment of individual young people across all curriculum areas. Young people are more regularly discussing with their teachers how to progress their learning and setting targets for improvement. Teachers work collaboratively with other staff within the school and some with colleagues across a group of neighbouring secondary schools, and others across a wider area to improve their judgement of young people's progress through and achievement of a CfE level. Teachers are increasing their use of National Benchmarks.
- Senior leaders are beginning to use the whole school data to identify and support and challenge inconsistencies in performance in the BGE. The school's robust approaches to tracking young people's progress has allowed it to identify better young people's needs and interests and to target appropriate interventions.

Senior phase

- The school provided evidence of achievement of young people which was not available through Insight, the Scottish Government benchmarking tool.
- Young people study on average six courses in S4, five courses in S5 and four courses in S6 in the senior phase. Staff have reviewed and updated the curriculum to widen the range of courses and programmes available. As a result, there has been an improvement in a number of outcomes for young people. The school is using local market intelligence to refresh the curriculum offer with courses which help to develop skills for work.
- The lowest attaining 20% of young people leaving the school, middle 60% and highest 20% as measured by tariff points (complementary) has improved over the period 2013/14 to 2017/18. This has been broadly in line with the VC. For the middle 60% and highest attaining 20% this was significantly higher than the VC in 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Breadth and depth

- At S4, the percentage of young people achieving six or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better is in line with the VC over the four years from 2015/16 to 2018/19. In 2018/19, the percentage of S4 obtaining six or more qualifications at 5C or better has improved to the highest in the past five years. At SCQF level 5A, the percentage of young people achieving six or more qualifications increased between 2014/15 2016/17 and has remained the same since then. However, the school has set targets to secure greater numbers of passes at 'A' and 'B'. By S5, for four or more and five or more qualifications at SCQF level 6C or better, these are in line with the VC.
- The number of learners with additional needs gaining qualifications at SCQF levels 2 and 3 has increased and the school is now more aspirational in also presenting young people, where appropriate, at SCQF levels 4 and 5.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people have a very impressive range of opportunities to achieve and contribute to the life of the school. As a result, high numbers of young people are developing the skills, attributes, knowledge and capacity to succeed in life and work beyond school. Young people enjoy and value having access to a wide range of lunchtime and after school activities. Some of the clubs and activities are led by young people. A wide range of trips, including residential trips develops a broad range of social skills. High numbers of young people develop confidence through participation in sporting, cultural and musical events. Previously, all S5 and S6 young people completed the Youth Philanthropy Initiative and this year all in S3 are doing so. This helps to embed the importance of giving back to the community through charity work. Many leadership opportunities across all stages are adding value to young people's achievements. The many opportunities for young people to achieve are enhancing their physical, social and emotional wellbeing and developing their talents and interests.
- Recognition and celebration of achievement is very strong. Young people are proud of their achievements and those of their peers within the culture of achievement. Social media, the school website, assemblies, local press, newsletters and displays around the school are just a few of the ways the school uses to showcase achievement. In addition, merit points, 'learner of the month', 'achiever of the month', achievement letters and praise postcards are all examples of the various ways in which young people can be recognised for achievement. Seniors are engaged in the recognition and celebration of achievement through the popular and inclusive 'Achievement Fridays'.

- Effective use is made of a range of wider accreditation awards available across the school to recognise achievement. This includes The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Saltire Award, Youth Achievement Awards and Dynamic Youth Awards. Through these awards, young people have developed leadership skills, resilience, confidence, team-working and communication skills. Almost all young people at the senior phase have developed life skills through work to achieve a Heartstart award. A group of young people achieved life skills through participating successfully in the F24 challenge. They designed and manufactured a racing car which enabled them to compete at Silverstone. Young people have been able to achieve qualifications and awards in addition to National Qualifications through their learning pathway choices. Often these achievements have been personalised. In recent years, additional qualifications and awards young people have achieved have included skills for work, National Progression Awards, Scottish Vocational Qualifications, Foundation Apprenticeships, Higher National Certificate and Young Applicants in Schools Scheme.
- Senior and middle leaders effectively track young people's engagement and success in wider achievement activity both within and outwith school. Young people are encouraged to engage in a range of achievement experiences which provide a breadth of participation. Young people can confidently discuss some of the skills they are gaining from their experiences. Senior leaders recognise that linking the tracking of achievement to skills development would be a helpful next step. Engaging young people in identifying and planning their skills development through their achievement opportunities would be an important next step.

