Summarised inspection findings

St Stephen's High School

Inverclyde Council

14 May 2024

Key contextual information

St Stephen's High school is a denominational school in the town of Port Glasgow, Inverclyde. The head teacher has been in post since 2022 and is supported by two depute head teachers and an acting depute head.

St Stephen's sits within Port Glasgow Community Campus, sharing a building with Port Glasgow High School and Craigmarloch School.

At the time of inspection the school role was 534 young people.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average.

Exclusions continue to be lower than the national average.

In September 2022, 30% were registered for free school meals.

In September 2022, 68% of young people live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2022, the school reported that 46% of pupils had additional support needs.

1.3 Leadership of change	good

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

- The headteacher provides highly-effective leadership and is held in high regard by staff, learners and parents across the school community. Since coming into post, he has led a number of important developments across the school which have resulted in positive impact for young people. These include, for example, introducing greater accountability for middle leaders and class teachers, developing approaches to monitoring and tracking the progress of young people, and setting high standards and expectations for learning and teaching. These are providing greater clarity and a clearer sense of direction for staff.

- The school leadership team is benefiting from clearer direction and leadership and now holds key strategic responsibilities which support the implementation of areas of focus within the school improvement plan. Senior leaders collaborate closely with middle leaders to effect improvement in departments and faculties. For example, they hold regular departmental meetings with a focus on attainment, classroom practice and professional learning. The headteacher should continue to support and challenge his senior leadership team and review their strategic remits regularly to ensure there is greater impact. In a few areas of the school such as universal support, depute headteachers should strengthen their leadership and approaches to monitoring and evaluating the impact of their work.

- Staff feel empowered to lead improvement, particularly within their curriculum areas. Staff value opportunities to influence the curriculum and approaches to pedagogy. They are introducing new programmes and courses in the senior phase and are trying out new approaches to teaching and learning. Teachers appreciate the support they receive from local subject networks and partners, particularly in moderation. They welcome having opportunities to look outwards and learn from others. Teachers are working well in school improvement groups to take forward school improvement plan priorities.

- Senior leaders and staff are working well together and have established a strong sense of community in a nurturing, inclusive and supportive learning environment. Almost all staff feel valued and indicate that the school's vision and refreshed values are beginning to underpin their work more consistently in classes.

- The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school, captured by the motto 'Strive for Success.' This vision signals high expectations and aspirations for all young people. Through it, the headteacher is promoting a collective sense of purpose and common goals for all staff and young people across the school. The vision is underpinned by a strong set of co-created values (fairness, ambition, inclusion, trust and honesty) which are displayed prominently across the school. These values align well with the school's focus on gospel values. Almost all young people understand these values and demonstrate them through their positive attitudes and behaviours. Together, the vision and values play an important role in

driving improvement and are a motivating influence on staff and young people alike.

■ The school improvement plan, 'Strive to 25' provides clarity for the school community about what the school is aiming to achieve for young people. Senior leaders ensure that the improvement plan priorities are drawn from a range of self-evaluation activities and align well with most national and local improvement priorities. They include targets that are measurable, manageable and reflect the school's context well. The priorities are shared with the parent council, the wider parent body, and staff. Senior leaders have managed the pace of change carefully and sensitively to allow practice in learning and teaching to be consolidated.

■ Senior leaders have created a Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) plan which identifies priority areas for intervention for young people who are living in the least affluent deciles. The use of these funds is a feature of consultation with key partners such as parents, staff and young people. Their views are fully considered and taken account of. Plans have prioritised the recruitment of key staff to focus on working with young people and deliver strategies to meet their needs. The plans also support increasing progress for identified young people most impacted by socio-economic disadvantage, which the school are doing well in some measures.

■ Departmental improvement plans link closely with school improvement priorities. A whole school self-evaluation calendar is used by departments across the school. Link depute headteachers now monitor more robustly how faculties and departments are progressing with improvements through the use of regular meetings. This increased level of accountability is ensuring key improvements.

