

Summarised inspection findings

St Joseph's Academy

East Ayrshire Council

3 December 2019

School Name St Joseph's Academy
Council: East Ayrshire Council
SEED number: 8224633
Roll (Sep 2018): 685

Attendance is generally below the national average.

Exclusion from school is above the national average.

In February 2019, 23.4 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2018, 41.1 per cent of pupils live in the 20 per cent most deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2018, the school reported that 35.6 per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

Key contextual information

St Joseph's Academy is the only denominational secondary school in East Ayrshire. It is a six year comprehensive school. The school has had a significant turnover of staff in recent years. The current headteacher has been in post for 20 months. He is supported by three depute headteachers. At the time of the inspection the depute headteachers had been in post for a period of four years, 16 months and two weeks respectively. The majority of promoted post holders and teaching staff have taken up post in the last 20 months.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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 has had an immediate and positive impact on leading change within the school since taking up post. He has provided much needed stability and a clear direction to take the school forward. He has been welcomed by the school community. Staff and parents acknowledge the positive impact he has had, and report that the school is led well.
- The vision, values and aims have been in place since 2010. The headteacher has identified correctly the need to refresh these to reflect the current context of St Joseph's Academy. He is aware that these need to be developed in conjunction with the wider school community to ensure all stakeholders share ownership of these. The work on the rights and values based education, and the start made to promoting more fully the Catholicity and Gospel values of the school, should support this work. The school currently has a merit scheme to promote positive behaviour. Going forward approaches to developing positive relationships and behaviour need to be in line with the revised vision, values and aims and be clearly communicated to all stakeholders.
- The St Joseph's Academy catchment area covers all of East Ayrshire. The headteacher introduced 'St Joseph's in Context' to ensure staff have an awareness of the geographical area. This helpful booklet provides a range of socio-economic information, including housing, health and labour market intelligence (LMI) data. As a result, staff have an improved understanding of issues directly affecting young people and the communities they live in. Staff are now better placed to make a more meaningful contribution to the work on the vision, values and aims.
- The headteacher is supported by three deputy headteachers who bring a range of skills and experience to the leadership team. Their remits have been aligned with national improvement priorities and 'How good is our school? 4th Edition' (HGIOS?4) quality indicators. As a team, they have led staff recently, in significant work to improve the curriculum in the broad general education (BGE) and in developing learning pathways in the senior phase as detailed in QI 2.2 below. It is too early to measure the impact of these changes. While approaches to pastoral care have also been developed, inclusive practices, which reflect current national guidance are not yet fully evident. Senior leaders and teachers need to drive forward improvement in this area at an appropriate pace.
- The school improvement plan has three clear priorities identified by the headteacher, from a range of evidence. They are: improving attainment in literacy; developing consistency in learning and teaching; and ensuring all young people have access to personal support. These well-considered priorities, which link directly to local and national priorities, are meaningful to the school community. Senior leaders have worked well to ensure staff have a clear understanding of these priorities.

- The school has plans in place for use of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). These include improving attendance, increasing learner engagement and raising attainment in literacy. Evidence of impact is limited at this stage. Senior leaders should now ensure that the rationale for this funding allocation is shared more fully across the school. This should lead to senior leaders being better placed to measure improved outcomes for young people who are targeted by this funding. Positively, the Parent Council were consulted regarding the allocation of the PEF.
- Senior leaders acknowledge the need for more effective whole school approaches to self-evaluation, improvement and monitoring the impact of change. This should include engaging all staff, young people, parents and partners in meaningful opportunities to evaluate and improve the work of the school. An extended senior leadership team of middle leaders meets regularly to discuss and share practice. The role of middle leaders across the school should be extended to ensure they contribute more to whole school self-evaluation and improvement planning. At departmental level, most principal teachers are managing change well. They engage in self-evaluation activities using a range of sources and data, including pupil participation surveys and Insight analysis. Principal teachers develop improvement plans which link to the school improvement plan. These plans are of varying quality, as are approaches to self-evaluation. It would be helpful for staff to develop an agreed understanding of what successful self-evaluation and improvement planning looks like. Developing further the use of HGIOS⁴ should support this.
- Staff across the school demonstrate a strong commitment to professional learning and are beginning to view themselves as agents of change within the school. For example, a significant number of staff undertake SQA duties and around a fifth have engaged in accredited courses in recent years. All staff engage in a range of internal, external and local authority professional learning opportunities. These are closely aligned to the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) standards, national improvement framework (NIF) drivers and HGIOS⁴. Senior leaders are in the process of aligning these more closely to school improvement priorities. Teaching staff engage in a professional review and development process linked to GTCS standards. A few teachers are leading on the whole school approach to improving learning and teaching.
- Young people have limited opportunities to influence change across the school. Senior leaders have identified correctly the need to improve the involvement of all young people in evaluating the work of the school and are beginning to address this. A few young people are members of junior and senior leadership teams, eco committee, developing awareness of children's rights and the values based education group. A few young people in S3 are beginning to engage with 'How good is OUR school?' Across the school young people participate increasingly through decision-making groups.
- Staff actively encourage partners to engage with the school. Partners support young people's learning and health and wellbeing well. A few partners undertake their own self-evaluation of programmes and activities and share these with the school. These are not used systematically to inform strategic planning for continuous improvement or to recognise the strong contribution partners make to the life and work of the school. Similarly, community partners are not engaged in planning and implementing improvement and change. Staff should further engage with community partners in shaping and driving improvement. This should help to ensure all partners understand and recognise their role in improving outcomes for young people.
- Staff have a clear understanding of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) priorities and are strengthening the focus on employability skills. The redesign of the BGE and enhancements made within the senior phase have been planned well to ensure continued

