

Summarised inspection findings

Annan Academy

Dumfries and Galloway Council

5 March 2019

School Name **Annan Academy**
Council: **Dumfries & Galloway**
SEED number: **5948339**
Roll (Sep 2017): **795**

Key contextual information

Annan Academy is a non-denominational secondary school in the town of Annan in Dumfries and Galloway. Annan Academy has eleven associated primary schools. The headteacher has been in post for approximately three years. The headteacher is supported by a School Support Manager and three depute headteachers, one of whom has been recently appointed.

Attendance is in line with the national average and has been consistent for the last four years.

Exclusions from school have reduced considerably in recent years and are now below the national average.

In February 2018, 11.8 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals which is below the national average of 14.4 per cent.

In September 2017, 9.3 per cent of pupils live in 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2017, the school reported that 32.8 per cent of pupils had additional support needs which is in line with the local authority figure and above the national average.

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 in consultation with young people, parents and staff has rightly reviewed the school vision, values and aims. This resulted in a refreshed vision, 'to work together to meet the needs of every child so that they feel safe, cared for and respected in order to achieve their best'. This vision is underpinned by values of care, effort and resilience. Together the vision and values help give a clear understanding of the aspirations of the school while taking account of the context of their community. The headteacher has been proactive in sharing the refreshed vision, values and aims with the school community. Senior leaders and staff report the cultural change that is evolving in the school has been helped by a more common shared purpose. The values of the school, displayed on posters across the school, now need to be referenced more explicitly and regularly by staff so that they have greater impact on young people.
- The headteacher has strong core values of integrity, social justice and care. He has a high profile in the school community and a determination to improve experiences and outcomes for all young people. He has a clear vision for how improvements will be led at Annan Academy and has demonstrated strong decision-making when prioritising actions that will lead to improvements. He has created a climate of collegiality and care where staff are encouraged and empowered to collaborate and contribute to school improvement. He is highly valued by the school community who view his relentless positivity as a key strength. There is emerging evidence of a more structured approach to self-evaluation for improvement with staff increasingly using evidence to inform practice. He recognises that further work is required as self-evaluation and gathering robust and rigorous evidence is variable across the school.
- Improvement planning makes specific reference to the National Improvement Framework (NIF) while taking account of the local context. The plan is ambitious, however the headteacher has worked hard to streamline and prioritise key areas. Staff recognise the need to accelerate efforts in moving forward with important areas of school practice and provision. There are now more open and transparent mechanisms in place to ensure stakeholders have the opportunity to work collaboratively in setting priorities for the school. Commendably, young people working on 'rights based approaches' have translated the school improvement plan into a pupil friendly version. The school should build on this to ensure that all young people have a shared understanding of what the school is working on to improve their learning experiences. Faculty improvement plans now better reflect school priorities and are increasingly based on self-evaluation evidence and improving outcomes for young people. The quality of these plans is variable and therefore it would be helpful for middle leaders to share and learn from best practice in the school.
- There are a number of changes led by depute headteachers that have resulted in improvements in practice and provision. Examples include: a recent curriculum review which

resulted in an increase in the variety of learner pathways for young people as they move into the senior phase; a whole school learning and teaching intervention has been introduced; and an on-going change to the tutor system is underway. In all cases, changes are informed by evidence. The senior leadership team now need to strengthen the strategic direction they provide in all key remit areas. They should develop a clear rationale for improvements and be more rigorous and systematic in evaluating the progress and impact of change.

