

Summarised inspection findings

Buckie Community High School

Moray Council

11 February 2020

School name: Buckie High School
Council: Moray Council
SEED number: 5208734
Roll (Nov 2019): 753

Attendance is generally above the national average.
Exclusions are generally in line with the national average. Exclusion rates have fluctuated in recent years having declined in 2018-19 following a rise in the previous year.

In February 2019 12.1 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.
In September 2018 no pupils lived in 20 per cent of most deprived data zones in Scotland.
In September 2018 the school reported that 31 per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

Key contextual information

Buckie Community High School (BCHS) serves the town of Buckie and the Moray coastal community. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, one full time deputy head teacher and two job share deputy head teachers. At the time of the inspection there was a vacant deputy headteacher post which was soon to be filled. Middle leaders consist of twenty principal teachers in mainly single-subject departments. There is an onsite Special Education Department providing enhanced provision to meet the additional support needs of young people from S1 to S6 who live in the Buckie area. Recruitment and maintaining staffing levels has been an ongoing challenge for the school in recent years due to geographical location.

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 school's senior leadership team (SLT) has undergone many changes in the last 18 months. A new deputy headteacher will join the SLT in December 2019. At this point senior leaders have an opportunity to review the distribution of roles and remits to enable key priorities for school improvement to be driven forward. This should also help to provide a fresh context as the school moves to establish clearer strategic direction. Over a number of years the challenge of recruiting and retaining staff has had an impact on the pace of change. Senior leaders are beginning to take positive steps to work more collegiately with staff across the school and from the local authority. This is helping to develop more robust processes to ensure the pace of change is monitored, well-managed and understood by all staff at all levels.
- Senior leaders, in consultation with young people, staff and stakeholders of the school community should continue to review the vision, values and aims of the school. In this way young people should be able to identify with a vision, values and aims that they have been involved in identifying and agreeing. A group of learners, along with staff, have begun to create a narrative around their expectations for more effective learning experiences. It would be beneficial for staff to use this opportunity to link this aspect of the school's work to the review of the vision, values and aims. This could help staff and young people to make clear links between everyday expectations and link standards of everyone across the school community with the vision, values and aims. The school's renewed approaches that underpin the promotion of positive relationships across the school should be aligned to the vision, values and aims when they are refreshed.
- The majority of middle leaders across the school are managing change and improvement effectively within their departments. The majority of staff are developing well their skills in self-evaluation and are beginning to use a range of information sources and data meaningfully to inform improvement in their departments. Increased opportunities are needed for all staff to develop approaches to self-evaluation. This should include analysing data in a whole school context and focussing on robustness of evidence to inform improvements. The majority of middle leaders do not yet engage enough in strategic school improvement activities across the school. Senior leaders should create opportunities to engage middle leaders more often in professional dialogue activity around priority areas for school improvement. This will help to promote a shared and clearer approach to strategic planning moving forward. For example, middle leaders would benefit from engaging in more discussions around approaches to planning high-quality learning and teaching across all departments.
- Senior leaders seek the views of a range of stakeholders including key partners when identifying areas for school improvement. The school improvement plan and department improvement plans are linked directly to local and national priorities. As staffing levels are currently more stable, the school is now well-placed to take actions needed to move forward.

Senior leaders are now able to work more closely with all practitioners to agree and streamline key priorities for improvement that are needed to raise attainment, achievement and ensure the wellbeing of all young people. A few of these areas are now progressing and with further work should help contribute to improving outcomes for young people. For example, staff are now using recently renewed approaches to tracking and monitoring young people's progress across the broad general education (BGE). Moving forward, senior leaders and staff now need to work together closely to review and improve the curriculum offer for all young people. This can help to ensure that all young people can choose for them, what is relevant, aspirational and motivational choices in the senior phase. Importantly, this offer to young people should provide clear progression pathways for all whilst maintaining the highest expectations for success.