■ There is variability in the quality of departmental improvement plans, with a few priorities not sufficiently linked to self-evaluation. Greater consistency is required with a clearer focus on improving outcomes for young people and aligned self-evaluation activities such as analysis of attainment data or learning observations. A more robust approach to departmental improvement planning has the potential to support departments to demonstrate improvements more clearly.

■ All teachers participate in annual professional review and development discussions with line managers across the school. These are well aligned to departmental and school priorities. Staff reflect well on their practice and gain a deeper insight into how they can lead on departmental and whole school improvement. Professional learning is helping to extend their skills, knowledge and expertise in important areas such as learning and teaching and trauma informed practice. This practice is supporting the wellbeing of identified learners and resulting in them feeling nurtured. As a next step, professional learning on universal support and wellbeing, progression in learning and the use of assessment would be helpful to improve practice further.

■ Senior young people in leadership positions such as head boy and girl and their deputes contribute to the positive ethos of the school. There is a strong pupil council with two representatives from every class. They effect change and improvement by meeting regularly to discuss issues which impact on them and the classes they represent. Their successes include a range of approaches to support their peers with mitigating against costs of the school day. This includes the provision of stationery and personal items for young people to access free of charge. These young leaders also successfully campaigned for school water bottles for the entire school community as part of their work to promote healthy living and to address issues around single use plastics. A "you said - we did" board informs all pupils of what changes have been made and their positive impact on young people across the school. Senior leaders and staff should continue to build on this valuable work. This can ensure that every young person

feels listened to and that their opinions are valued in school decision making, evaluation of learning and teaching as well as aspects of school budgeting.

- Senior leaders recognise the need to incorporate employability and skills development into the curriculum. Young people are not yet able to talk confidently about these skills. External employability partners talk positively of the good relationships they enjoy with school staff. A minority of young people undertake work-experience placements to develop their skills in readiness for the workplace.

- There has been limited staff professional learning around the planning and implementation of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and curriculum development. Staff are beginning to develop their awareness of national guidance in areas such as Career Education Standards, Workplace Standards and the support materials available on Career Management Standards. Senior leaders need to develop a more robust strategic approach to DYW in the school, with a clear focus on employability and skills, will support young people's aspirations, ambitions and future career pathways.

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

■ In almost all classes, young people benefit from positive and respectful relationships with staff and each other. There is a calm, orderly and purposeful learning environment in the school which supports young people well to participate in their learning. Young people appreciate the support they receive from teachers and other staff. They value the support offered to them through the extensive range of study support programmes and wider learning activities beyond the timetabled school day.

■ Most young people are confident in talking about their learning experiences and what they feel helps them to learn. Teachers support young people to develop their confidence through learning collaboratively, presenting their learning to their peers and group-based activities. All departments seek young people's views on their learning, and most make adjustments based on learners' responses. In a few subject areas, young people are able to make choices about what they learn.

■ In most classes, teachers support individuals and groups of young people directly during a lesson. An important next step for most teachers is to ensure that all lessons are suitably differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. This includes those learners who would benefit from greater challenge. A few teachers plan this skilfully. Senior leaders should consider how these approaches are more systematically and widely shared. In a minority of lessons, young people would also benefit from a brisker pace of learning.

■ In almost all lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and the purpose of learning is shared with young people. Teachers have developed a "holding screen" which provides an overview of learning intentions, success criteria, skills and alignment to rights of the child. At the start of the lesson, teachers display these for young people. A few teachers use the holding screens effectively to support young people to evaluate their own learning. Teachers should consider how these approaches may be further reviewed and streamlined to support young people's learning more effectively in all classes.

■ In the majority of lessons, young people benefit from a range of teaching and learning approaches including opportunities to work collaboratively or independently. This helps young people to be more engaged and active as they take responsibility for their learning. In most lessons, young people are not able to access digital technology independently to enhance their learning. As a result of challenges to accessing ICT, this constrains the ability to use digital technology well within lessons. A few teachers are piloting innovative work to develop the use of artificial intelligence to support learning.

