Summarised inspection findings

Dunoon Grammar School

Argyll and Bute Council

31 March 2020

School name	Dunoon Grammar School
Council:	Argyll & Bute Council
SEED number:	8110239
Roll (Sep 2018):	679

Attendance is generally in line with the national average.

In February 2019, 17% of pupils were registered for free school meals, which is in line with the national average.

In September 2018, 16% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2018, the school reported that 33% of young people had additional support needs.

Key contextual information

Dunoon Grammar School offers English Medium Education (EME) and Gaelic Medium Education (GME). There is specialist provision for those with significant additional support needs. This is known as the learning centre. The school has experienced challenges in recruiting teachers of English and home economics.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	good

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

- ■ learning and engagement
- ■ quality of teaching
- ■ effective use of assessment
- ■ planning, tracking and monitoring

■ The headteacher, ably supported by depute headteachers, is successfully leading approaches in pursuit of consistent, high-quality learning and teaching across the school. Importantly, this is underpinned by strong relationships, promotion of values and the headteacher's highly visible approach in a range of learning contexts. The headteacher is highly respected by staff and stakeholders for his focus on learning.

■ Senior leaders, staff and young people have co-created an effective, interactive learning and teaching policy, 'The DGS Way' (The Dunoon Grammar School Way). This interactive tool sets expectations of the agreed features of high-quality learning and teaching. It also provides links to professional reading, including on pedagogy. This has continued potential to effectively support a consistent format and rationale to delivering lessons across the school. 'The DGS Way' should now be developed to take account of immersion, including how EME and GME co-exist inclusively within the school.

■ Dunoon Grammar School has a nurturing ethos. Most young people participate well in learning, for which they have a positive attitude. Most lessons are well structured, with most staff offering clear instructions and explanations. All teachers share the purpose of learning with young people. In most lessons, staff make explicit links to prior and future learning. Almost all staff share how young people will know when they have been successful in their learning. Staff should involve young people in co-constructing shared outcomes in order to build young people's responsibility for their learning. The recently introduced 'DGS Skills Framework' is

beginning to support most young people to identify the skills they are developing through learning. Young people should improve further their ability to discuss progression in skills.

■ In most lessons, young people experience personalisation and choice, to which they respond well. They engage purposefully when lessons are planned using real-life contexts. In a majority of lessons, teachers effectively meet the needs of young people. When activities and tasks are not well matched to the needs of young people, a few can become disengaged and disrupt others' learning. All teachers use questioning to establish young people's understanding and knowledge. A minority use effective questions in order to promote higher-order thinking skills and deeper learning. Going forward, teachers should provide greater levels of challenge and increase expectations for all young people.

■ Most staff use a range of contexts for learning, including by working with partners. The majority of young people benefit from learning in cross-cutting themes, such as creativity, enterprise and digital literacy. They engage with outdoor learning in the local community. For example, young people in S2 are developing their skills for learning, life and work, and in particular their digital literacy skills, through the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI). Staff in the business and computing department work with an extensive range of partners, including local, national and international businesses and charities. Staff overcome challenges of the school's rural location by using digital technology very effectively to make links across the world. They should be aware that a few young people do not have access to broadband at home. Staff and young people have won multiple awards and presented at national and international conferences (using digital technology) to showcase their experiences in this area.

■ Staff should now prioritise improving further assessment and moderation, particularly in the broad general education (BGE). Senior leaders are developing an 'Assessment and Moderation Policy'. In the senior phase, teachers show confidence in applying course assessment requirements. They use approaches well to support young people to progress towards gaining National Qualifications. A number of staff undertake Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) duties, which assists their understanding of national standards. All staff should build on these approaches to ensure that assessment in the BGE challenges all young people.