- Almost all staff engage in aspects of professional learning including leadership opportunities linked to school improvement priorities. Planned opportunities are included within the school's working time agreement for staff to engage in development activity and dialogue with Associated Schools Group (ASG) primary school colleagues. All teachers need to access more relevant professional learning opportunities so that they can support more successfully learners with a wide range of learning needs. For example, staff would welcome more focused professional learning opportunities to build on the school's positive start to embedding restorative approaches to developing more consistent, positive behaviour across the school.
- All staff discuss their professional development through a professional review and development process. This is linked closely to General Teaching Council for Scotland Standards for Full Registration. Staff's professional development activity, would contribute more to whole school improvement if it was more closely aligned with improvement priorities from the school and department improvement plans. Emerging aspects of practice across the school show effective approaches to professional enquiry and collaborative practices. Groups of staff from across almost all departments are looking outwards to engage with colleagues across the ASG and local authority. More staff now need to look outwards and more widely beyond the ASG and local authority to gain further insights into the application of national standards and expectations.
- Young people engage in a variety of leadership activities across the school. The school currently has no pupil council. However, senior leaders are planning to introduce a new 'pupil senate' for young people to have a say and shape aspects of school improvement. The school is now well-placed to develop a greater understanding of how young people as leaders can take ownership for further aspects of change and improvement. Senior and middle leaders need to agree consistent approaches to developing mechanisms for young people to have a say in improving their experiences in subject departments. Senior leaders have made a promising start to engaging a group of young people in the young leaders of learning (YLOL) programme. When embedded this should give young people a greater say in shaping improvements to their learning and teaching experiences. This work is being led by the young people. They are using the national How good is OUR school? guidance to inform their dialogue with each other and with staff. This group has begun to look outwards to explore good practice in other secondary schools across Moray Council. As this area of work is at the early stages, the intended impact is not yet evident.
- BCHS engages well with a wide range of community partners. The school is an active and valued partner within the Buckie Central East Locality Planning Partnership. Recently developed planning structures are at an early stage, although the school is making a positive contribution to this. The school has a clear understanding of the community, informed by need. Effective use is being made of appropriate data to inform partnership planning. Partnership working with Community Learning and Development staff is well-embedded and highly productive. Youth work staff based within the school make meaningful contributions to the

curriculum. Senior leaders are open to new ideas and have enthusiastically adopted improvement planning approaches based on input from community planning officers. Youth work staff benefit from accessing joint professional learning opportunities alongside school colleagues.

- The headteacher and senior staff demonstrate a commitment to the development and implementation of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) priorities. School leaders are working closely with the local authority and the other ASGs in Moray to shape and deliver the expectations of the Moray Skills Pathway. This is resulting in changes to the range of learning opportunities and pathways on offer for young people which aligns with the current and projected skills needs of the Moray area. Currently, arrangements for evaluating the progress the school is making on delivering across the DYW themes is not well enough developed. Also arrangements for evaluating young people's experiences and skills are not well enough developed to determine the impact of activities.

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

- The school's values of being aspirational, showing respect, seizing opportunities and demonstrating commitment are helping to shape the context in which young people learn. Most teachers feel that these values and the school's vision underpin their work. Emerging from this is a climate for learning in which young people are valued and encouraged to achieve. Most young people enjoy their learning and are motivated to make the best of opportunities that the school provides.
- Relationships between staff and young people are positive overall. Nearly all young people focus on their work in lessons and are well-behaved. Most young people across the school are welcoming, polite and show respect to others in classrooms and corridors. In a few lessons, low-level disruption interrupts learning and teaching. A recently introduced revised approach to encouraging positive behaviour is promoting respect for learning.
- Young people are encouraged to cooperate with each other during lessons and do so well in most lessons across the school. Young people's engagement in their learning is variable across the school. This is often directly related to how actively involved they are in their learning and is heightened when they are given opportunities to learn independently and in groups. Young people are keen to support others in school and beyond. Their participation in wider aspects of the life of the school is extending their engagement in learning. This includes work on the Youth Philanthropy Initiative, assuming responsibilities when working with the school's partners and in a few cases, opportunities to take on leadership roles in the school. A buddying scheme and a programme of peer-supported learning have a positive impact on the learning and engagement of some young people.
- The school is beginning to develop coherent approaches to engaging young people in school improvement. For example, a few young people have engaged as participants of a 'School Improvement Group'. Additionally a few young people have been trained as YLOL. Young people are reflecting on and evaluating their learning experiences in an increasing number of subjects. This deepens their understanding of their own learning and provides teachers with feedback that can influence improvements in the learning experiences for others.
- In a few lessons, young people are actively engaged in planning aspects of their own learning. When this takes place, their levels of motivation and their understanding increase. In almost all lessons, teachers clearly outline the purpose of learning. Too often, this is limited to being a list of tasks that young people are to undertake. When young people engage in working with teachers to create jointly the expectations for particular lessons, their learning is deepened. This is not yet a consistent feature of learning for young people at BCHS.
- Almost all teachers show commitment to improving outcomes for young people. Most plan lessons thoroughly and include a variety of tasks designed to enhance learning. These tasks