improvement in this area. Increasing the variety of curriculum pathways and options, a greater focus on Career Management Skills (CMS) and work with a range of partners are supporting this well. However, the work experience arrangements are traditional and less successful than they could be.

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

- In almost all lessons relationships are positive with an ethos of mutual respect between teachers and young people. In most lessons, young people are motivated and engaged, demonstrating commitment to their learning. Most participate well in class discussions, group and individual work. Teachers regularly seek the views of young people on their learning. In a few examples these are taken account of. For example, 'you said, we did' boards in the English and mathematics departments demonstrate the ways in which teachers have implemented changes based on feedback from young people.
- In most lessons, learning is matched well to the needs of most young people. However, in too many lessons, learning is overly teacher-led with young people engaging in the same task at the same pace. In S1 to S3, teachers need to develop further approaches to meet all learners needs. The over-reliance on setting in a few departments is not meeting all young people's needs well enough. Teachers should develop their understanding of approaches to differentiation to ensure the pace and level of challenge in learning meets the needs of all young people. When young people are given opportunities to lead their own learning, they are eager and active participants. In a minority of lessons, tasks and activities encourage young people to take responsibility through collaborative learning activities or by supporting their peers. In these lessons, young people are highly motivated with good opportunities for independence and creativity. This practice should be shared more widely across the school to support young people to share their thinking and discuss new ideas.
- In most lessons, young people understand the purpose of their learning and what they need to do to be successful. In a few lessons, young people co-create success criteria which is improving their engagement in the assessment process. School leaders have identified the need to ensure that the purpose of learning is more explicit for young people and is more focussed on outcomes rather than tasks.
- Digital approaches are used increasingly across the school to support young people who require additional support for their learning. Staff provide almost all young people with a tablet device to use in school and at home. However, their use across the school is inconsistent. Issues with connectivity and repairs contribute to this. Senior leaders should revisit the digital literacy strategy to ensure it continues to deliver its intended impact. Most teachers create engaging presentations incorporating a range of media which are well received by young people. A few teachers use digital media platforms to share the content of their lesson and encourage young people to access independently notes or recap on the day's lessons. A few departments are using commercial software which enables young people to practice and consolidate their learning at their own pace and to receive instant feedback.