- It is important that senior leaders put in place a clear strategy for taking forward national initiatives associated with Developing the Young Workforce. Currently there is no overall school plan for the implementation of Work Placement Standard, Career Management Standard (CMS) and Career Education Scotland national priorities. It is therefore unclear whether the requirements of these standards are being delivered to young people.
- Almost all curriculum leaders are providing strategic direction and support for their staff in their respective departments and faculties. They are committed to school improvement and ensuring that all staff are consulted in the process. For example, in faculties, all staff are involved in the analysis of Insight data and collaborate on decisions related to subsequent improvement actions. Curriculum leaders would welcome greater opportunities to work together and share practice. There is a need to involve pastoral leaders more in strategic improvement.
- All teaching staff have been involved in working groups related to the school improvement priorities. The headteacher has prioritised time to support key improvement activities during in-service and collegiate time. The headteacher is keen to have a more flexible working time agreement that would allow further opportunities for staff to work together on school priorities. Teachers are increasingly using the challenge questions in How Good Is Our School?4 (HGIOS?4) as a tool for reflection. They require more support in identifying appropriate evidence to validate their evaluations of the quality indicators in HGIOS?4. Most teachers are acting as agents of change in the classroom and wider school community by, for example, increasing the range of experiences for young people outwith the classroom. Individual teachers are leading a range of creative initiatives, for example accreditation in bee keeping, that are benefiting young people.
- There are strengths in the relationships between partners and Annan Academy. Senior leaders value the contributions partners make to enhancing the experiences of young people and meeting their needs. Senior leaders should now include partners more in the planning and evaluation of collaborative activities.
- In moving forward, senior leaders should continue to ensure that change is monitored and progress communicated to stakeholders. This will help to ensure that there is a shared understanding and ownership of change.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Relationships between young people and teachers are positive. There is a caring and supportive ethos which is underpinned by the school's refreshed vision and values. Most young people feel their teachers are approachable and treat them fairly and with respect. In a few lessons, a few young people disengage from their learning through low-level off-task behaviour.
- Most young people participate in their learning and are eager to do well. Most enjoy their learning at school. However, they are not always fully engaged. In most lessons observed young people understand the purpose of their learning and have opportunities to speak to teachers about their learning and progress. Young people respond well when they are offered choice, learning is challenging and is well matched to their needs and interests. However, this practice is not consistent across the school. Young people would benefit from additional opportunities to take more responsibility for their learning, to learn more independently and also to learn more collaboratively with their peers. Staff should ensure all young people are challenged appropriately in their learning and are working at a suitable pace.
- Senior leaders and staff have a clear focus on improving the quality of young people's learning experiences through increased professional learning and collaborative working. All staff take part in a well-planned programme of career-long professional learning designed to support the delivery of the school's priorities for learning and teaching. Increasingly staff work with colleagues to share and develop their practice. This includes discussion at faculty meetings, leading professional learning and developing learning trios. Senior leaders should ensure that the school has robust learning, teaching and assessment policies and processes in place. This will support all staff to have a consistent understanding of what makes high quality learning and teaching and the increased expectations around this. It will also promote parity of experience for learners across departments and faculties.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Too often, learning is directed by teachers and there is limited evidence of differentiation. In most lessons observed teachers share the purpose of learning, build on young people's prior knowledge and share success criteria with young people. In a few lessons, teachers use questioning well to promote higher order thinking skills and increase challenge for some young people. There are clear plans in place to ensure all teachers further develop their skills in using a variety of active and engaging teaching approaches which encourage young people to take more responsibility and leadership of their learning. This includes using different assessment approaches to increase the engagement of young people with their learning. There is also scope to improve the quality of teaching through further development of staff's skills and confidence in using questioning and in differentiation to enable all young people to be successful in their learning.

- Learners are using digital technologies to save and collate their work, communicate with teachers, and undertake revision and research. New platforms and applications are being introduced to enrich young people's experiences. The school recognises the need to further develop the use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching and develop staff skills and confidence in using it.
- Teachers support young people to make progress with their learning by using a variety of techniques to provide feedback. This includes written and verbal feedback to individuals and groups. Young people value feedback that is personalised, specific and focussed on identifying clear next steps to help them to meet their learning targets. Senior leaders recognise the need to continue to improve practice in this area so that all young people have access to effective feedback, the opportunity to take part in high quality conversations and set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound, (SMART) individual targets. Overall, there are strengths in teaching on which to build leading to more consistent high quality learning across the school.
- Increasingly, teachers plan a variety of assessments as part of their planning for learning. This includes peer and self-assessment activities and tasks. This practice should be shared and extended so that planning for assessment is seen as integral to planning for learning across all departments and faculties. Teachers are developing the robustness of their professional judgements of progress in the broad general education (BGE). Increasingly young people in the BGE are aware of the level they are working at and what they need to do to improve. Teachers take part in moderation activities in their departments and faculties and have engaged in whole school professional learning on the moderation cycle. Teachers' professional understanding of standards in literacy has been strengthened through a well-planned cluster programme of moderation activities. This includes joint planning of learning using the experiences and outcomes, the development of holistic assessments and moderation of a range of evidence using the National Benchmarks. Teachers should continue to seek opportunities to engage in systematic approaches to moderation and understanding of standards in the BGE. The robust cluster model for developing literacy and numeracy provides a strong model to build on.
- Teachers are increasing their confidence in their assessment judgements in the senior phase. A minority of teachers undertake SQA duties and most participate in professional learning which is shared with colleagues. Teachers engage in a range of moderation activities within their departments and faculties to deepen their understanding of standards in national qualifications. They plan a range of assessment activities to provide evidence of progress and to inform future learning. Feedback to young people from these assessments ensures that they are aware of their progress leading to National Qualifications and other awards.
- Senior leaders have developed systems to track and monitor the progress of young people in the BGE. A more established process exists within the senior phase. Within departments and faculties teachers are increasingly using data to set targets with young people, to evaluate their progress and deploy appropriate interventions as required. However, there is variability in the effectiveness of this practice across the school. Young people in the senior phase are offered a range of support by departments, both in lessons and beyond the classroom to help them achieve their targets successfully. This includes supported study and online resources. Young people value the additional support provided by staff to help them to achieve success.