■ A few staff have completed professional learning on moderation. This includes with associated primaries and local secondary schools to develop reliability in awarding a level. A minority of staff have established moderation links out with the school to support planning and assessment procedures. Staff for GME make successful use of technology to work with a similar department in another local authority. However across the school, moderation is at too early a stage. Staff have identified the need to re-establish moderation with associated primary schools and beyond. Once moderation is fully embedded, the more robust approach to tracking and monitoring in the BGE should ensure more appropriate presentation decisions as young people move from BGE into the senior phase.

■ In the senior phase, young people are aware of their working and target grades. As a result of learner conversations, young people know what they need to do to improve. Teachers need to consider how feedback in jotters supports young people in meeting their targets.

■ In the BGE, a new local authority approach to tracking, monitoring and recording progress in Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels has been introduced. This is helping staff to streamline their approaches, whilst gaining consistency across subjects and with primary schools. Information from tracking and monitoring is used productively to discuss progression and identify how young people can make sufficient progress. Through tracking and monitoring discussions with key adults or named persons, all young people are given the opportunity to highlight their strengths and next steps. Staff put in place interventions as required, particularly

for young people requiring additional support. These interventions are regularly reviewed to ensure their effectiveness.

■ Senior leaders recognise the continued need to evaluate the outcomes of tracking and monitoring to ensure resulting improvements. In particular, senior leaders are supporting staff and young people in having more robust conversations where tracking information has shown a need for interventions to enable young people to fulfil their potential.

■ Parents receive five tracking reports per session. In the BGE, these focus on progress within a level, and in the senior phase on working and target grades. Senior leaders should continue to ensure that all parents receive consistently high-quality feedback on their child's progress.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

■ The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority. We have alerted the school and the education authority to these issues. The school and the education authority have assured us that appropriate action will be taken to address these.

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 in the BGE through the medium of English

■ In the BGE, teachers have been effectively identifying and reducing gaps in numeracy attainment. This is helping young people make better progress. During the three-year period 2017 to 2019, the school reported that almost all young people achieved numeracy at third CfE level or better. Between 2016 and 2019, the school reported that just over a half of young people achieved fourth CfE level in numeracy.

■ Literacy is an important area requiring further improvement. Staffing vacancies in the English department are not helpful in supporting young people's progress in literacy. In 2019, the school reported that the majority of young people achieved at third CfE level or better in reading and writing, with most in listening and talking. This represents a decline in attainment in comparison to previous cohorts. In 2019, a minority of young people achieved fourth CfE levels in literacy. Teachers of English have begun to make some key adjustments to the curriculum to raise attainment. As a next step, senior leaders and teachers should build further on gathering assessment evidence of learners' progress in literacy across a range of curriculum areas. Teachers predict that young people's attainment will begin to show improvements in 2020.

Attainment of leavers in literacy and numeracy

■ Between 15/16 and 17/18, almost all leavers achieved a numeracy award at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 4 or better as units, with most achieving at this as part of a course award. During the two-year period 16/17 and 17/18, all leavers' attainment in numeracy is consistently in line with the virtual comparator (VC) across all SCQF levels. In 17/18, almost all leavers with additional support needs (ASN) achieved a numeracy award at SCQF level 3 or better.

■ Between 15/16 and 17/18, most leavers achieved a literacy award as units at SCQF level 5 or better. The percentage achieving this in 17/18 is significantly lower than the VC. The school has still to achieve a consistent pattern of improving attainment at SCQF level 3 or better and SCQF level 4 or better. Between 13/14 and 17/18, a few young people who achieved awards and qualifications in curriculum areas may not have an award in literacy. Senior leaders are now being more rigorous in ensuring that young people are presented for a literacy award. Senior leaders and teachers are reviewing curriculum pathways through the senior phase in English and mathematics. Senior leaders are able to evidence that more flexible approaches are beginning to allow higher numbers of young people to achieve literacy and numeracy awards.

■ For all leavers, there are improvements in literacy at SCQF level 5 or better and SCQF level 6 or better between 13/14 and 16/17, with a decline at these levels in 17/18. Between 14/15 and

17/18, just under, or over a half of leavers achieved a literacy award at SCQF level 6 or better. However, at SCQF levels three to six, leavers' attainment is often significantly much lower and significantly lower than the VC. The improvements noted at SCQF level 5 and level 6 between 13/14 and 16/17, also apply to young people who require additional support with their learning.