■ In most lessons, teachers use questioning to check young people's understanding and evaluate how they are progressing. In a few lessons, teachers use highly effective questioning

to promote higher order thinking skills among young people. Senior leaders should consider how questioning can be shared further across the school.

- During most lessons, teachers give individual feedback that supports young people to understand what they need to do to progress with their learning. Teachers use a range of feedback including oral and written and, in a few instances, digitally through an online platform. Young people also engage regularly in one-to-one learning conversations with their teachers which also help them to identify their progress and next steps. Currently, these approaches are more developed and streamlined in the senior phase. Learners in the broad general education (BGE) are less clear on their progress, strengths and next steps in learning.

- A minority of teachers adapt their planning effectively in response to emerging formative assessment evidence. They use a range of strategies for checking for understanding and use this evidence to make subsequent revisions to lessons. This includes, for example, consolidating learning for a few learners whilst considering extension work for others. This practice of using assessment evidence to inform planning remains an important area for improvement.

- All teachers engage in well-planned moderation activities in both the BGE and the senior phase. This includes frequent and extensive work with subject colleagues in their joint campus. Teachers also work with colleagues across the local authority. In the senior phase, teachers are supported further within the school by colleagues who have taken on Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) responsibilities within their subject area. Teachers have a clearer understanding of national assessment standards for learners in the senior phase as a result of this work. Teachers are using a wider range of assessment evidence to inform their professional judgements. Teachers have a strong understanding of national standards and expectations as a result of this collective work.

- Teachers monitor and track the progress of young people well. They now need to use this information more effectively to inform their planning of learning, teaching and assessment. A minority of teachers use the monitoring and tracking data well to consider the planning of appropriate tasks and activities. This enables learners to make appropriate progress. This practice should be shared across the school. Senior leaders are well placed to proceed as planned to adopt a whole school approach to planning learning, teaching and assessment.

- Teachers have developed the St Stephen's High School Learning and Teaching Policy. The "Preparing for Success" component is having a positive impact. In almost all lessons, regular routines for learning such as starters and processes for collaborative working are a consistent feature of teachers' practice. This is working well across the school. Senior leaders have identified the importance of developing consistently high-quality learning experiences for young people.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ Curriculum for Excellence levels are shared from primary to secondary for literacy and numeracy. These are used well to support progression in literacy and numeracy as young people move from P7 to S1. Middle leaders are aware that courses in S1 need to provide better continuity and progression, building more effectively on what children have learned and achieved at primary school across all curricular areas, outwith literacy and numeracy. Young people are building on their prior learning through the emerging helpful work in the cluster science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) event and through achieving the Discovery Crest Award in P7 and S1.

■ Young people do not yet receive their entitlement to experience the full range of experience and outcomes at third curriculum level by the end of S3. Young people access a second additional language during the BGE in line with national recommendations. The school is meeting the minimum national recommendation in relation to high-quality physical education (PE) provision and core Religious Education.

■ The current approach to progression in the BGE focuses on teachers planning courses and programmes based on Curriculum for Excellence levels. Curriculum leaders are well placed to review planning for progression, based on reliable monitoring and tracking, that allow learners to progress in different ways and at different rates. A minority of young people would benefit from moving onto fourth level at an earlier stage.

■ Young people make choices at several points in their learning pathways. The school is currently developing its approaches to ensure that young people are fully informed on how best to make subject choices. Senior leaders have recently developed approaches for school-wide tracking and monitoring through the broad general education and senior phase. This has the potential to support young people to make more appropriate choices for their subjects as they will be better aware of how well they are performing across subjects.

■ The senior phase offers young people clear progression pathways for most curricular areas and subjects although in a few instances, young people have been unable to access curriculum linked to their progression pathway. Curricular leaders should consider the full range of qualifications, accreditation and awards for young people. This may involve the delivery of bi-level classes to ensure that young people have appropriate progression routes from S4 to S5 or S5 to S6. In the senior phase the school has developed partnerships with schools across the authority and, in particular, the joint campus to widen pathways for learners.