- In the BGE teachers in some departments and faculties use tracking and monitoring information to amend courses and programmes to better meet the needs of all learners. At classroom level, there is scope for teachers to make more effective use of tracking and monitoring data to inform planning for learning, teaching and assessment. The school should undertake a review of planning, tracking and monitoring to ensure that the systems and processes being used across the school are consistently rigorous and robust.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff have updated the curriculum rationale in the last year and have been proactive in looking outwards to consider other practice. This has enabled them to consult with young people and evaluate the curricular experience across the stages. Consequently improvements were made to the range of awards and courses on offer in the BGE and the senior phase. Teachers should continue to evaluate the changing offer within courses and awards.
- There is a strong transition programme between the local primaries and Annan Academy. Young people from P6/7 engage in a monthly calendar of activities and events to support the transition from P7 to S1. Pastoral information is passed between schools and some data around literacy and numeracy is also transferred.
- In the BGE young people follow a common curriculum across all of the curricular areas in S1 and S2. Most of the courses are planned using third and fourth level Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. Recently, teachers and young people reviewed the curriculum and following this, some aspects of the S3 experience changed. The current position where young people choose a theme will be changed next session to include adding an elective for one period a week in S3. This approach is at an early stage of development. Senior leaders are aware of the need to keep this under review.
- The course choice arrangements at the end of S2 encourage young people to specialise within curricular areas. This enables young people to work on fourth level experiences and outcomes to prepare them for progression into the senior phase. Teachers should maintain vigilance around appropriate progression within the BGE to ensure young people are presented at the correct level as they move into the senior phase. Teachers are tracking the achievement of a level data and should continue to ensure rigour in this process in order to make sure young people are challenged appropriately to achieve their potential.
- The subject choice booklet distributed to young people in S3 and their parents contains highly specialised educational language. It is important that senior leaders review the style of the information provided to make this more user friendly for parents and young people. Including some important information about career routes and career destinations will also be helpful.
- There are a number of outdoor learning experiences provided for young people, for example engaging with the local community through social subjects, modern languages and drama. These positive experiences are supporting learning in different contexts.
- Digital learning across the school is an area that has been recognised for further development. There are a few examples of young people engaging with digital learning and this good practice should now be shared across the school.
- In most lessons observed young people were compliant and well-behaved but lacked interest and enthusiasm for learning. A minority of young people would benefit from a more varied, structured learning pathway in the BGE to support their individual needs. Young people with additional support needs should be better supported in learning within the BGE. There is a lack of differentiated work in most lessons. As a result the majority of young people with additional support needs disengage and lack motivation when tasks are not suited to their ability or their needs.
- The school needs to strengthen the learning pathways for young people in health and wellbeing, especially in relation to healthy eating through for example, home economics. There

is an option for some young people to take a second modern language in S3. The progression of those taking two languages into senior school should be kept under review in order to ensure appropriate pace and challenge for those young people.

- The senior phase offer has been reviewed and updated over the last three years and young people are now offered clear progression pathways in all curricular areas. Additional awards and courses have been added over the last three years. Young people in the senior phase are able to personalise their curriculum from a range of courses offered within the school and at local colleges as well as from consortium arrangements with other neighbouring schools.
- There is a good and varied range of National Qualifications, ranging from National 3 to Advanced Higher, offered to young people which is increasing the flexibility of the senior phase learning pathways. This includes National Progressions Awards (NPAs), Skills for Work courses (SfLW) and Foundation Apprenticeships. The school has recently expanded the availability of vocational learning opportunities for young people in the senior phase and participation by young people increased in 2018/19. Teachers are aware of the need to ensure that young people know the skills they are developing over the course of their studies.
- The school works creatively with a wide range of partners to ensure tailored approaches are in place which ensure positive outcomes for young people. A strong commitment to support young people underpins partnership working. Youth work staff and other community, learning and development (CLD) partners such as Aberlour Futures, Dumfries and Galloway College, Church of Scotland, Police Scotland and Opportunities for All are clear about their respective roles and responsibilities. At an operational level partnership working is effective and as a result, the previously experienced duplication of effort has been reduced. Partners feel that they now have clearly identified links within the school.
- Staff look closely at school data to identify young people at risk of exclusion. As a result a few young people were specifically targeted as part of the 3 Rs work (Respect, Responsibility and Resilience). This work helped improve the behaviour of the targeted group and reduce the number of exclusions from school.
- Staff at all levels across the school offer a good range of lunchtime and after school activities. There is a positive uptake in these activities. Staff are aware of the need to include an understanding of the skills developed in each area.
- The school makes good use of Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) monies to improve life chances for young people. Through an informed, targeted approach it ensures young people at risk of missing out can participate. For example some young people are supported with the purchase of sports kit.
- Effective partnership working with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has contributed to a detailed School Partnership Agreement. This includes an appropriate range of planned activities to ensure the careers information and advice guidance (CIAG) service offer is delivered to all year groups. However, most actions identified to develop whole school improvements such as embedding CMS and My World of Work (MyWoW) are at an early stage.