Attainment in literacy through Gaelic in the BGE and the senior phase

- Across the school, the numbers studying literacy and Gàidhlig are relatively small. As such, trends cannot be ascertained. Between 2018 and 2019, the school reports that most or almost all young people achieved third CfE levels or better in literacy and Gàidhlig. In the senior phase, with the exception of SCQF level 6 in 2016, there is uptake for National 5 and Higher Gàidhlig. A few young people study the Advanced Higher.

- There is a significant reduction in young people's curriculum being delivered through Gaelic as they move from primary to secondary. Staff have developed a rationale for the curriculum through Gaelic. This should now form part of senior leaders' strategic planning for the whole-school curriculum to raise attainment, encourage fluency in a wide range of contexts and meet national expectations. A number of interventions have been put in place to raise attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig in the BGE. These include a teacher beneficially leading a curricular transition project with children in the primary school with the aim of improving a structured programme for grammar.

Attainment over time in the BGE

- Whilst senior leaders have data over time, teachers' professional judgements of CfE levels could be more reliable across curriculum areas. A recent change of approach to tracking and monitoring young people's progress is allowing senior leaders and teachers to design more bespoke and prompt interventions. As a result, senior leaders and teachers predict improvements in young people's attainment across the BGE in 2020. Improved approaches to tracking the progress of identified groups are helping to raise the attainment of targeted groups of learners, and those with protected characteristics. This tracking should be extended to include the progress, attainment, as well as in- and beyond-school achievements of young people in GME.

- Across almost all curriculum areas, teachers are beginning to plan more coherent programmes of learning. Young people have increased opportunities to apply skills in literacy and numeracy in a variety of contexts. Teachers should continue to prioritise building on young people's progress at transition from the primary stages.

Attainment over time in the senior phase

- Young people in S4 are offered seven courses taken as a qualification. During the period 16/17 to 18/19, the majority of young people have chosen to follow seven courses. This is above national average. In 2019, a minority of young people did eight qualifications. Young people in S5 are offered five courses, with those in S6 offered four courses, taken as a qualification. In 18/19, numbers of young people opting for five and four courses respectively have increased.

- During the five-year period 13/14 to 17/18, the school's attainment is in line with the VC for all leavers and the highest-attaining 20% in four out of the five-years. For the middle-attaining 60%, the school is in line for three out of the five-years. Staff's next priority is to enable effective progress to achieve consistently year-on-year improvements. For the lowest-attaining 20%, the school is achieving in line with its VC for four out of five years between 13/14 and 17/18. However, complementary tariff scores are variable and not showing sustained improvements. This variability also shows as young people who are the lowest-attaining 20% move through the school.

- During the five-year period 14/15 to 18/19, young people at S4 are performing very well at SCQF level 5 or better. The percentage of young people who are achieving one or more to seven or more qualifications is increasing. In 18/19, young people's attainment of one or more to seven or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better and SCQF level 5A or better was significantly higher than the VC. Between 14/15 and 17/18 at SCQF level 5C or better, the percentages achieving one or more to six or more qualifications, for two and occasionally three years, young people's attainment is significantly higher than the VC.

- During the five-year period 14/15 to 18/19, young people by S5 at SCQF level 6C and better and SCQF level 6A and better are performing consistently in line with the VC.

- By S6 in both 17/18 and 18/19, the percentage of young people attaining one or more qualification at level 6C or better is significantly higher than the VC. Between 14/15 and 18/19, the percentages achieving one or more to six or more qualifications at SCQF level 6A and better is in line with the VC. During the same time period, at SCQF level 7C or better and SCQF level 7A or better, for one or more qualifications, young people's attainment is in line with the VC.