■ The school is at an early stage of developing a clear and shared strategy for the development and assessment of literacy and numeracy as a responsibility for all. A few departments are focussing on literacy and numeracy skills in the BGE through planned class and homework tasks.

■ Learners in the BGE benefit from one timetabled period of personal and social education (PSE) Young people in the senior phase do not experience timetabled periods of PSE. Senior leaders should work with the local authority to ensure that PSE entitlements for senior phase pupils appropriately prepare all young people for life beyond school.

■ Several curriculum areas display informative notice boards in corridors highlighting career opportunities and pathways linked to their subjects. Vocational pathways are extended in S4 to S6 to include a range of appropriate options to suit individual learner needs. The recognition

and development of skills is embedded well using holding screens during lessons. This provides learners with important insight into skills development related to possible future careers.

- Vocational pathways are offered in S4 to S6 and are delivered at the local college across nine subject areas. College vocational programmes are promoted well within the choices options provided to learners and parents. This demonstrates clearly, parity of esteem with other course options. However, there are variable success rates for S5/S6 courses.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ Most parents value the regular communication from the school. This includes a headteacher newsletter and social media updates. Parents appreciate the helpful merit emails which let them know when a young person has done well at school. A minority of parents would like more information on option choices.

■ A significant minority of parents do not think that the school offers activities for parents and young people to learn together. The school is at an early stage of delivering planned engagement activities and events with parents. This will help to engage more parents to support learning at home.

■ The Parent Council is beginning to re-establish its purpose following a period of change. It has established a positive relationship with the school leadership team which ensures that members are regularly consulted on proposed changes. For example, the Parent Council contributed to the refresh of the vision, values and aims and the school improvement plan. The Parent Council should continue with its plans to engage further with the wider parent community.

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.

<table>
<tr><td>

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

</td><td>

satisfactory

</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

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

</td></tr>
</table>

■ The wellbeing of young people is supported by positive, caring and nurturing relationships across the school community. Positive relationships have been enhanced by the recently developed 'Nurturing Relationships for Success' policy. Young people feel ownership of this policy, having been involved in its creation alongside parents and staff. Most young people feel that staff and their peers treat them fairly and with respect. Almost all young people feel that staff help them to be responsible for their own behaviour. Young people welcome approaches taken by the school to recognise and celebrate positive behaviour, and efforts for greater consistency in addressing behaviour across the school. Young people feel that their successes are increasingly recognised and celebrated.

■ Staff understand that the basis for pupil participation is enshrined in the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The inclusiveness of St Stephen's comes from the values of the school, its climate and ethos and the headteacher's relentless pursuit of ensuring that all young people are valued. As a result, almost all young people feel a sense of belonging and included in the school. The headteacher seeks and values the views of young people. He demonstrates respect for young people's rights to express an opinion and to have it taken into account on matters that affect them. This contributes to an inclusive school environment.

■ Staff and young people are at an early stage of developing a shared understanding of the language of wellbeing and the wellbeing indicators. Young people in S1 and S2 completed a wellbeing survey recently that guidance staff plan to act on. Young people from S3 to S6 have a limited understanding of wellbeing indicators and their progress against these. Senior leaders need to provide clear strategic direction in this area and should now consider the most effective way to develop, assess, track and monitor the wellbeing of all learners. A whole-school approach to the use of wellbeing indicators has the potential to help staff to monitor all young people's wellbeing and evidence wellbeing outcomes.

■ The Mentors in Violence Prevention programme gives a minority of young people in S6 a valuable opportunity to take a leadership role in supporting the wellbeing of learners in the BGE. They are acting as positive, credible role models to younger learners. Younger learners feel this contributes to the support network, including guidance staff, within the school. They would welcome further opportunities to influence and lead on aspects of learning in relation to wellbeing.