- Annan Academy benefits from SDS coaches who provide both universal and targeted support to young people across the school. The development and consolidation of CMS for young people is not yet supported consistently within the wider curriculum. A few young people in the senior phase are aware of their CMS and how these could help them to enter and sustain a positive destination. Senior leaders recognise that the current approach to CIAG needs to be developed. This includes relocating the facility to a main corridor to improve access for all young people.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders have improved their approaches to seeking the views of parents and recognise the role that parents can play in supporting school improvement. Parents value the ambitions the headteacher has for the school and cite improvements to the ethos and culture of the school since his appointment. They appreciate the range and quality of clubs on offer beyond the school day.
- The majority of parents state that they receive timely and useful information, often in the form of reports that inform them of their children's progress in learning. These could be more effective by identifying more specific ways that parents can support their children with their learning. Senior leaders recognise the need to engage parents more effectively and provide them with advice on how they can support their children's learning at home. Only a minority of parents felt that the school organised activities for them where they would learn together with their children.
- The Parent Council is supportive of the headteacher and the efforts of staff to drive forward school improvement. The Chair of the Parent Council values the way in which senior leaders support and work with the Council. The Parent Council is regularly consulted about proposed school improvements. They also discuss national initiatives such as PEF through participation in Dumfries and Galloway's Parent Council Forum.
- The Parent Council is proud to have funded many initiatives, including the Sports Leader Coaching programme, that young people benefit from within the school. The Parent Council is keen to strengthen their role by engaging a wider range of parents. There is scope for the school to work with the Parent Council so that their work can be shared more effectively with the wider parent body. Their participation in the National Parent Forum is acting as a useful platform to discuss strategies and efforts to achieve this.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- The school's approach to wellbeing is underpinned by the growing commitment of young people, staff, parents and partners to the shared values of the school community. Senior leaders recognise that positive relationships are central to developing a whole school approach to wellbeing. Young people benefit from increasingly positive relationships with staff which is supporting them to achieve. The wellbeing of most young people is supported by positive relationships with their peers. Although work on developing positive relationships is not rooted in the latest Scottish Government guidance, there is a move towards moving from punitive measures to create a more caring and supportive ethos and culture. This is reflected in the reduction of behavioural referrals in recent years.
- The school is in the early stages of developing a shared understanding of wellbeing across the whole school community. The wellbeing indicators are not yet being used consistently to support young people. Efforts have been made to discuss the wellbeing indicators at earlier stages of the school. There are emerging indications that young people in S1 are more confident and able to self-evaluate their wellbeing by using the wellbeing wheel to support them. There is scope for staff in the school to raise the profile of the wellbeing indicators and to use them to track and monitor young people's progress more consistently, as well as to inform planning.
- Senior leaders have introduced a whole school strategic approach to universal support through daily dedicated tutor time. This is ensuring that young people have frequent and regular opportunities to discuss their learning and development with their key adult. Most young people are confident that they know where to seek additional help and support if required and that they have someone to talk to if they are upset or worried about something.
- Senior and middle leaders recognise that personal and social education (PSE) programmes and courses need to be refreshed to ensure that they take full account of the local context and better meet the needs of young people. Currently, PSE lacks progression and young people are not being sufficiently prepared to respond to 21st century challenges.
- There are a number of peer led approaches embedded across the school which are having a positive impact on outcomes for young people. In discussions with young people, they highlight the role of peer educators (Mentors in Violence Prevention), Sports Leaders and School Captains who support them to be more involved and engaged in the life of their school community. Young people feel a strong sense of connection and community and recognise that there are improvements in relationships across the school. Relationships between mentors and young people in S1 and S2 are very strong and support an increased sense of safety in young people. Mentors demonstrate an increased knowledge and understanding of gender based

violence, topical issues and practical ideas on how to support bullying issues. While mentoring others they are also developing a range of personal skills through their contribution to the PSE curriculum.

- Young people are increasingly included in decisions about the life and work of the school. The majority of young people feel their views are sought and acted on by staff in the school. Their views are increasingly sought, at both departmental and whole school level, on a range of issues. This is helping to inform improvement planning priorities. The active pupil council, chaired by the Head Prefects, plays a key role in the life of the school. The pupil council, while supported by staff, operates independently of them. Young people in the pupil council feel valued by their peers and staff. They are rightly proud of their achievements in bringing about change within the school.
- Pastoral transitions into the school are well planned and involve a range of staff. Joint reviews and sharing of data within P7-S1 transition are helping secondary staff to have a better understanding of each individual young person's needs. Senior pupils play a strong role in supporting the transition process and are active participants in a number of activities which develop their own skills while building confidence in the young people moving into Annan Academy. The well-considered Annan Cluster Transition Plan is resulting in young people settling into Annan Academy well which helps relieve anxieties, perceived or otherwise.
- Staff should continue with their plan to ensure that all young people in the senior phase access appropriate provision for religious and moral education.
- The school is meeting the duties under the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 to ensure access to free drinking water, protect the identity of those entitled to a free meal and promote the school meal service to parents and young people. The local authority catering service needs to review aspects of provision in the dining hall to ensure full compliance with the nutrient standards and food and drinks standards across the day.
- Young people who require additional support in their learning have their needs identified well. Their needs, and how they can be supported, are shared with staff across the school through a useful confidential database. However, strategies are not being deployed by most classroom teachers to meet the needs of young people. A co-ordinated and streamlined approach to assessing, planning for and meeting the needs of all young people with barriers to their learning is required. A staged intervention process is needed, which, when complemented by more effective integrated pupil support, will lead to more young people's needs being met more effectively. For those young people with a support plan, the targets set should be SMART. Plans should be monitored regularly thus enabling progress to be evaluated and additional interventions or strategies considered if required.
- Exclusion rates have declined in each of the previous three years. The headteacher understands the impact of exclusion on young people and uses this as a last resort. He is working with staff across the school to promote more inclusive practices. Recently for example, staff attended a professional learning event on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) to help develop their awareness of barriers to learning experienced by some young people.
- Key staff are aware of young people who have experienced care. However this group of young people are not monitored effectively enough with an integrated support team. A greater level of understanding is required with regard to implementing corporate parenting duties, as reflected in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Consideration

needs to be given to whether care experienced young people meet the requirements for a co-ordinated support plan.