- Senior leaders and teachers should continue to review the school's 'positive presentation policy' to improve further attainment outcomes for all young people as they move through the senior phase. They should make more rigorous use of data to inform learner conversations and course choice conversations. This will help impact on better coursing of young people, aligned to their individual needs and aspirations.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Young people appreciate staff's efforts in providing a wide range of opportunities to develop skills and attributes through sporting, musical and drama activities, as well as competitions, trips and community events. A wide range of local partners work with the school to help provide a wide range of contexts for learning. Commendably, staff are pro-active, inclusive and equitable in how achievements are recognised. Senior leaders systematically review young people's participation in achievements so that no young person misses out. The school's initial evaluation of achievements confirms a change in culture, whereby young people are proud of their achievements and how these are recognised.

- Young people at all stages are given opportunities to develop leadership skills, particularly through the junior and senior pupil leadership teams. Tasks undertaken by these teams include planning community events, participating in committees, organising charity functions and house competitions. Young people in these roles prioritise ensuring that the views of young people are taken into account in improving the school. For this, young people engage well with 'DGS WEE HGIOS' (Dunoon Grammar School's Wee How good is our school?).

- The school should continue to seek ways of providing further leadership opportunities for young people, with recognition through use of the SCQF Framework. They should also make use of their skills framework within the context of achievements.

Equity for all learners

- The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is being used effectively to remove potential barriers to help young people. Teachers across all subject areas are using Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and attainment data more purposefully to mitigate underachievement as a result of inequity. This targeted approach to using data is beginning to show improved outcomes for groups of young people. Between 15/16 and 17/18, young people residing in SIMD decile one have been leaving with complementary tariff scores significantly higher than national scores. No young person resides in deciles associated with least deprivation. Most

young people reside in deciles four to six. For these leavers, average complementary tariff scores are largely in line with national averages.

■ Between 14/15 and 17/18, almost all leavers left for an initial positive destination. In 2018, the percentage of young people leaving to go to higher education increased.

■ In supporting equity for young people in GME, senior leaders have some changes planned. The teacher of GME has a very clear vision on how the sector should be developed. Senior leaders should continue to recognise that they have a legislative duty to deliver a medium of learning, which is more than a language within a curriculum area. In planning for equity, senior leaders should look at ways of providing more of a proportion of CfE through Gaelic. This should include daily, formal opportunities for young people to use Gaelic. The teacher of GME's time is being used to deliver provision through English. Senior leaders have agreed to look at protecting young people's time in literacy and Gàidhlig from extraction.

The learning centre is a specialist provision that supports young people who have significant additional support needs. The hub supports young people with emotional and behaviour needs.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Young people in the learning centre benefit from the positive whole-school ethos, which is based on a strong sense of community and equity. Staff and young people demonstrate a firm commitment to mutual respect, tolerance and inclusion. Importantly, young people from the learning centre are fully included in school life.

- Young people in the learning centre benefit from high-quality relationships between staff and peers. Both in the hub and the learning centre, young people are happy, confident and positive in their outlook. They are working with increasing independence and confidence in many aspects of their learning.

- Classrooms in the learning centre are bright and well presented. They are well resourced, including with digital technologies. Teaching and support staff benefit from a range of career-long professional learning (CLPL) opportunities. They use this effectively to ably provide young people with well-informed support.

- Teacher-pupil dialogue is of high quality. Staff are very sensitive to the needs of young people, which they meet very well.

- Young people in the learning centre access a wide range of subjects in mainstream classes. This is both as discrete groups and whilst joining mainstream classes with the support of an adult. Young people enjoy being included in the school community. They participate in a wide range of school events, including at lunch times, school shows, charitable events and leavers' ceremonies.

- Young people from the learning centre access clubs, after-school learning and respite sessions at evenings and weekends. This is well supported by staff. Parents report that access to these aspects of wider school life has had a very positive impact on family life.

- The school makes very effective use of its community. Young people from the learning centre are full and valued members of Dunoon Grammar School, the town and the surrounding area.