■ The Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme does not include clear and progressive learning across the BGE and is not on offer in the senior phase. As a result, young people are not building on their prior learning well and there are gaps in their learning. Young people are

unable to articulate how they are progressing with wellbeing or how to take steps to improve their outcomes. Young people in the senior phase would welcome greater input to support them with choices after school such as budgeting, aspects of equality and diversity, and managing risks. Senior leaders now need to review the scope, content and delivery of PSE.

- Young people appreciate and value the individual support and care they receive from their guidance staff. Most young people feel that there are members of staff who know them well and to whom they can go to with any concerns. At times, young people feel that they have limited opportunities to discuss their wellbeing, learning, and achievements and set appropriate targets with their guidance teachers. Given the constraints of guidance staff getting to know their caseload, it would be helpful to develop a whole-school approach to the delivery of universal support entitlements. This might include strengthening the role of first-line guidance as part of registration.

- The school is further developing their approach to tracking and monitoring the needs of young people with Additional support needs (ASN). Support plans should contain appropriately specific and measurable targets to ensure young people are receiving the right level of support at the right time. Senior leaders recognise the need to evaluate these plans more rigorously and robustly to ensure that young people are overtaking their personal targets.

- The targeted provision in the school, The Hub, is effective in supporting a few young people who have barriers to learning. Although this department are at early stages of demonstrating impact, young people feel well supported, valued by staff and have a strong sense of belonging. They feel that The Hub is a safe haven where they can go for support. Almost all young people attending The Hub are supported to achieve literacy and numeracy qualifications.

- Guidance staff have introduced clear procedures to track and monitor young people's attendance. The deployment of the wellbeing officer is supporting a few young people who do not attend. There is variability in how young people with very low rates of attendance are being supported. It would be helpful for more effective earlier interventions to be in place, which might include appropriate referrals to partner agencies. There are higher number of latecomers and attendance anomalies across the school that all staff should continue to address.

- Staff adopt a nurturing approach to resolving issues of disruptive behaviour. Professional learning on 'trauma informed practice' is resulting in fewer immediate referrals of young people directly to senior leaders. There has been a significant reduction in exclusions in the latest academic session 2023-24. Young people who have been excluded speak positively of the support they receive from the school to help manage and regulate their emotions. As a result, there are rarely any repeated exclusions for the same young person.

- The ethos of anti-bullying is embedded in day-to-day practices. There is a respectful, equitable and inclusive culture and ethos where respect and promoting positive relationships and behaviour are evident. As a result, incidents of bullying are very low. Incidents of bullying are analysed and appropriate responses, including input from partner agencies, are put in place. Most young people feel that bullying is dealt with effectively by guidance staff. Principal teachers of guidance (PTGs) should review how they record incidents of alleged bullying to reflect national guidance better.

- Young people who are care experienced are supported well by the Guidance team. Young people speak positively about their experiences of school. The school should build on their 'Care Experienced tracker' to allow for a more strategic overview of outcomes for care

experienced young people. A next step for senior leaders is to ensure that all care experienced young people are considered for a coordinated support plan.

- Staff understand that the basis for pupil participation is enshrined in the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The inclusiveness of St Stephen's comes from the values of the school, its climate and ethos and the headteacher's relentless pursuit of ensuring that all young people are valued. As a result, almost all young people feel a sense of belonging and included in the school. The headteacher seeks and values the views of young people. He demonstrates respect for young people's rights to express an opinion and to have it taken into account on matters that affect them. This contributes to an inclusive school environment.

- Most young people say that the school helps them to understand and respect other people. In a number of curriculum areas such as English young people study a range of texts which help them to explore and challenge discrimination in relation to protected characteristics. The STEM group is supporting an increasing number of girls to take up opportunities leading to pursuing careers related to STEM subjects. They speak positively of all young people being given strong equal opportunities to succeed. The new school Equality and Inclusion Group should now provide a strategic approach to ensuring that all staff consistently promote equality and celebrate diversity across the school. Programmes and courses could better reflect the lived experiences and the distinctiveness of all the school's young people.