- Senior leaders are currently reviewing the school procedures for recording attendance and following up absence. There is evidence that the school takes appropriate action for those young people who have low attendance, which includes effective working with partner agencies to support these young people in their learning. The school should introduce rigorous systems to record, monitor and track attendance across the whole of the school day.
- The Additional Support for Learning Department, which includes a team of skilled support assistants, provides valuable support for young people with a range of additional learning support needs in a nurturing environment. Currently young people are regularly supported by extracting them from their lessons. This model of support needs to be updated to reflect latest national guidance on inclusive practice. Young people who require additional support in their learning should be more effectively included in mainstream classes. There is considerable scope to develop a range of professional learning opportunities for staff to ensure that they all fully understand their role in identifying barriers to learning and meeting the needs of all young people.
- The school is successfully promoting a few aspects of equality and diversity and tackling discrimination. As a result of a request from young people, rights based learning and the Gender and Sexual Alliance Group (GSA) have been introduced to the school. The GSA aims to increase young people's awareness of issues affecting those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). The GSA is working towards LGBT Youth Scotland charter mark by tackling discrimination against sexual orientation. It is important that other aspects of the Equality Act are well understood and that senior leaders evaluate their approaches to equality, inclusion and diversity so that all young people feel valued. For example, by ensuring that there is an appropriate focus on the experiences of young people who have English as an additional language.

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:

- The school provided the following BGE data which demonstrates a positive picture in attainment in literacy and numeracy by the end of the BGE. A greater percentage of young people achieved 3rd CfE level or better by the end of S3 in 2018 in reading, writing, listening and talking and in numeracy than in 2016. In 2018 almost all young people achieved this level or better in reading, writing and listening and talking which is above the local authority and national figures. Most young people achieved 3rd CfE level or better in numeracy which is slightly below the local authority and national figures.
- The percentage of young people achieving 4th CfE level by S3 has fluctuated between 2016 and 2018. However more are now achieving this level in literacy and numeracy than in 2016. In 2018 less than half achieved 4th CfE level in reading and writing. The majority achieved 4th CfE level in listening and talking and in numeracy. Senior leaders believe that the improvement in the percentage of young people attaining numeracy at 4th CfE level between 2016 and 2018 is in part due to teachers more detailed use of data to inform improvements and also their increasing confidence in making sound professional judgements.
- In literacy and numeracy the school has well established working groups which are leading change and driving the improvements noted in both these areas. Teachers use a variety of commercially produced packages as well as targeted individual and group supports effectively to improve young people's literacy across the curriculum. New programmes to support improvements in numeracy across the curriculum are being implemented. To continue to improve literacy and numeracy levels young people in S3 will be allocated more time within both English and mathematics departments in session 2019/20.

Senior phase:

- Almost all young people achieve literacy at SCQF level 4 or better or numeracy at SCQF level 3 or better before leaving school. In both literacy and numeracy at level 3 or better to level 6 or better a greater proportion of young people left Annan Academy in 2017 with better qualifications than in the previous year. In the senior phase senior leaders report that these improvements have been achieved through targeted additional support for young people who had not yet achieved SCQF levels 4 and 5. A few young people have teachers as mentors to support their attainment. In addition all young people have regular learning conversations with each of their teachers. This is leading to more focussed target setting and increased expectations of young people. Interventions for both literacy and numeracy are currently being reviewed further with new programmes for numeracy being introduced for National 4 and Higher courses next session.

Attainment of young people in literacy by the time of leaving school:

All leavers, literacy:

- Almost all young people left school in the four years up to 2017 with SCQF level 4 or better in literacy which is in line with the virtual comparator (VC). This was at its highest in 2015. Most young people left school with SCQF level 5 or better in literacy between 2015 and 2017. In 2016 this was significantly much higher than the VC. In 2017 the percentage of young people leaving school with SCQF level 6 in literacy recovered to previous levels after a fall in 2016, however is significantly lower than the VC.
- S4 leavers, literacy: Most young people who left school in the four years up to 2017 attained literacy at SCQF level 3 or better which is in line with the VC. The percentage of young people who attained SCQF level 4 or better by the time they left school fluctuates over the five year period to 2017. The majority attained this level in four of the last five years to 2017. At SCQF level 5 or better the proportion of young people attaining has fluctuated over recent years with less than half attaining SCQF level 5 or better in 2017 which is in line with VC. In 2017 the percentage of S4 leavers attaining SCQF level 3, 4 or 5 or better in literacy remains in line with the VC but is less than in the previous year. Senior leaders have put in place mentoring arrangements to support improvements in this area.
- S5 leavers, literacy: The percentage of young people attaining literacy at SCQF level 3, 4, 5 or better and SCQF level 6 between 2013 and 2017 has fluctuated but improved overall. Figures are broadly in line with the VC in all measures. Almost all young people leaving after S5 attained literacy at SCQF level 4 or better between 2015 and 2017. Most young people attained level 5 or better in 2017. At SCQF Level 6 the school is in line with the VC in the four years up to 2017. Less than half of the cohort attained literacy at SCQF level 6 however this improved from the previous year when a few attained at this level.