and activities do not always meet the learning needs of all young people. Senior leaders are aware of the importance of developing further approaches to differentiation so that they better match classroom activities with all young people's needs and progress.

- In a minority of lessons, engagement is supported through teachers promoting independent learning and encouraging young people to take responsibility for aspects of their learning. However, too often lessons are overly teacher-led, resulting in the learning being too passive and lacking appropriate pace.
- Teachers in most lessons provide young people with feedback that helpfully informs them of their next steps in learning. To improve in this area, teachers should ensure that targets for learning are always clear and contextualised to their subject. Young people would receive better quality advice if best practice in this area is shared with all teachers.
- A recently revised programme of Universal Pupil Support (UPS) provides a context for learners in the BGE to reflect on their progression in skills and attributes. A few subjects across the school contribute and support this programme by highlighting particular skills being developed through their courses. This has the potential to become an important aspect of a coherent approach to skills development.
- Almost all teachers use digital technologies to provide a range of resources and a facility for presenting information. In a few classrooms, teachers use such technologies to create contexts for highly motivating, inter-active learning. School library staff use a well-tailored programme to develop the digital skills of young people. Poor connectivity issues compromise the learning of young people in a digital context.
- Teachers engage very positively and collaboratively in professional learning that focuses on improving learning, teaching and assessment. Through professional learning communities, informal opportunities for reflection and sharing a range of in-house resources, teachers provide each other with support and useful advice. Additionally, all teachers have participated in professional learning, targeted at removing the barriers to learning faced by some young people. To support all young people being included in all areas of the curriculum such focused professional learning should be continued and extended.
- Teachers are increasingly using imaginative approaches to assess young people's progress. This has included learning being evidenced through young people making presentations, working collaboratively in groups and producing models. In planning appropriate assessment activities and assessing young people's progress at the BGE, teachers are using National Benchmarks with greater confidence. In a few classes, peer assessment is helping young people to understand and articulate their learning. Assessment data within the BGE is now more robust. Following teachers' engagement in moderation activities, the reliability of professional judgement is improving. Moderation activities have included working with colleagues in other schools. Widening the focus of moderation to reflect on all aspects of the moderation cycle would further support improving outcomes for learners.
- Teachers share assessment information with young people. Most young people at the BGE are confident in articulating the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level at which they are working, particularly for literacy and numeracy. Teachers use assessment information to support young people in identifying targets that support progression in their learning, particularly at the senior phase. The approaches to support young people at all stages to make informed decisions about appropriate career and curricular pathways could be developed further.