- Staff demonstrate a shared vision for improving learning and teaching. The relaunched 'LEARN' policy provides a useful framework to move the quality of teaching forward in a consistent way. Almost all lessons are structured well around this framework. Teacher explanations and instructions are clear. Most teachers use questioning well to establish the level of young people's understanding and to engage them in learning. A few departments use questioning effectively. Teachers should build on this current effective practice to promote higher order thinking skills. This should help to ensure questioning techniques better engage all young people in whole class discussions. Plenaries are used well at the end of most lessons to check young people's learning. In a few lessons, feedback from plenaries is used to inform the next lesson or starter activities.
- Staff have had a recent focus on providing feedback to young people which is evident across the school. Most young people are positive about the feedback they receive regarding their progress in learning and what they need to do to improve. In the BGE, young people receive useful feedback on their learning in almost all curriculum areas. In the senior phase, most young people are aware of their targets and most have agreed these in conversation with their teachers.
- Teachers use a range of approaches to assess young people's progress across the curriculum in the BGE. This includes providing young people with regular opportunities to evaluate the work of their peers. In most lessons, teachers use approaches which support judgements about young people's understanding throughout a lesson. This should now be used to inform better teachers' planning for future learning. Assessment approaches should be reviewed to ensure they allow all young people to demonstrate what they know and how well they can apply what they have learned. In the senior phase, assessment is planned well to track young people's progress in National Qualifications. Almost all young people feel that teachers help them to understand how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. Almost all young people appreciate the support they get from their teachers and are aware of extra support available to them.
- In the BGE, staff are using National Benchmarks to plan learning and moderate professional judgements about the attainment of young people. These judgements are not yet sufficiently reliable across all curriculum areas. Staff should continue to work collaboratively to develop their confidence in assessment and to develop a consistent approach across curriculum areas. At present, departments use a range of terminology to describe progress through a Curriculum for Excellence level. The new authority-led system currently being introduced, should support a more consistent approach across the school. This should help young people and their parents understand more clearly young people's progress in learning.
- Teachers and principal teachers track the progress of young people within their departments. In the BGE, this data is not used well enough yet to ensure all learners are making sufficient progress. Teachers do not monitor well enough the progress being made by young people who face additional challenges. Action is required to address this and ensure that appropriate interventions are planned and implemented. In the senior phase, assessment data is used more effectively to monitor progress and plan interventions when required. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to develop a system that will gather information across all curriculum areas. This has the potential to provide a more detailed profile of the learning and progress of young people over time. It should also enable staff to monitor collectively the progress of young people and to implement more timely intervention strategies.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Last session senior leaders identified that the curriculum urgently needed reviewed. Prior to 2019/20 significant weaknesses in the curriculum included young people not receiving their entitlements to all curricular areas within the BGE. In addition, in comparison with schools of similar size, a fairly limited range of courses and programmes was on offer. Staff have had a substantial focus on developing the curriculum across all areas in the school. This involved consulting with most key stakeholders. The review allowed staff to reflect on the unique context of the school and make use of the 'St Joseph's in Context' document. The school has helpfully shaped its curriculum around recent national advice. The curriculum is now seen as fluid and evolving rather than a fixed offer. This better meets most young people's learning needs.
- In 2018/19, teachers reviewed the curriculum in the BGE. Teachers identified how the content of their courses link to a number of key drivers including Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes, skills for learning, life and work and CMS. The updated curriculum is leading to more meaningful learning experiences for most young people in S1-S3. Senior leaders plan to continue to review the curriculum offer and to continue to support young people to make more informed choices during personalisation and choice events.
- Teachers refreshed the personal social and education (PSE) curriculum ensuring that it links better with revised national guidance on PSE delivery. This is providing young people the opportunity to understand themselves and their wellbeing better. Young people's involvement in evaluative activities is developing, providing them with opportunities to contribute to leading improvements across the school.
- Religious education (RE) is planned in line with requirements for the delivery of RE in Catholic schools. The faith and learning programme provides opportunities to reflect on faith, liturgy and personal responsibilities. Young people are receiving physical education (PE) in line with national guidance.
- The school's approaches to literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum are at an early stage. Departments have identified, through the BGE audit how their courses and programmes link with literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing outcomes. However, developments in these areas are currently too heavily confined to the English, mathematics and PE departments respectively. As a next step, the development of a health and wellbeing strategy should provide a framework for a coherent and progressive programme delivered across the different contexts of the curriculum. Senior leaders recognise the need to develop approaches to learning for sustainability and healthy eating.

BGE

- Almost all young people in S1 and S2 experience a broad general education across all curriculum areas. This session a few young people are following a bespoke pathway. This should be kept under review to ensure that these young people receive their entitlements, including appropriate depth of learning, and that their needs are met well.
- Young people in S2 are able to apply for places on college 'vocational bursts' where college staff deliver courses and programmes on a range of topics over five week periods. The current vocational bursts on offer are early years education, social science, fashion and hair and beauty. Young people have the opportunity to continue to follow these pathways with college link programmes in S3 and the senior phase.

- The school's revised structure this session enables all young people in S3 to experience courses in maths, English, modern languages, RE, PE and PSE. Young people also choose two subjects each from science, social subjects, technologies and arts and wellbeing. In addition, senior leaders have introduced a period per week of 'improvement and intervention' for young people in S3. During this time young people receive additional time to study a second modern foreign language, develop their performance skills in music, consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills, develop resilience, improve their awareness of current affairs, or contribute further to learner participation.
- A few young people in S3 choose to take vocational electives, with some elements of courses delivered by school staff and others by college staff. This session these include childcare, hair and makeup, bike maintenance and milkshake bar. Engagement in these projects has raised young people's confidence and helped develop their social skills. A few young people have also gained qualifications in areas such as The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland customer care, customer service and early learning and childcare.