Attainment of young people in numeracy by the time of leaving school:

- Most young people leave school with SCQF level 4 or better in numeracy and the majority left school with SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy in three of the last five years up to 2017 which is in line with the VC with the exception of 2014 where this is significantly lower than the VC at both levels. The percentage of young people leaving school with SCQF level 5 or better as part of a course award fluctuates. At SCQF Level 6 the school is significantly lower than the VC in three of the last five years. While this improved in the latest year from a low figure in 2016 this remains significantly lower than the VC. As a result the school has now tracked the skills required at each level to Advanced Higher (SCQF level 7) and is in the initial stages of implementing a new skills framework for the development of numeracy in young people across the school.
- S4 leavers, numeracy: Most young people who left school in S4 between 2013 and 2017 attained SCQF level 3 or better in numeracy, in line with the VC. The percentage of young people attaining at this level is highest in the latest year, 2017. At SCQF level 4 or better the majority of young people attained numeracy in four of the last five years up to 2017 however in two of these years, including the latest, this is significantly lower than the VC. Less than half of the young people who leave school at S4 attain numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better over the last two years. This is improving and is in line with the VC.
- S5 leavers, numeracy: Almost all leavers achieve SCQF level 3 or better in numeracy by the time they left school between 2013 and 2017 with the exception in 2014 where all young people attained SCQF level 3 or better. Most achieve SCQF level 4 or better by the time they leave school in the last three years up to 2017. Less than half attain SCQF level 5 or better.

This has fluctuated over the last five years. Between 2015 and 2017 attainment in numeracy of S5 leavers is in line with the VC.

Attainment over time

BGE:

- Teachers are using the National Benchmarks well as part of their approach to reporting on achievement of a CfE level. In addition a few have created and implemented holistic assessments to assess progress. As a consequence of this, and the conversations which teachers have with young people about their learning, young people are becoming more aware of the levels they are at working at and what their next steps are in a few subject areas. Moderation activities within school, and with their associated schools, are resulting in teachers becoming more confident in their professional judgment of achievement of a level. This is further enhanced throughout the school with the addition of a Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer. As planned teachers should continue to develop their approach to moderation and to incorporate assessment and evaluation in the planning cycle.
- There is a tracking and monitoring system in place to review the progress of young people as they enter secondary school and through the BGE. This is being used well by almost all principal teachers of curriculum (PTC) in order to review the progress of young people and provide interventions at as early a stage as possible, where necessary. Principal teachers interrogate this data to plan how they will continue to improve achievement within BGE courses across the school. Young people are encouraged to set aspirational targets based on data and teachers' professional judgements. There is scope to develop this tool further to enable senior leaders to have a whole school overview and the ability to monitor and track groups of learners more effectively, for example those with additional support needs or from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds. The school is participating in a pilot project within the local authority in order to further improve the tracking and monitoring procedures.

Staying on rates:

- The percentage of young people staying in school at the end of S4 is generally in line with the VC and the local authority figures for three of the last five years. The percentage of young people who stay on at school beyond S5 is below the VC and local authority. The school is currently exploring learning pathways to provide more flexible options for young people to better meet the needs of young people and encourage them to gain more qualifications before leaving school.

Senior phase: Attainment over time Leavers.

- The average total tariff points for all leavers is significantly lower than the VC in four of the last five years up to 2017.
- For the lowest-attaining 20% of leavers the school is performing in-line with the VC between 2013 and 2017 however the total tariff points remain below the VC in each of the five years.
- For those learners in the middle-attaining 60%, total tariff points are in line with the VC in 2013 to 2015 but significantly lower than the VC in 2016 and 2017. Total tariff points are below the VC and national in the four years up to 2017.
- For the highest-attaining 20% there is variation in attainment between 2013 and 2017. For two of the five years, including 2017, attainment as measured by the total tariff points, is significantly lower than the VC. In the last four years to 2017 total tariff points are below the VC and national.

- As detailed in the school improvement plan for 2018-2019 senior leaders are reviewing the curricular options for young people in the senior school with a view to extending the range of pathways offered. This, along with a review of support for young people preparing for choices, is intended to lead to improvements in the total tariff points gained by young people.
- All PTCs currently complete an in-depth analysis of both National Qualifications and prelim results to identify trends, areas of strength and areas for development. Results in National Qualifications indicate that an increasing percentage of young people in a few subject areas have continually attained well over the years to 2017.

How well is the school improving young people's attainment as they move through senior phase in school?

- In S4 the lowest-attaining 20% and middle-attaining 60% are attaining in line with the VC in four of the five previous years. In 2016 both groups attained significantly lower than the VC. The highest-attaining 20% are attaining in line with the VC in the last five years
- By S5 the lowest-attaining 20% are attaining in line with the VC in the last five years. In two of the previous five years the middle-attaining 60% of pupils and the highest-attaining 20% of pupils attained significantly lower than the VC.
- By S6, all groups have attained in line with the VC for the last four years.
- In 2018 a few young people in S5 achieved success at GCSE Polish level A and A*. This year they are progressing to AS level presentation.

Breadth and depth:

- In 2017, 16.3% of young people starting S4 left the school the following year. This figure is above the national figure of 13.1%. As a result the breadth and depth measures which are reflected below represent each cohort based on the number of young people which started the year.