- In most subjects, teachers use assessment data, to varying degrees of effectiveness, as part of self-evaluation activities. This is helping staff to plan learning, adapt and adjust courses where necessary. In the senior phase, teachers analyse assessment information robustly and determine action points designed to improve outcomes for learners.
- Assessment information is also communicated regularly to parents to assist them in helping their child to raise their attainment. Senior leaders are currently reviewing approaches to how parents are informed of and engaged in supporting young peoples' progress.
- Within the BGE, a recently developed system of tracking and monitoring records levels of attainment across all subject areas. In a few cases, departments use this data to assist in revising plans for programmes of learning. In the senior phase, a system of tracking and monitoring outlines both current and aspirational levels of attainment. Teachers use such information to plan interventions to raise attainment.
- Within the school, areas of existing effective practice in learning, teaching and assessment should be built upon. Many staff are keen to embrace change. Senior leaders should now build on these strengths and establish a clear strategic approach to improving learning, teaching and assessment. Key features of this should include a clear definition of what high-quality practice looks like in BCHS. Establishing and agreeing approaches to self-evaluation of learning would support this. In addition a coherent plan for professional learning that develops staff's capacity in key areas of learning, teaching and assessment would enhance further the improvement.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The vision of 'Developing Skills for Learning, Life and Work' underpins the curriculum rationale. Staff are aiming to build 'resilient, cultured, young people with soft skills and open minds'.
- The P7 to S1 pastoral transitions process is well established. Pupils with additional support needs experience enhanced transitions, focusing well on personal needs. Curricular links at transition from primary are strongest in English and literacy. Senior leaders recognise they need to continue to build strong links across all curriculum areas, particularly in numeracy.
- Young people in S1 to S3 do not receive their full entitlement to a broad general education as a result of teacher shortages. They specialise in S3 to support additional depth and challenge. A majority of learners work at fourth CfE level. Teachers should ensure that all S3 learning largely remains focused on CfE and does not prioritise National Qualification requirements. Currently very few interdisciplinary projects support young people to make valuable connections in their learning. Teachers now need to further develop approaches to delivering the four contexts for learning with more measurable outcomes linked to the experiences and outcomes.
- Young people specialise in S3 taking forward twelve courses which they reduce to six qualifications or awards in the senior phase in S4. The present S3 curriculum arrangements do not allow sufficient time for depth of learning when specialising in the sciences and other curriculum areas. Staff recognise that the present period allocation in S3, is impacting negatively on attainment. Senior leaders and staff understand that in providing specialisation in S3, they may also need to provide additional support for the few learners who wish to change subject choices at S4. Young people experience course rotations in a few curriculum areas. Teachers should ensure that course planning reflects prior learning and builds on skills and knowledge already developed. Pupil support staff need to ensure that the learning pathways young people choose are always appropriate to their needs.
- Young people in the Special Education Department have opportunities to engage with the wider school community through small group working in mainstream learning. In the BGE young people are benefitting from access to specialist resources in technical and home economics. They are enjoying the learning and developing practical skills in a real-life context. The school should explore further opportunities to expand the curriculum offer for young people with additional support needs.
- The school's rural location limits the curriculum offer for a few subjects in the senior phase as a result of teacher vacancies. Senior leaders need to consider whether additional distance learning digital solutions are available to enhance subject choice. A few young people at S5 to S6 already engage in the Young Applicants in Schools Scheme providing them with opportunities to complete an Open University module. The small charge for a few courses studied in the BGE and senior phase can be a challenge for families facing socio-economic hardship.
- Teachers broaden learning through the addition of a wide range of outdoor learning including through residential activities. They place a strong focus on health and wellbeing with all young people receiving two hours of high-quality physical education (PE) per week until the end of S6. This session an additional health and wellbeing period has been added in S1 supporting learners to focus further on the understanding of the wellbeing indicators. It is too early to measure the impact from this. Digital literacy is developing well in a few courses. This should continue to be developed in all curriculum courses.

- All young people from S1 to S3 receive their entitlement to modern languages in line with the 1+2 guidelines. Mandarin taster classes are offered within the BGE. This should be reviewed to ensure that courses offer progression for learners who wish to continue to develop their mandarin skills towards future accreditation. Staff recently reviewed the S3 language experience and are providing specialisation in French and/or German as well as a Skills for Languages option. Learners can study a Scots language award at Level 4. School leaders should now review whether the modern languages is offering adequate progression and depth within the present period allocation.
- Learners in the senior phase experience a wide range of curriculum options as an offer of combined S4 to S6 courses. This includes through college consortium arrangements. Learning pathways in the senior phase are leading to positive and sustained destinations for almost all young people. A range of multi-level classes is in place. A few teachers report they do not feel able to provide the required time and attention as teaching time is too divided across the different pupil groups. Staff need to revisit curriculum course levels to ensure that all young people are presented at the level they can achieve success. Staff should monitor the uptake of subjects where there is any gender imbalance.
- Most care experienced young people, at risk of not achieving, are supported well through the provision of an additional one-to-one focus on literacy, numeracy and aspects of health and wellbeing (HWB). S4 leavers are supported through the use of additional college courses linked to skills for work.
- Additional courses leading to accreditation other than National Qualifications is broadening the curriculum provision. S5 and S6 learners select five courses plus a wider achievement course. Additional numeracy support for a few learners is resulting in recent improved attainment at National 5. A minority of young people are applying to university each session. A number of staff support them very well to do this. For those learners going into employment the main employers are oil and gas, fishing and agriculture. Additional college courses support employability skills well. Young people can access work experience placements, with a minority of young people benefiting from opportunities aligning with their career aspirations. Timetabling in the senior phase can limit opportunities to participate. However, activities and planning are not linked systematically to the work placement standard. Young people in S6 experience learning in religious and moral education (RME) in line with statutory guidance. The home school link worker supports young people very well to access youth work.
- Staff aim to ensure that almost all pupils who leave the school have achieved a National Qualification in literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better. Improvements in numeracy courses will be needed to ensure ambitions for learners are achieved.
- The majority of staff are aware of their responsibility to develop literacy across learning. Currently, the English department leads the assessment of literacy. An increased strategic focus to enhance staff confidence in developing literacy, moderation and assessment skills is needed. School library staff have supported a few departments successfully in developing these skills. A few departments have used the research model effectively and the S1 book talks have reinforced literacy expectations. Engagement in moderation with local primary schools has resulted in positive discussions and understanding of literacy levels and progression. This could be developed further.
- Numeracy as a responsibility for all staff is at the early stages of development. Staff reference exemplars on common methodology and language when teaching numeracy concepts across selected subject areas. This is not yet consistent across the school. A three-year plan is in