Senior phase

- This session the school introduced a free choice model in S4, S5 and S6, moving away from the more traditional structure of previous years. The curriculum now provides the opportunity for almost all young people in S4 to select seven courses which lead to qualifications. Across S5 and S6, almost all young people select five courses leading to qualifications. From S4 to S6, the school provides, along with partners, an increasing variety of courses and learning pathways for young people, including those with identified barriers to their learning. The school has a growing range of courses leading to National Qualifications and other accreditation at SCQF levels 3 to 7. However, the current staffing complement means that progression to the senior phase is not possible in business and home economics. Moving forward, staff should look to broaden the opportunities for greater progression routes for young people from S4.
- Multi-level teaching has been, and continues to be, experienced by young people in some curriculum areas including music, PE and art. In a few cases this includes tri-level classes from National 5, Higher and Advanced higher level experiences. The current staffing complement allows young people at particular levels to be taught for some periods as discrete classes.
- A few strong community partnerships enhance learning pathways. These could be developed further by using shared intelligence and self-evaluation to inform what is working well and what is not. This should help identify gaps, maximise the contribution of partners and contribute to developing skills for learning, life and work.
- Teachers work well with third sector partners including: the Prince's Trust; Business in the Community and the Chamber of Commerce. These partners offer a useful range of additional short programmes and support. They encourage the development of employability skills, and ensure enhanced opportunities for young people at greatest risk of not achieving their potential. This well-planned and coordinated partnership work ensures motivation, attendance and achievement as well as the development of skills for learning, life and work.
- The school partnership with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) helps ensure that young people are aware of the wide range of learning pathways available. My World of Work (MyWoW) use and registrations are above the national norm. The school has a small but helpful team of MyWoW ambassadors. Careers advice is well supported, and staff make good use of CMS and LMI in their curriculum planning. Young people benefit from useful individual support in areas such as curriculum vitae writing or Universities and Colleges Admissions Service applications.

- Senior leaders work well with Ayrshire College to ensure a wide range of suitable curriculum options, primarily in the senior phase. These include options linked to the health sector, creative industries, and enterprise. Certificated college programmes are promoted well and understood by young people. Staff ensure young people are well informed about the options and are well supported. As a result attendance and success rates are high.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- See choice QI.

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.

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

- In recent years the school has experienced extensive changes to staffing in pastoral care and support for learning. The 'St Joseph's in Context' document is enabling staff to be increasingly aware of the context of the school, and responsive to the changing needs of young people. Senior leaders and support staff have developed helpful operational procedures. The roles and responsibilities of staff are now clearer and more focussed. This is strengthening team work and communication, which is leading to more consistent approaches for improving outcomes for all young people. As indicated in QI 1.3 above, stronger collective responsibility and leadership is required in pastoral care and support for learning to drive forward improvement at an appropriate pace.
- Most young people benefit from increasingly positive relationships with staff which is helping them to achieve. All young people have daily contact with their pastoral care teacher. Most young people feel safe and have someone they can talk to if they have concerns or worries. The majority of young people feel that their views are sought by staff and also taken into account. Most also feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Senior leaders need to ensure that the staged approach to promoting positive behaviour is applied more consistently by teachers across the school. They should also review this in line with current national guidelines to promote inclusive approaches across the school.
- Most young people view the revised PSE programme for S1-S6 positively. Young people's views and those of a few partners informed the planning and development of this programme. Senior leaders should continue to keep this programme under regular review to ensure that it remains relevant for all young people as they progress through the school.
- Young people are beginning to become more familiar with the wellbeing indicators and are developing an understanding of their own wellbeing. They benefit from a wide range of opportunities to be active. An extensive range of clubs and activities support young people's mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Staff recognise the need to extend the language of wellbeing across all aspects of school life. Young people use a wellbeing web to reflect on their progress in all aspects of wellbeing. Pastoral care teachers use this to support their assessment of needs and to plan interventions for young people. Staff are not currently able to identify and measure progress in wellbeing for all young people. Senior leaders should continue to improve approaches to wellbeing and the universal support available for all young people.
- Awareness and understanding of mental health issues are successfully raised through the PSE programme and at assemblies. Most young people comment positively on staff's use of restorative approaches in class and of teachers' work to increase their understanding of their

own mental health. A few staff are trained in mental health first aid and partner agencies, including the Samaritans and Bethany Trust, provide further input at assemblies. Staff and senior pupils, in the 'Safe Spot' room, provide a supportive environment based on nurturing principles for young people who wish to use this. Trained counsellors work with young people to address issues such as self-confidence, anxiety, trauma and bereavement.