- Young people's learning is planned using experiences and outcomes. National Benchmarks and milestones are used for assessments. Staff use the local authority's tracking and monitoring system to check progress and tailor learning activities to young people's needs. There remains scope to differentiate learning more to the abilities of young people.

- Young people in the learning centre are not always aware of the purpose of learning tasks. They engage very well when learning is active and matched to their interests. Staff should continue to monitor learning and teaching to ensure activities have sufficient pace, challenge and enjoyment.

- The learning centre has both a dedicated nurture space and a very clear commitment to a nurturing approach across the centre. Young people benefit from feeling cared for and safe. They are well known by adults who provide them with skilled support. This keeps young people

motivated and keen to succeed. Staff should continue to pay close attention to balancing the level of support and challenge in place for young people.

■ Effective assessment is very evident at points of transition. Young people's learning needs are effectively planned for as part of the P7 to S1 programme. Interventions are therefore well timed and well matched to what young people require to engage in learning most effectively.

■ Where appropriate, young people in the learning centre have the correct planning and review arrangements in place. Parents speak very favourably about their involvement in this process and make reference to their involvement.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

■ In 18/19, young people in the learning centre achieved course awards, across a range of 12 subjects ranging from SCQF level 2 or better to SCQF level 5 or better. Staff should now profile the attainment and achievements of young people in the hub and learning centre. A next step is to use this information more robustly to evaluate impact of interventions over time.

■ Since 15/16, all leavers from the learning centre achieved a positive destination. Key staff in the learning centre, and at University of the West of Scotland and Argyll College support young people in progressing to courses in further education on leaving school. Young people follow a range of courses including art, media and volunteering.

■ In numeracy, young people are making progress in number, measurement and money. Some young people with significant barriers to learning are achieving milestones in numeracy, for example with shape, number and counting. They are also developing fine motor skills and walking. In literacy, young people are improving their skills in writing and talking.

■ As part of P7 to S1 transition arrangements, teachers identify young people for whom additional support with literacy would be helpful. Assessment data is showing that reading ages are improving year on year for this targeted group. Young people are developing decoding skills, which is supporting them with dyslexia. Over time, almost all young people have improved their reading age in this way.

■ Overall, primary transition arrangements into the school and learning centre contribute positively to improved outcomes for young people. Parents make consistent and highly positive reference to the effectiveness of these programmes. Young people's attendance, engagement with school and progress in skills have improved. Parents also report that their children are better enabled to access the community and independent life.

■ Young people in the hub are positive about the impact of their support. Similarly, young people speak positively about their time in the nurture space. Staff have started to track attendance, behaviour referrals and other criteria to evaluate the impact of the hub. Some early data is showing that young people's attendance is improving.

■ Young people in the learning centre are successful in a wide range of achievements over time. They have been nominated for local authority awards in both volunteering and enterprise. Young people participate fully in the life and work of the school. They take part in a wide range of experiences, in which they feel included, respected, happy and successful. Experiences range from residential trips, charitable events, Christmas fayres and a wide range of community events.

■ Young people take part in a range of sporting, leisure and wellbeing events. Some of these include a national or authority-wide level of participation from children and young people with additional support needs. Young people have been successful in winning medals and prizes at events like Scottish Disability Sports competitions.

This contributes to school evaluations. It is in addition to the evidence presented elsewhere in the summarised inspection findings.

Context

Dunoon Grammar offers Gàidhlig as a National Qualification at SCQF level 4 to SCQF level 7. No other subject is offered through the medium of Gaelic. Young people learning through the medium of English have an option to learn Gaelic as an elective in the senior phase. Currently, this is not leading to a National Qualification.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

■ Staff and young people enjoy very positive relationships. Specialist staff make very effective use of immersion approaches to support young people's further development of literacy and Gàidhlig. Young people are very motivated by their experiences and are keen to use the language they are acquiring.