place to develop numeracy. This needs now to move at pace to develop numeracy skills across the curriculum.

- Staff engage well in a range of actions, which support DYW priorities. This includes planning and activities associated with delivering the Moray Skills Pathway. Young people are gaining greater breadth in work-related learning pathways, including foundation apprenticeship opportunities. Teaching staff are making links increasingly in their course with the world of work. Staff need to develop this further to enhance learning and teaching. Overall, the school has a lack of clarity and consistency in the development of the 'language of skills'. This includes the use of career management skills and the career education standard in relation to employability. Most learners are not able to recognise and reflect on how they are developing these skills. As a result, they are unable to apply them effectively to support them to make informed decisions regarding their pathway within and beyond school.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The Parent Council is involved in aspects of improvement planning in the school. It has recently worked collaboratively with school staff on improving communication between school and parents. Digital approaches to sharing information about homework, information meetings and useful dates have been implemented, and parents are beginning to find these helpful. The BCHS website has been redeveloped with the support of the Parent Council to provide information to parents on a range of activities and events in the school.
- Parents have opportunities to learn more about how to support their children through planned information evenings. Parents, school staff, and partners in the community work together to deliver workshops to help improve young people's health and wellbeing. This is planned to progress over the course of this year.
- The Parent Council are proactive in encouraging members of the wider parent forum to participate and are working with other Parent Councils in its ASG.

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 local 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

- Staff understand that supporting young people's health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. The school's strategic approach to wellbeing centres on the importance of establishing open, positive and supportive relationships with young people. Caring and positive relationships are clear to see across the school.
- The school is at an early stage in developing a shared understanding of wellbeing amongst all staff. Senior staff recognise that professional learning on how the wellbeing indicators can be used to improve outcomes for young people is needed for all staff. Pupil support staff are making effective use of the wellbeing indicators to assess young people's needs as part of the child planning process. Commendably, they are involving young people in using the wellbeing indicators to reflect on their progress in being safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. This is leading to a fuller assessment of wellbeing and more effective support plans, which detail the actions required by the team working with the young person.
- As part of the school's approach to wellbeing, the school introduced a new managing relationships policy. Young people are given time to reflect on their behaviour and make positive choices. This restorative approach to managing behaviour is not yet fully embedded across the school. In a few lessons, poor behaviour is interrupting young people's learning. Staff lack confidence in the use of nurturing principles and restorative practice professional learning for all staff in these areas would be of benefit and support them in applying the new managing relationships policy. A few young people do not understand the new policy and the 'Choices' and 'Consequences' aspect of it. Senior leaders acknowledge the need for further work with all young people on making positive choices and understanding rights and responsibilities.
- Young people are learning about mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing in UPS, personal and social education (PSE) and HWB lessons. In UPS lessons for S1 to S3, young people have been reflecting on their learning across their subjects and completing a learning log. In UPS and PSE lessons, young people are starting to reflect on skills, this is at an early stage. In HWB lessons young people are learning about resilience and practical approaches to managing their emotional wellbeing. This includes inserts on managing their workload, getting plenty of rest and the benefits of physical exercise. Young people value this work, particularly on the focus on mental wellbeing and signposting to services. Young people know where to go to access supports. Senior leaders recognise that staff should agree a progressive HWB curriculum plan for each year group to avoid duplication and ensure progression in wellbeing outcomes.
- Senior leaders are aware of the statutory requirements in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. A range of local authority and school policies and guidance supplements this. Senior