- A variety of peer-led approaches across the school is having a positive impact on outcomes for young people. Those who are actively engaged as peer educators, buddies, digital ambassadors or as sports leaders for example, feel more involved and engaged in the life of their school community. As a result they are developing more confidence, self-esteem and improved social and emotional wellbeing.
- Processes and procedures for identifying barriers to learning, creating support plans and putting interventions in place have improved significantly over the last two years. Staff have an understanding of factors which affect young people's learning. Classroom assistants are deployed usefully across the school to support learning. Teachers are provided with strategies to support young people in their classes. In order to be more helpful these strategies should be personalised and more specific. Young people and parents need to be more consistently involved in setting and reviewing targets. Plans for young people need to include specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART) targets. Senior leaders need to develop a more rigorous approach to planning to meet all young people's needs more effectively.
- A staged intervention process has recently been established to facilitate more appropriate information sharing for young people who require individualised or co-ordinated support. The school support team regularly discusses barriers which young people face and seek creative ways to meet their varying needs. A number of targeted interventions have been introduced that are resulting in a few young people re-engaging in their learning.
- Attendance at school in recent years has shown a slight improvement but still remains below the national average. Approaches to improving attendance remain a priority for the school. Senior leaders need to continue to monitor closely all interventions to ensure that all young people receive their full entitlement to education. More rigorous arrangements need to be put in place to monitor period-by-period absences and anomalies.
- Senior leaders provided figures that demonstrate that exclusion rates have decreased overall over the last five years to 2018/19. The focus on developing restorative approaches and on professional learning for staff with regard to a range of barriers to learning is considered, by senior leaders, to have contributed to this reduction.
- The main duties under the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007, including promoting the school meal service, protecting the identity of those entitled to free school meals, and providing access to free drinking water throughout the day, are being met. Further work has been agreed with senior leaders to promote and encourage those entitled to free school meals to use this service. Further work is also required to ensure full compliance with the nutrient standards for secondary school-aged young people, and to comply with the drinks standards which apply in secondary schools.
- Senior leaders should ensure that staff's understanding of statutory requirements is current and regularly updated. Taking greater account of latest Scottish Government guidance and codes of practice in this area should further support young people's wellbeing, inclusion and equality. Senior leaders should continue to review approaches to anti-bullying, including the

recording and monitoring of all incidents, such as those related to protected characteristics. Where appropriate young people should also be involved in this review.

- Pastoral transitions into the school are well-planned and involve a range of staff. Key information is shared appropriately which is helping staff to understand the needs and circumstances of individual learners. When appropriate, enhanced transitions and the use of safe spaces are helping a few young people to settle well into secondary school.
- Partners are very positive about their work with school staff to support young people. This includes young people who have experienced care, young carers and those requiring support with their wellbeing. Team around the child meetings are held regularly and targeted early interventions are planned in a solution focussed way. Individualised programmes and interventions are supporting young people's learning, wellbeing, confidence and success.
- Care-experienced young people are well supported by pastoral support staff. Multi-agency discussion takes place regularly to consider young people's needs and whether a coordinated support plan is required. This however, is not yet recorded. Clear chronologies are kept which detail next steps to support positive outcomes. As a result, most young people who have experienced care, receive the support they require to attain and achieve a positive post-school destination.
- Senior leaders and pastoral care staff are beginning to address the entitlements detailed in the Carers (Scotland) Act. Pastoral care staff have identified young people who would benefit from a young carer's statement. Plans are in place to draft these. Although this work is at an early stage young carers and parents are benefitting from practical help and support for their wellbeing.
- Young people are aware of children's rights; the school has gained the Rights Respecting School silver award and is working towards gold award. The previous pupil-led equalities group has developed into a wider equality and inclusion group encompassing the full range of protected characteristics. Although this is at the early stages there are clear plans to take this work forward and to involve more young people. Young people have also been involved in initiatives and activities to promote and raise awareness of diversity and the importance of tackling discrimination. These include a trip to Northern Ireland to highlight the importance of challenging sectarianism, the Anne Frank project and the Bee Kind/Choose Respect initiative designed to promote inclusion.

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

- Senior leaders are working to provide a suitable BGE for all young people which enables progression in learning. Over the last two years, staff have taken forward significant work around the content and delivery of Curriculum for Excellence courses and programmes. Coupled with increased opportunities for teachers to engage in moderation activities with others from both within and outwith the school, staff confidence in the reliability of teachers' professional judgements is improving. All staff are working better together to develop their understanding of national standards and expectations.
- By the end of S3, almost all young people attained third Curriculum for Excellence level or better in reading and listening and talking in 2016/17 and 2017/18. Most attained third level or better in writing and in numeracy in 2017/18. Less than half young people attained fourth level in reading and in writing with the majority attaining at this level for listening and talking in the same year. In 2018/19, figures provided by senior leaders indicate improvements in the percentage of young people attaining numeracy at both third and fourth level. Improving literacy for young people has been an identified priority in the school improvement plan over the last two years.