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
- In session 2022/23, staff report that almost all young people have achieved CfE third level or better in literacy by the end of S3. Most young people achieved CfE third level or better in numeracy by the end of S3. The school has maintained these performance levels over the last few years, 2019/20 to 2022/23.

- School data indicates that the majority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3. Attainment at this level has declined for both literacy and numeracy in the latest year. However, these declines reflect more reliable and robust professional judgements of an achievement of fourth level.

- The school is not able to provide historic data on CfE levels for those young people who require additional support in their learning. However, a new monitoring and tracking system has been introduced in 2023/24 that provides attainment levels for those who have additional support needs. It is too early to state attainment levels over time for these young people.

Senior phase

Leavers (literacy)
- The school has maintained high levels of performance in literacy at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better from 2017/18 to 2021/22. The majority of young people leaving school in the five-year period up to 2020/21 achieved SCQF level 6, in line with the VC. Performance at this level declined in 2021/22, with a minority achieving this level. This was significantly much lower than the Virtual Comparator (VC). This is the result of young people being presented for Communication and Literature. Senior leaders indicate that this qualification, although meets the needs of its learners, does not contribute to SCQF level 6.

- Most young people leaving school who have additional support needs achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy between 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Leavers (numeracy)
- Performance in numeracy is strong at SCQF level 5 or better with most young people leaving school achieving success at this level between 2018/19 and 2021/22. This has been significantly higher or much higher than the VC. There is a notable difference between the success young people have in achieving numeracy through units when compared to the

percentage who achieve this through a course award. A minority of young people leaving school achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy, in line with the VC.

- Young people with additional support needs achieve well in numeracy. The majority of young people leaving school who have additional support needs achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

- Senior leaders have ensured that almost all young people leave school with a positive profile, having achieved a qualification in literacy and numeracy.

Cohorts (literacy)
- At S4, there has been an improvement in performance at SCQF level 5 or better in the latest year 2022/23 with almost all achieving this level. At S5 based on the S4 roll, there is less consistent performance at SQCF level 6 although performance remains in line with the VC. At S6 based on the S4 roll, performance at SCQF level 6 has shown a slight decline since 2020/21 although remains in line with the VC.

Cohorts (numeracy)
- At S4 and by S5 based on the S4 roll, performance at SCQF level 5 or better remains in line with the VC over the last five years from 2018/19 to 2022/23. There is a notable difference between the success young people have in achieving numeracy through units when compared to the percentage who achieve this through a course award. By S5 and by S6 based on the S4 roll performance at SCQF level 6 shows a steady improvement over the five-year period and remains in line with the VC.

English and Mathematics
- There is a significantly high number of entries for both National 4 mathematics and Higher Application for Mathematics compared to the national average. Attainment at Higher Mathematics was significantly lower than the national average 2021/22 between and 2022/23.

Attainment over time

BGE
- The school is not yet able to demonstrate attainment over time in the BGE for curriculum areas outwith literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders have recently developed a monitoring and tracking tool, which is now being used across the school by teachers to record information on pupil progress and attainment.

Senior phase

Improving attainment for all
Leavers
- When compared using average complementary tariff points, the attainment of young people leaving school between 2017/18 and 2021/22 shows no consistent improvement. The attainment of the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% of young people leaving school is generally significantly lower or much lower than the VC.

Cohorts
- When compared using average complementary tariff points at S4, by S5 and by S6 attainment of the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% is generally in line with the VC.

Breadth and depth

■ At S4, the minority of young people achieve five or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better. Over the last five years, there has been an overall improvement in the percentage of young people attaining 3 or more courses to to 6 or more courses at SCQF level 5C and 5A or better,. Performance across these measures have been in line with the VC.

■ 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 shows a decline for one or more to five or more courses.

■ By S6 based on S4 roll, attainment at SCQF level 6C or better shows an overall decline for one or more to five or more courses. Passes at A grade have fallen in the latest year 2022-23. Performance at this level remains in line with the VC. At SQCF level 7C or better performance also shows a slight decline in recent years, although remains in line with the VC.