leaders need to ensure that key systems and processes are in place to comply with relevant legislation and statutory duties to support wellbeing, equality and inclusion. In line with the Carer's (Scotland) Act 2016, it is important that young carers be considered for a young carer statement, which contains information about their caring role and the support provided by the local authority. The progress of young carers and care experienced young people is monitored on a fortnightly basis through the Multi Agency Planning Meeting (MAPS). Closer tracking of attainment is required to improve outcomes for young people. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to a coordinated support plan to support positive outcomes for care experienced young people.

- A few young people are on part-time timetables and not accessing the national recommendation of 27.5 hours educational provision. Senior leaders agree that a strategic overview is required to ensure this is a short term and targeted intervention.
- Pupil support staff discuss and identify barriers to learning through MAPS meetings. A collegiate approach is taken to agree where actions are required to remove or minimise barriers to learning. Young people requiring targeted support are discussed under the child planning section of the meeting. Single and multi-agency plans are put in place as required. Actions are regularly reviewed every two weeks at house group meetings. Senior leaders agree the need for planning to be based on positive outcomes for young people. As yet, no system is in place to track the success of interventions and young people's progress in attainment.
- Young people who have additional support needs benefit from an increasing range of strategies including support from partner agencies. Staff in the Support for Learning (SfL) Hub and the Inclusion Unit 'Transform' work in a very flexible way and provide support as and when required. Further work should be undertaken to ensure young people feel included in mainstream classes. Targeted learner pathways for young people should be fully understood by staff across the school. A policy statement articulating clearly the purpose of each support provision is required.
- Support for learning teachers have a key worker role and this is supporting successful transition planning from school. As a result, positive destinations for young people with additional support needs are increasing.
- Professional learning has been delivered to all staff on approaches to supporting learners needs including the use of 'Learner Profile and Strategy' sheets. Differentiated approaches to learning across classes are lacking.
- The school has recently established an equalities school improvement group. The group is at an early stage in planning approaches to building staff and pupil understanding of the Equality Act and protected characteristics. This should help to improve gender balance in classes. A review of the anti-bullying policy is planned.
- Young people are learning and developing a greater awareness of other people, cultures, religions and beliefs through their learning in RME and PSE. For example, they have been focussing on learning about diversity, kindness, racism and discrimination. Staff have participated in professional learning for staff on how to support young people who are identifying as LGBT+.
- Young people are aware of how to report any worries or concerns that they have. This is supported by buddying systems which have been established to help support younger children.

Volunteering opportunities help young people to meet the school expectation of being willing to do your best and to support others.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

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

- Attainment information provided by the school indicates that by the end of S3, almost all young people are achieving third level or better in literacy and numeracy. Teachers report increasing confidence in assessing achievement of a CfE level. Currently less than half of young people achieve fourth level in literacy and the majority do so in numeracy.

Literacy

- In three out of the last four years, by the end of S3, almost all young people achieved third CfE level or better in reading, writing and listening and talking. Senior staff report that the data is more robust than it has been previously. This is a result of moderation work that has taken place in reading and writing across the ASG. Teachers are also gaining experience with using the National Benchmarks. This is resulting in increased levels of confidence in making reliable professional judgement.

Numeracy

- From 2015/16 to 2018/19, by the end of S3, the percentage of young people being reported as achieving third CfE level or better in numeracy, has overall, remained constant at almost all. Teachers are engaging with the National Benchmarks and senior leaders are confident that professional judgement is now more robust. Staff have engaged in limited moderation activity with colleagues from outwith BHCS but plans are in place for this to happen. When undertaken, this should support further shared understanding of standards required to achieve a level and help improve reliability of professional judgement.

Senior phase

- The school has had a recently strengthened focus on ensuring that all young people achieve a qualification in literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better before they leave school. Senior and middle leaders recognise that improvements are needed in the development of young people's numeracy skills to ensure that ambitions are achieved. Improvements have been achieved recently through targeting groups of young people for additional numeracy periods during their 'wider achievement' time at S5.