Equity for all learners

- The school has a very strong commitment to ensuring equity for all learners. Highly effective support is in place for young people and their families to overcome the impact of economic hardship. Taking into account the contexts of young people's lives beyond school, removing barriers within a framework of 'poverty proofing the school day' are outstanding strengths of the school's approach to promoting equity. The school reduces the 'cost of the school day' through providing support in the areas of Uniform, Travel, Learning, Friendship and Community, School Trips, Eating at School, School Clubs and Home Learning.
- The school has performed better than the national average for young people leaving in 2017/18 in deciles 1, 2, 4 and 8. The school has successfully narrowed the attainment gap between SIMD 1 and 2 and 9 and 10 as measured by tariff points.
- Senior leaders consulted with parents, young people, partners and staff on how best to use Pupil Equity Funding. A plan to support the development of young people's literacy, numeracy and wellbeing is now in place having taken account of views. The targeted interventions have a clear rationale and effective arrangements are in place to monitor the impact of this work. There is clear impact for a number of targeted young people on levels of confidence, attendance engagement and attainment. A few young people articulate the transformational change to them and the impact the interventions have had on their life chances.

Positive destinations

- Over the five year period between 2013/14 and 2017/18, the percentage of leavers moving on to an initial positive destination has fluctuated between most to almost all. In 2017/18, the figure has improved to almost all moving on to a positive initial destination and is in line with the VC. The percentage of young people leaving school at the end of S4 has reduced in 2017/18 and is below that the VC, local authority and the national average. In 2017/18, the initial destination which the highest proportion of leavers moved on to was Higher Education.

Attainment vs deprivation

- 86.3% of young people live in datazones designated in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 to 5. Almost 18% live in SIMD 2. The average complementary tariff scores and average total tariff scores of leavers living in SIMD 2 was significantly higher than the national figure in 2017/18.
- Exclusion levels have declined in recent years and is below national average. The school community's strong promotion of the 'CARES' values and inclusive approaches is contributing to this.
- Senior leaders place a very high priority on high attendance of young people. Attendance of all young people and groups of young people with protected characteristics are monitored very closely to ensure that interventions are put in place and barriers are removed as quickly as possible. The school works closely with parents and partners to support strong attendance so that young people can achieve the most from their school experience. Attendance has been maintained in recent years and is in line with national average.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The school's approaches to reducing the cost of the school day (poverty-proofing).

Quality of provision of Special Unit (contributes to school evaluations)