Qualifications:

- In S4 the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF Level 4 or better is in line with the VC for six or more courses in four of the last five years. The percentage attaining at SCQF Level 5C or better is significantly lower than the VC in three out of the last five years for six or more courses. The percentage attaining at SCQF level 5A or better is in line with the VC in three of the last five years but in 2017 and 2018 this is significantly lower than the VC for six or more courses. Middle leaders, through more rigorous tracking, monitoring and interventions are confident that in 2019 the percentage of young people attaining at this level will improve.
- By S5 the percentage attaining at SCQF Level 5C or better in five or six or more courses is in line with the VC for four of the last five years up to 2018. The percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 5A or better for five or more courses is in line with the VC in three of the last five years. The percentage of young people attaining SCQF level 6C or better in four or more courses fluctuated over the last five years and improved in the latest year to 2018. The percentage of young people attaining SCQF level 6A in one or more or two or more courses improved in the latest year to 2018. Those attaining at SCQF level 6A in four or five or more courses is in line with the VC for the last five years. Overall attainment by S5 improved in the latest year to 2018. Senior leaders recognise that improvements in the number of passes at SCQF level 5A will lead to further improved attainment at level SCQF 6C and above.

- By S6, the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 5C or better for seven or more courses is in line with the VC over the last five years. At SCQF level 5A or better the percentage of young people attaining two or more courses was significantly much higher than the VC in 2017. Those attaining three, four or five or more courses at SCQF level 5A or better is in line with the VC for the last four years.
- By S6, the percentage attaining at SCQF Level 6C or better is generally in line with the VC for four of the last five years up to 2017.
- By S6, the percentage attaining at SCQF Level 6A or better is generally in line with the VC over the last 4 years. The percentage of young people attaining SCQF level 6A or better in one, two, three, four, five or six courses or more courses improved in 2017.
- By S6 the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 7C and above for one or more to three or more courses is generally in line with the VC.
- Senior leaders have reviewed the curriculum in order to provide a wider range of courses and qualifications and ensure progression in each area of the curriculum. This includes the introduction of National Progression Awards and Skills for Work courses as well as strengthening partnership working with the local college.
- Key staff, when supporting young people to make choices and changes in courses, should ensure that they are using the tracking and monitoring data effectively to inform appropriate learning pathways for young people which will help raise attainment for them.

Overall quality of learners' achievement:

- There are a wide range of opportunities for young people to achieve in the school. Young people speak positively about their involvement in lunchtime and after school clubs. Staff are increasingly seeking new opportunities for young people to develop skills through wider achievement within the curriculum. Tracking the skills gained by young people will enable staff to evaluate the effectiveness of new learning pathways. In response to an identified gap, senior leaders have introduced a comprehensive tracking and mapping system which accurately captures participation in wider curricular activities. This has enabled the school to identify and engage with those young people who did not participate in wider achievements. As a result young people are encouraged and supported by school to consider opportunities in line with their interests. Senior leaders recognise that a positive next step would be to identify specific groups of young people who may be missing out, or at risk of doing so.
- Young people make a positive contribution to the life of their school and the wider Annan community. The majority of young people actively take on leadership/coaching roles within transition initiatives, sporting and youth work organisations. This is helping them to develop confidence and leadership skills.
- Staff within the school support young people's broader achievement through an impressive range of initiatives. This includes very strong provision within the Music and Drama faculty. Young people engage well with both senior and junior shows each year, the school band and the choir. Annual events such as the highly successful collaboration with absolute Classics provide young people with the opportunity to have their compositions performed and recorded by professional musicians. In addition, there is a Coding club, a murder mystery literacy challenge and a bee keeping group, as well as a wide range of successful sporting clubs. The

Warhammer Alliance group have achieved success in national competitions and is a positive support for young people helping them to develop their confidence and resilience.

- The school actively celebrates achievement and effort through prize giving ceremonies, sports awards, and award ceremonies for junior and senior school. Success is also celebrated through notice boards, social media outlets and the local press. Young people feel their achievements both in and out of school are valued. As a result they are increasingly confident to succeed.
- The recently introduced Colour Awards are at an early stage of development. There are positive signs of engaging more young people to participate in wider achievements. Since its launch in October 2018 24 young people from S2-S6 have been awarded club colours and 31 major colour ties. These were awarded for arts, community, leadership and sports.
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award Unit within the school is highly effective. Commendably young people regularly complete their gold award before leaving school. The school now benefits from time from a youth support worker who is focussing on increasing opportunities for accrediting achievements. Youth Achievement Awards are currently being piloted with all young people in S6. Young people have the opportunity to sign up for Saltire Awards to recognise and reward their time spent volunteering to help others. There is scope for the school and partners to introduce wider accreditation opportunities such as Dynamic Youth Awards and Saltire Awards at an earlier stage across the BGE.