Literacy

- Leavers: The percentage of leavers achieving literacy at SCQF level 5 or better has been improving over the latest five years. Most leavers achieved literacy at SCQF level 5 or better through a course award in the latest year. The percentage achieving literacy through a unit is significantly much higher than the virtual comparator (VC) in three out of the last five years, including in the most recent year. The percentage achieving literacy at SCQF level 6 has been

in line with the VC and has been improving from 2013/14 to 2017/18. In 2017/18, just over half achieved literacy at SCQF level 6.

- **Cohorts:** In the latest year, across year groups, attainment in literacy is in line with the VC at all levels. In S4, in each of the last five years the percentage of young people being presented for National 5 English has been significantly higher than the National Average. The percentage achieving an A-C award was in line with the National Average in 2018/19. By S5, as a percentage of S5 roll, the percentage of young people achieving literacy at SCQF level 5 or better and SCQF level 6 has been in line with the VC since 2016/17 for SCQF 5 or better and 2015/16 for SCQF 6 or better. By S6, as a percentage of S6 roll, there is an improving five year trend from 2014/15 to 2018/19 in the percentage of young achieving literacy at SCQF level 6. In 2018/19 the percentage was in line with the VC having been significantly lower than the VC in the previous year.

Numeracy

- **Leavers:** Most young people achieved numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better through a course award before leaving school in the five years from 2013/14 to 2017/18. The percentages achieving this through a unit has been significantly much lower and lower than the VC from 2016/17 to 2017/18. The percentage of leavers achieving numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better through a unit improved notably in 2017/18. It is now in line with the VC having been previously significantly much lower and lower in the three years prior to this. Approximately a fifth of leavers achieve numeracy at SCQF level 6 in 2017/18. This is now in line with the VC after being significantly lower than the VC in the previous year.
- The school recognises that there is more work to do to ensure that the attainment of leavers in numeracy is stronger. Recent improvements in culture, pedagogy and courses and programmes provide a positive platform for continuing positive outcomes in the mathematics department.
- **Cohorts:** In S4, the percentage of young people achieving numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better through a unit has been significantly lower or much lower than the VC in each year from 2014/15 to 2018/19. The percentage of young people being presented for National 5 mathematics in the five years from 2014/15 to 2018/19 has been significantly lower than the National Average. By S5, as a percentage of S5 roll, the percentage of young people achieving numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better through a unit has been improving over the five years from 2014/15 to 2018/19 but has been significantly lower or much lower than the VC in each of these years. The percentage of young people achieving numeracy at SCQF level 6 has been significantly much lower or lower than the VC from 2016/17 to 2018/19. By S6, as a percentage of S6 roll, the percentage of young people achieving numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better through a unit is now in line with the VC having been significantly lower or much lower in the three years from 2015/16 to 2017/18. The percentage of young people achieving numeracy at SCQF level 6 has been in line with the VC in each of the five years from 2014/15 to 2018/19.

Attainment over time

- The school introduced a new approach to monitoring and tracking young people's progress through the BGE in 2017/18 session. Young people's progress in each curricular area is recorded three times across an academic session into a central electronic system. There is a need for refinement of the system and continued staff professional learning. Senior leaders are beginning to analyse data for cohorts, groups and individuals and are aiming to use this to provide support and challenge to raise attainment. Senior leaders have identified improvements they need to make to the system in light of the first data analysis. Currently, each department tracks and monitors the progress young people are making at the BGE, to

varying degrees of effectiveness. As the whole school tracking system develops, it will provide school staff with a tool to support them in monitoring young people's progress more consistently. The school also has plans to work in partnership with associated primary schools on a consistent approach to monitoring and tracking. This can support continuity in learning for children as they move to secondary school.

- The school has yet to determine a clear approach that outlines the way in which tracking and monitoring data will be used systematically to raise attainment. Such an approach is needed to ensure that targeted interventions for identified learners are established following analysis of attainment data. To support this, confirmation of expected roles and responsibilities at all levels is needed.
- Senior leaders are not yet measuring value added from P7 through each cohort to S3 for literacy and numeracy. As a result, they are not exploring and analysing attainment trends from P7 to S3. Doing this would enable a stronger focus on raising attainment through the BGE.