■ Young people's understanding of the place of Gaelic and Gaelic Medium Education in Dunoon is beginning to be opened up to more young people with the availability of Gaelic (Learners) to those in English medium. A next step would be to create a progression pathway for Gaelic (Learners), with a range of National Qualifications. Senior leaders are aware of how a progressive pathway may be achieved by using the national digital platform, e-Sgoil. The role of interdisciplinary learning in supporting informed attitudes to Gaelic is still to be explored.

■ Partners and Gaelic organisations need to have a bigger role in collaborating with the school to increase the totality of learning and teaching through Gaelic.

■ The school's improvement plans over time do not detail whole-school action points bespoke to the Gaelic sector, or linked to national planning for Gaelic. Senior leaders' more strategic direction would support young people's learning, teaching and assessment through Gaelic. The creativity and flexibility in learning through Gaelic, encouraged in Education Scotland's Advice on Gaelic Education, is still to be maximised by senior leaders.

■ Senior leaders should monitor and track the attainment and achievement of those in GME as a group of learners. This would help ascertain if the best possible outcomes are being achieved.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

■ Over time, young people have gained skills and fluency in Gaelic from their involvement in national immersion opportunities. All young people are involved in Film-G, the national competition for which short films are created. They are also involved in national debating competitions through the medium of Gaelic. Young people showcase their successes in these immersion opportunities very effectively with cèilidhs and premieres of films. Commendably, young people develop leadership skills through the medium of Gaelic by working with children who are in Gaelic Medium Education at Sandbank Primary School. Young people's participation in suggesting improvements to GME should be encouraged with 'DGS Wee HGIOS'.

■ Staff should consider how the SCQF Framework can be used to recognise the skills that young people acquire from national and local immersion opportunities. Initially, the accreditation may need to be through English while awarding bodies make these available through Gaelic.

Other relevant information for Gaelic Medium Education

■ Senior leaders should ensure that the school handbook promotes GME and Gaelic (Learners).

■ A depute headteacher who is fairly new to post has responsibility for GME. This should be written into her remit so that GME is central to the work of the school. Senior leaders would benefit from regular specialist professional learning on GME. This should include visiting other schools, and collaborating with other senior leaders in the local authority and regional improvement collaborative.

Practice worth sharing more widely

■ Through enterprise, the school has developed relevant, real-life contexts to support and frame young people's learning and teaching. This has involved working with an extensive range of partners, including local, national and international businesses and charities. Staff, partners and young people recognise the substantial impact this work has had on the development of learners' skills for learning, life and work. It has also enhanced learners' digital literacy and creativity skills.

■ All young people in S2 complete the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI). In so doing, they focus on developing creativity and digital literacy skills through the creation of multi-media presentations. The school's work with the UK charity 'Apps for Good' School of the Year resulted in young people participating in the 'Internet of Things' competition. This challenged young people to develop new products out of everyday objects. Young people developed a safety product to support people living with dementia. Having won the competition, young people linked with Dementia UK, Glasgow University and worked with professional developers to explore the merits and challenges of their product. Young people clearly developed a range of skills. They also enhanced their knowledge of the processes of product planning, development and marketing, as relevant to the curriculum.

■ Staff have explored rich learning topics relating to machine learning, artificial intelligence and the technology jobs for the future. Young people developed a machine learning based app which measured an individual's carbon footprint. It offered strategies to reduce their impact on the planet. Learners are demonstrating enhanced skills in communication, teamwork, presenting, leadership and problem-solving.

■ The school has overcome some of the challenges of its rural location by employing digital technology to make links across the world. Recently, young people engaged in an in-depth discussion about technological innovations, and a question and answer session with staff from technological companies based in California. Due to these experiences, some young people have been empowered to pursue a career in business and technology.

■ School staff and young people have won multiple awards and presented at national and international conferences (via digital link up) to showcase their successes. This includes the JA Europe Entrepreneurial School Award in 2019. Dunoon Grammar School is the first school in Scotland to receive this accolade. It was also awarded the 'App for School' School of the Year, with staff recognised for their commitment to meaningful partnership working.

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.