Senior phase

- The percentage of young people leaving school who have achieved both literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better improved between 2015/16 and 2017/18. In 2017/18 the majority of young people leaving school achieved both literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 5 which is higher than the virtual comparator (VC).
- Overall between 2013/14 and 2017/18 the percentage of young people leaving school with literacy at SCQF level 5 or better improved. Most young people now attain at this level which is broadly in line with the VC after a two year period of being significantly lower. Senior leaders believe that changes in the curriculum at both BGE and senior phase, as detailed in QI 2.2 above, have previously impacted negatively on the consistency of teaching and on the quality of passes over this period. Supported by the PT moderation, teachers are beginning to engage with more moderation activities related to literacy across the curriculum.
- The majority of young people leaving school attained numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better between 2013/14 and 2017/18. For young people leaving school at S5 the percentage attaining SCQF level 6 in numeracy improved between 2015/16 and 2017/18 and is now significantly much higher than the VC.

Attainment over time

BGE

- At present, staff cannot evidence progress over time in the BGE in areas outwith literacy and numeracy. This has impacted negatively on their ability to support progression into appropriate pathways in the senior phase. Staff are unable to articulate clear strategies for raising attainment. Further work is required to lead change in this area with a particular focus on developing a whole school strategy to raise attainment and to close the poverty related attainment gap. As detailed in QI 2.3 above, staff should continue to develop their confidence in assessment and to develop a consistent approach across curriculum areas. This, along with the planned introduction of a new monitoring and tracking tool, has the potential to support teachers to identify better where interventions or increased challenge are required for individuals and cohorts of young people.

Senior phase

- As young people move into the senior phase they have an increasing range of accredited opportunities to pursue including National Qualifications and other recognised awards. Recently young people have been offered a 'free choice' of options rather than the traditional structured option column approach. Faculties have each increased their range of study options for young people moving through the senior phase. While this is an encouraging development in the curriculum it is at an early stage with regard to measuring any impact.
- In four of the last five years to 2017/18, the average complementary tariff scores attained by all young people by the time they left school is in line with the VC. In 2016/17 this was significantly lower than the VC. For the lowest attaining 20% of young people the average complementary tariff scores are significantly lower than the VC in 2015/16 and in 2016/17. In 2017/18 this is in line with the VC. This may be due in part to the increasing flexibility and opportunities the revised curriculum offers young people. Senior leaders are aware of the few young people who are currently leaving school with zero tariff points. Staff need to keep under review the progress of individuals and different cohorts of young people to ensure sufficient progress is made by all.
- The complementary tariff scores for young people in S4, by the end of S5 and by the end of S6 are in line with the VC from 2016/17 to 2018/19. The lowest attaining 20% of young people in S4 while still lower than national, has improved from being significantly lower than the VC in 2017/18 and significantly much lower in 2016/17 to being in line with the VC in 2018/19. The lowest attaining 20% of young people in S5 attained significantly lower than the VC in 2018/19. The lowest attaining 20% of young people in S6 attained in line with the VC in 2018/19, however this group attained significantly higher than the VC in the preceding year (2017/18). Overall the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people attain in line with the VC in the years from 2015/16 to 2018/19.
- For young people with additional support needs there has been an improvement in average complementary tariff points and in positive destinations between 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- Almost all principal teachers track the progress of young people within their own departments. They discuss this regularly with senior leaders. Senior leaders are now reviewing this process and should, as planned, develop further the monitoring and tracking processes into one coherent system across the school to enable staff to use data more effectively. This should help staff to identify concerns earlier and provide more meaningful interventions to improve outcomes for young people.