■ Senior leaders have begun to address the number of courses taken as a qualification in both S5 and S6. In S5, 36% of young people are presented for five or six courses compared to 64% nationally. In S6, exactly half are presented for 2 courses or less compared to 18% nationally. Senior leaders have recently undertaken a review in coursing arrangements for young people as a potential future strategy for raising their attainment. In addition, higher expectations have been shared with both learners and parents on staying on at school for S6. There are fewer change of levels and withdrawals from courses as a result of greater levels of accountability and more young people being coursed appropriately.

All SCQF courses

■ At S4, around 81% of young people are presented for six or more courses. A minority of young people achieve success at SCQF level 5 or better at six or more courses. Pupil support staff, with the support from senior leaders, should review the number of courses young people are presented for. This will help ensure young people are not presented for courses that they do not pass.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

■ The school community celebrates young people's successes in and out of school through, for example, assemblies, social media and newsletters. The school website has a helpful online form for anyone to submit details of young people's achievements. As a result, most young people feel that their successes are valued.

■ Staff take an active interest in the activities of young people both in school and out. Young people benefit from taking part in a range of after-school and lunchtime clubs that are matched very well to their interests. These include, for example in music where young people can participate in a choir or in a school band, using their skills to perform at a range of in school events and in the local community. Sporting activities also provide opportunities for young people to develop important skills including in athletics, football and netball.

■ Young people regularly demonstrate the skills and knowledge gained through these activities when working across subjects and in their daily interactions with others. This includes their ability to work collaboratively, problem solve and communicate well in a variety of ways in a range of contexts. Young people develop their skills in leading others, including through accredited programmes. These include Dynamic Youth awards, Duke of Edinburgh and Mentors in Violence Prevention. Young people are confident and empowered to approach staff to request new activities to meet their interests and aspiratons.

- The school have been recognised for their work on First Aid training. Almost all S5 young people gain a first aid at work qualification and S3 learners participate in" Heart Start". These programmes support young people to develop confidence, resilience and communication skills. A few young people in the senior phase provide support for other children who attend local primary schools and young people in a nearby additional support needs establishment. Young people can also volunteer their own time to support in these settings. This opportunity further supports the development of skills and attributes for young people in St Stephen's.

- The school is beginning to track young people's activities in school and across the community. There is scope to develop the tracker further to include accreditation and skills. The school should continue to build on the data gathered to enable them to target those young people who do not currently engage in further achievement opportunities activities within or outwith school This is particularly important for those young people living with significant socio-economic disadvantage. The school should continue with plans to increase accreditation for young people engaged in leadership and volunteering activities. This will help young people to recognise and articulate better their skills and achievements.

Equity

- The school's approaches to equity are highly effective. The appointment of key additional staffing, such as the depute head teacher and wellbeing support officer, are improving young people's outcomes. For example, there is clear evidence of improved attendance for a few young people with very low rates of attendance. In addition, there are improvements in attainment for selected attainment measures for those young people in SIMD deciles 1 and 2.

- When compared using average complementary tariff points, young people leaving the school between 2017/18 and 2021/22 who reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile one generally attain broadly in line with young people living in the same deciles across Scotland. For decile two, young people perform significantly better at St Stephen's High School than the national average.

- School data indicates that the attainment gap between young people in quintile 1 and other quintiles shows inconsistency over time for the achievement of CfE third level. There is a clear reduction in the gap at CfE fourth level.

- Almost all young people move onto a positive destination. This is significantly lower than the VC in session 2021/22. In 2022/23, senior leaders presented evidence from SDS that indicates an increase in the percentage of positive destinations.

Other Additional Evidence

■ The school's approach to equity also includes reducing costs associated with the school day. There are highly effective approaches in place to support young people across the school. These include the provision of a universal breakfast club, and range of free uniform including sports kit. Young people and families value the support offered to them to mitigate against costs.

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.