Glenrothes High School (GHS) hosts a local authority department of additional support (DAS) for secondary aged young people with additional support needs from across Fife Council. The DAS provides young people with small group, full time educational provision. A majority of young people benefit from opportunities to access a few learning opportunities within GHS where this meets their learning and social needs. Currently, 43 young people attend the DAS.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Staff working in the DAS provide a nurturing and supportive environment for almost all young people. Young people accessing the DAS interact well in almost all classes and are respectful towards each other. In the majority of activities, learners' experiences promote independence and develop skills for life. In well-planned activities, young people understand the purpose, enthusiastically engage with, and lead aspects of their learning. Young people have opportunities to contribute to a few whole school activities, for example, a horticulture group and a café. The high level of support in each class enables most learners to stay on task and promotes positive patterns of behaviour. DAS staff need to provide appropriate challenge for all young people taking account of individual needs. For a majority of learners this includes demonstrating growing independence for their learning.
- All teaching and support staff reflect the school's commitment to providing a caring environment. They understand the individual needs of young people. In less than half of activities, teachers effectively differentiate learning for most young people. In less than half of classes, learners can identify individual targets and discuss progress made in relation to their targets. However, in a majority of classes, staff need to develop more creative teaching approaches, informed by a variety of assessments. This should support better individual learners develop skills, attributes and capabilities across a range of contexts.
- DAS staff, supported by the leadership team, should review and measure the impact of interventions. This should include working with young people, parents and appropriate agencies to focus clearly on expected outcomes. DAS staff need to detail the young people's additional support needs, plan how to meet needs, agree outcomes and specify what additional support is required. This should support the DAS staff in providing a coordinated approach to meeting those additional support needs and allow them to accurately track and monitor the progress of each individual learner. In the nurture base, young people have needs assessed and staff are at the early stages of using assessment to plan targeted approaches. In this setting, young people and staff discuss skills, then write and display them in an accessible manner.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- In the BGE, all young people are working below levels outlined in the CfE framework. However, young people are making satisfactory progress in relation to prior levels of learning in literacy and numeracy. Staff are actively making improvements in how they track achievement of a CfE level for young people in the BGE. However, there are not yet robust or reliable approaches to tracking attainment over time. Information provided through pupil reports identify most young people in the BGE as having not yet achieved early level in literacy and first level in numeracy. A few young people have achieved CfE first level and a few second level in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment over time

- The majority of young people in the BGE are making good progress in listening and talking. During almost all activities, young people interact positively, are respectful of other's views, and can offer appropriate responses to questions. With support, a few young people can extend learning to develop their perspective to prepare for a debate. Most young people can transfer talking and listening skills to real life contexts. For example, preparing for planned events, confidence in working in teams to plan cafés, developing friendships and requesting appropriate support from staff.
- Most learners in the BGE are making satisfactory progress in reading and writing. Most young people require additional support to engage with a range of texts. However, a majority of young people use taught strategies to read familiar words or texts. They read aloud, adding expression and find the main ideas of texts. When writing, a majority of young people create short texts, complete worksheets and write for real life contexts, such as, menus and invitations. Teachers should now plan to support learners write more independently and write extended pieces of text for a variety of purposes.
- Less than half of young people in BGE make good progress in numeracy and mathematics and access mainstream classes appropriate to their developmental age. This is providing them with opportunities to progress on courses at National 3 and National 4 as they move into their senior phase. A majority of learners are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and require significant support. The majority can tell the time using quarter past, half past and quarter to. They can undertake basic addition and subtraction tasks.
- In the senior phase, almost all young people are achieving a range of National Qualification units and course awards from National 1 to National 4 in mathematics and English. For a few of these young people, there is not sufficient progress made across their senior phase beyond National 1 number and communication units. Young people will benefit from additional challenge and opportunities to achieve through a wider range of courses.
- Positively, a few young people access mainstream classes in their senior phase. As a result, they progress well through national courses, achieving National 5 course awards in mathematics, computing, chemistry and media. Additionally, a few young people who access mainstream classes for their senior phase achieve Higher course awards, such as in biology and human biology.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Across the DAS, young people have effectively developed important life skills to interact positively and develop confidence in less familiar contexts. The majority of young people gain recognition and develop skills for a range of achievements. Such as, quadcopter challenges, firefighter for a day, youth arts productions, learner of the month, sporting competitions and school clubs. This has led to personal achievement awards for the majority of young people in their senior phase. The young people benefit from how the school recognises and supports wider achievement and success. For example, young people participate in national swimming competitions, work experience and college placements.
- Young people speak positively about their experiences with a few able to link developed skills to skills required for life after school. There is a need to improve how to plan and recognise targeted skills and the resulting positive outcomes for all learners.

Equity for all learners

- The DAS evidence since 2016/17 shows an improving trend in the attainment of almost all learners. Positively, all young people who left in 2018/2019 moved onto post-school positive

destinations. These include, work placements, college and other identified positive destinations provided by selected partners.

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.