Breadth and depth

- Between 2014/15 and 2016/17 most young people in S4 began the school year studying six SCQF courses. A few opted to study one or two SCQF level 6 courses over two years meaning that they were presented for four or five courses at the end of S4. Consequently this has impacted on the breadth and depth measures over time. In the latest year (2018/19) the curriculum offer at the senior phase has been revised as detailed in QI 2.2 above.
- The percentage of young people at S4 attaining five or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C+ or better is in line with the VC from 2016/17 to 2018/19. The percentage of young people at S4 attaining two or more to four or more qualifications at SCQF level 5A+ or better has improved. In 2018/19, this is significantly higher than the VC. The recent changes to the BGE and an increasing number of suitable pathways for young people as they move in to the senior phase may have contributed to this improvement. At S4, in 2018/19, almost all young people attained a SCQF level 4 award in modern languages for life and work which is significantly higher than the national figure.
- In 2018/19 the presentation policy for young people in S4 English was revised. This resulted in the majority of young people in S4 being presented for the course award at SCQF level 5 in English. Of those presented almost all attained at grades A-C.
- The percentage of young people by S5 attaining one or more qualification at SCQF level four or better in 2017/18 and two or more in 2016/17 and 2017/18 is significantly much lower than the VC. The percentage of young people by S5 attaining one or more to four or more qualifications at SCQF level 4 or better is significantly much lower than the VC in 2018/19.
- By S5 the percentage of young people attaining two or more to six or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C+ or better is in line with the VC in 2018/19. The percentage of young people at S5 attaining the same number of qualifications at SCQF level 5A+ or better is in line with the VC for 2016/17 to 2018/19. Less than half of young people by S5 attained one or more qualifications at SCQF level 6C+ or better in 2018/19. This is a decline from the previous two years and is now significantly lower than the VC. Senior leaders are working to address this issue.
- The percentage of young people by S6 attaining one or more to two or more qualifications at SCQF level four or better is significantly much lower than the VC in three out of the last four years. The percentage in this same cohort attaining three or more, or four or more qualifications at this level is significantly lower than the VC in 2018/19 and was significantly lower in the previous two years. Those attaining five or more qualifications at SCQF level 4 or better by S6 is in line with the VC in 2018/19 having been significantly below in 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- By S6 the percentage of young people attaining one or more qualifications at SCQF level 7C+ in line with VC in 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- As a result of the positive changes made to the BGE and senior phase offering the school is now better placed to improve the attainment of young people as they move through the school. Staff need to maintain high expectations and aspirations of young people and to support them to become independent learners.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people access a wide range of clubs and groups across almost all subject areas. This includes participation in sports leaders, numeracy ninjas, and expressive arts excellence

awards. The Young Journalist Society create a bi-monthly magazine which allows young people to develop further their literacy skills. The annual school show and exhibitions provide young people the opportunity to showcase their talents. Parents and carers, as well as young people, are encouraged to share any achievement and success outside of school through an area on the school's homepage. This is acknowledged where possible during assemblies or on a one to one basis.

- Through engaging in a variety of accredited and non-accredited programmes and activities young people have the opportunity to develop skills and attributes. Examples include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, John Muir and Saltire Awards. Participation across all accredited programmes however, is low. A few young people are developing leadership skills well, which they are using to support transitions and to organise fundraising events. A few have undertaken training, such as, Mentors in Violence Prevention, which they are planning to deliver to young people in S1 and S2. Volunteering as part of Caritas or Saltire award is increasing young people's awareness of wider community and faith issues, such as food poverty and illnesses affecting the elderly. This work has resulted in a nomination for a Scottish Care Outstanding Achievement Award, for a few young people in S1. Senior leaders now need to develop a clearer approach to promoting opportunities to ensure all young people are aware of them.
- The majority of young people are increasing their understanding of the world of work through a range of activities, including business links with curriculum areas. For example, an effective collaboration between the maths department and a local nursery, where young people supported children's numeracy skills, led to accreditation for volunteering. Senior leaders should consider how to incorporate these initiatives into the curriculum in a more structured and planned way to support young people's development of skills for learning, life and work.
- The recent recording by senior leaders of young people's involvement in activities within and out with the school, is a positive start to tracking participation. Senior leaders now need to build on this to track skills development over time and to recognise young people's achievements in a more systematic way. They should also analyse participation to ensure those young people who would benefit most are not missing out. Staff need to monitor the impact of the introduction of a bus warrant, for example, on participation levels in after school activities and supported study sessions. Moving forward, staff should explore the programmes on offer ensuring that they align better with young people's aspirations.

Equity for all learners

- The 'St Joseph's in Context' document has enabled all staff and partners to have a very clear understanding of the socio-economic context of the school and its community. As a result stakeholders were informed of the school context before being consulted regarding the allocation of the PEF. As detailed in QI 1.3 above, the school has plans in place for use of the PEF. These include the further development of a counselling and befriending provision which supports a few young people. A home link service has improved attendance of a few young people. A bespoke curriculum is offered to a few young people which has encouraged them to re-engage with school. Additional principal teachers are supporting families and staff to better meet the needs of young people within this community. It is not yet clear how these interventions are improving outcomes for specific young people. Further work is required to ensure there is a clear rationale for the use of PEF and that senior leaders are able to measure the impact on improving outcomes for those young people.
- Staff are at the early stages of identifying any gaps in attainment between groups of young people. When comparing the complementary tariff points of groups of young people there is no

clear pattern of an attainment gap closing. Senior leaders acknowledge the need to prioritise the development of strategies to raise attainment for some targeted groups of young people. This should include monitoring of attendance and attainment of these groups more rigorously.