Equity for all learners:

- Ensuring equity of opportunity is a priority for staff within Annan Academy who are developing their awareness of the impact of adverse childhood experiences. Almost all staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school. They have been consulted with regard to providing a range of appropriate interventions for those young people facing socio-economic disadvantage.
- The school's PEF allocation is being used to provide additional staff to support the development of literacy, numeracy and wellbeing skills in young people. Monies are made available to enable young people to access school trips and events, which help develop confidence and self-esteem. A successful breakfast club is encouraging some young people to attend school and be 'ready to learn' as well as increasing their social skills. By purchasing and making available to young people a range of study support materials the school has been able to demonstrate improved outcomes in the attainment of a few pupils. Other supports funded by the PEF include one to one mentoring meetings, support at the times of transition and support to reduce offending behaviour. As identified by senior leaders, there is now a need to develop a greater range of tools to more effectively measure the impact of the interventions on young people.
- As part of the longer term priority area of developing consistently high quality learning and teaching, senior leaders are investing in a 3 year programme of staff development. It is anticipated that this will have a positive impact on the attainment of a wide range of young people.

Attainment versus Deprivation:

- SIMD data may not truly reflect some aspects of the community which Annan Academy serves. For those learners from the most challenging socio-economic backgrounds the school is demonstrating some success in their achievements. This is reflected in the attainment versus deprivation figures of the complementary tariff scores in the last two years, however

this has often been significantly lower than those in the same SIMD deciles across Scotland. Implementing the planned improvements in tracking and monitoring will help senior leaders and other staff provide more bespoke interventions to help raise attainment for this particular group of young people.

How well is the school improving or maintaining positive and sustained destinations for all leavers:

Destinations:

- In four of the last five years up to 2017, almost all young people who left school have moved to a positive destination. Figures are significantly much higher than the VC in the last two years and are improving. Young people from Annan Academy who participate in Dumfries and Galloway College programmes make good progress and attain well.

Work with Skills Development Scotland.

- Overall, approximately one third of young people leave school to higher education. The number of leavers going to further education and employment are stable at approximately 40% and 23% respectively. Staff in the school should review the engagement with Skills Development Scotland to ensure that all young people receive the support they are entitled to.

Choice of QI : 1.4 Leadership and management of staff

- Governance Framework
- Building and sustaining a professional staff team
- Staff wellbeing and pastoral support

- There is a clear leadership structure within the school. Remits and responsibilities for the senior leadership team have been clarified and aligned more clearly to school improvement priorities. The school has a very good relationship with its quality improvement manager, who is very supportive of the school. This relationship should continue to be supportive but also challenging to take forward the aspects for improvement highlighted in this report. The headteacher should continue to support and challenge his senior team and evaluate the difference they are making in each of their areas of responsibility. Senior leaders need to ensure that middle leaders are appropriately supported and challenged to address areas requiring improvement. As the school continues with its plans to develop distributive leadership, thought has been given to customising remits for non-promoted staff such as tracking and monitoring achievement. There is potential for this to be developed further given the flexibility offered in the timetable.
- The headteacher establishes good relationships and a range of practices to foster self-evaluation at every level in the school. He models good practice in personal self-evaluation against the relevant professional standard and appropriate benchmarks. He promotes an open, honest and critical stance in examining practice. He encourages and supports others to critically analyse and evaluate their own practice in relation to relevant professional standards, policies and procedures. The senior leadership team acknowledge that not all teaching staff are equally committed to self-evaluation measures as a means to school improvement. Positive steps have been taken to increase the commitment to self-evaluation of almost all teachers.
- The school uses recruitment and selection procedures in accordance with current legislation and local and national agreements. Effective induction procedures for new staff are in place and all staff are clear about expectations, including safeguarding procedures. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by the local authority programme and mentors within the school. The school has appropriate performance management procedures in place. A comprehensive system to support professional review and development, closely linked to the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) professional standards, is now used by staff. Individual objectives need to be more clearly linked to the outcomes of self-evaluation and to whole school priorities as detailed in the school improvement plan.
- Staff are striving to create a more caring ethos in the school. They tell us there has been an improvement in relationships over the last two years although this is not consistent across the school. A better understanding of how young people's attitude to learning is shaped by their interactions with staff will help improve further the relationships between staff and young people across the school. The cultural shift in the school to a more distributed leadership model, while not fully accepted by all staff, is resulting in a greater willingness of staff to help to meet the challenges of continuing to improve the experiences and outcomes for young people in Annan Academy.
- An important aspect of supporting staff is the pastoral care provided by senior and middle leaders. This is a growing strength of the school. Clear policies and procedures provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council are in place to ensure the pastoral support and wellbeing of staff. These are shared with staff and are appreciated by them. For example, activities related

to the health and wellbeing of staff were prioritised at a recent in-service day. Opportunities to consult, share information and raise concerns are well established and understood by all staff. Senior leaders listen to others and respond positively to ideas and issues raised with them.

- Senior leaders have responded effectively to changes in staffing, including absence and to the variety of challenges of leading and managing the school. They follow the local authority's 'maximising attendance policy' and conduct return to work interviews. These are recorded appropriately and used as a support for staff. The GTCS standards are used appropriately to ensure that all teachers are aware of national standards and expectations of them. National and local guidance such as the 'Code of practice on dignity at work' are reinforced and used appropriately to set clear expectations. There are effective arrangements in place for dealing with complaints. These are recorded with follow-up actions taken to achieve, where possible, a satisfactory resolution for the complainer. Parents are provided with an in-house "cause for concern" leaflet which makes clear the complaints process in school.

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.