- Almost all young people in four of the last five years have moved into a positive initial destination. In 2017/18 more young people left St Joseph's Academy to higher and further education and fewer to employment than the VC. Most young people in 2017/18 remained at school beyond S4, however just over half stayed at school into S6. Young people living in the most deprived areas, who remain at school until S6, are now attaining in line with others living in similar circumstances across Scotland when comparing complementary tariff scores. This has improved from being significantly much lower in 2017/18. Senior leaders, along with other staff have revised the curriculum offer to those young people in the senior phase so that it now offers more flexibility and choice. It is anticipated that this will encourage and enable more young people to remain at school and gain appropriate qualifications to support them as they move into life beyond school.

Choice of QI : 2.7 Partnerships

- The development and promotion of partnerships
- Collaborative learning and improvement
- Impact on learners

- Young people from each year group are represented on the Parent Council. The Parent Council are well informed on key matters, such as school improvement planning. Senior leaders and staff are keen to support greater parental engagement, and parents' views are frequently sought and acted upon.
- Senior leaders are committed to the development of family learning, but acknowledge this is at an early stage. Last session, family learning events were introduced, however the uptake was low. Staff are reviewing how they can promote these events more widely to engage more parents. Staff should continue to look for creative and innovative ways to involve a wider group of parents in their child's learning and the decisions which impact on them. 'Vibrant Communities' via the education service, are enhancing opportunities for young people, for example by engaging with families through group and one to one support. Programmes such as Parents in Partnership (PIP) are breaking down barriers between families and school. Senior leaders should now continue to build on family learning approaches, including early engagement, through for example, establishing a dedicated space in school for parents.
- Effective transition arrangements for young people moving from the associated primary schools to St Joseph's Academy are in place. Time spent in the secondary school for young people prior to starting is valued and appreciated by both parents and young people. Senior leaders now attend community parents evenings in a few of the associated primary schools which is helping build relationships with parents who are new to the secondary school environment.
- The majority of parents are well-informed about their child's progress in learning and the methods by which they can support their learning at home. Parents welcome teachers' use of a homework app which supports learning at home. However, this app is not used consistently by all teachers.
- Staff have purposeful relationships with a wide range of enthusiastic and motivated partner organisations. The school's partnership working is focused on DYW, pastoral care and community groups. Partners are positive about the school's welcoming ethos and willingness to engage in joint work. The school's profile in the local community has been raised through young people's involvement in activities such as a town centre regeneration project.
- A few community partners conduct regular self-evaluation of programmes and activities, results of which are shared with the school. However, feedback from staff on the impact of community partnerships is mainly verbal. Analysis of the range of community partners working with the school would be helpful to inform where partners may support best and to identify any gaps in the provision. Opportunities for community partners to come together to share their work and aspirations would help to remove duplication and help develop strong alliances between them. Senior leaders should now develop further their approaches to joint self-evaluation, partners' inclusion in the school's approach to improvement planning, and in the development of the school's vision, values and aims. This should help to ensure there is a shared understanding of the contribution of community partners to school priorities and to the impact on young people.

- Across the school, a wide range of useful and committed business and statutory partners support the staff and young people well through the curriculum. Senior leaders have planned, meaningful interactions with key DYW partners and evaluate each of them systematically. Partners benefit from quick and clear communications, and feel supported by the school. No systematic way for the group of DYW partners to contribute to the planning or evaluation of the curriculum beyond their own contribution is in place.
- Senior leaders work well with SDS in planning the school partnership agreement, and this is delivered with the full support of the school. High levels of uptake of the services from SDS exist, for example, with registrations for MyWoW. Good facilities and resources are in place to ensure effective SDS partnership work.
- The school works in partnership with Ayrshire College to provide an appropriate range of college programmes for young people. Opportunities are highlighted through college staff supporting parents evenings and offering taster programmes. School staff inform young people about college options and support them well to take part. This results in high levels of attendance and success for a few young people.
- Partnership working with organisations such as an international banking group has helped a significant number of young people to develop business and financial awareness, and employability skills. Young people have been motivated and supported effectively, and the school's work in these projects has been recognised as leading practice by the Prince's Trust.
- Work placement opportunities for young people are supported helpfully by the Chamber of Commerce. However, the traditional model, primarily based on a one week placement in S3, is having limited impact on young people. Although a few young people are accessing work placements in S5 and S6, staff should continue to explore how more extended work placements might be delivered in the senior phase.

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.