Senior phase

- Difficulty in fully staffing the school in recent years has affected attainment. A raising attainment strategy has been developed recently outlining actions and methodology for how the agenda will be taken forward. This includes further diversifying learning pathways to meet young people's needs and coaching and mentoring for targeted groups. As yet, the strategy is not having sufficient impact on raising attainment.
- Leavers: The average complementary tariff scores and the average total tariff scores for all leavers, lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% although fluctuating over the five years from 2013/14 to 2018/19, have all been in line with the VC. This is with the exception of the middle attaining 60% in 2016/17, which was significantly lower than the VC.
- Cohorts: There is one pattern worthy of note which is evident for the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% groups of young people. These groups at S4 have almost always attained (as indicated by average complementary tariff score) in line with the VC over the five years from 2014/15 to 2018/19. However, the average complementary tariff scores of the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people by the end of S5, based on S5 roll, have in four out of the latest five years been significantly lower or much lower than the VC. This indicates that the S5 experience is not adding value for this group as expected when compared to the VC.

Breadth and depth

- The school is increasing the range of SCQF rated qualifications and awards on offer for young people at the senior phase. Staff need to ensure however that young people are well matched to these qualifications and awards. This is needed to raise expectations, ensure progression all, develop talents, meet aspirations and ensure young people are on learning pathways that are the most appropriate for them.
- There is headroom for improvement in attainment at S4. Most young people were presented for at least six qualifications in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19. A majority achieved six or more qualifications at SCQF 4 or better in each of these latest three years. The percentage achieving one or more to six or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better has improved in 2018/19. However, from four or more to six or more qualifications, the percentages have been significantly lower or much lower than the VC in that time. The percentage of young people achieving one or more to six or more qualifications at SCQF level 5A or better has been

declining over the five years from 2014/15 to 2018/19. The percentages have also been significantly lower or much lower than the VC for at least the three years from 2016/17 to 2018/19.

- By S5, there is headroom for improvement in attainment. The majority of young people study for at least five qualifications. The percentage achieving qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better and level 6C or better declined in 2018/19. The percentage achieving five or more and six or more qualifications at SCQF 5C or better and two or more to five or more at SCQF 6C or better has been significantly lower or much lower than the VC in the three years from 2016/17 to 2018/19. This suggests that fewer young people are achieving qualifications at these levels than can be expected when compared to the VC. Young people are also attaining fewer qualifications at SCQF level 5A or better with a decline from one or more to four or more in the latest year. There has however been an improvement in the latest year in the percentage of young people achieving five or more qualifications at 5A or better. Percentages achieving SCQF level 5A or better have been significantly lower or much lower than the VC for the latest three years. Attainment data suggests that both the quantity and quality of qualifications are lower than might be expected when compared to the VC.
- By S6, there is headroom for improvement in attainment. The percentages of young people achieving one or more to five or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better and 5A or better has improved in 2018/19. The percentage of young people achieving one or more to eight or more qualifications at SCQF 5A or better has been almost always significantly lower or much lower than the VC in the five years from 2014/15 to 2018/19. This data suggests that quality of the qualifications at this level are lower than might be expected when compared to the VC. There has been an improvement in 2018/19 for almost all of the measures from one or more to six or more at SCQF at level 6C or better. The percentages are significantly lower or much lower than the VC for achievement from one or more to five or more for the two years from 2017/18 to 2018/19 for SCQF level 6C or better and 6A or better. Again this attainment data suggests that both the quantity and quality of qualifications are lower than might be expected when compared to the VC.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people make a positive contribution to the life of their school and wider Buckie community. They develop leadership skills through taking on roles such as creating the school newsletter, serving as prefects or buddies and supporting P7 transition evenings. Young people at S3 completing sports coaching and leadership awards apply their skills by working in local primary schools. Young people demonstrate leadership skills through taking the lead on initiatives and events such as 'Participatory Budgeting' and 'Bucks for Buckie'. Young people participating in the Cullen Sea School wider achievement course are learning transferrable skills from retired boat builders. They apply their sea craft skills by participating in local community rowing events. Young people's participation in a long-established Tanzanian School Exchange programme and the Holocaust Trust – 'Lessons from Auschwitz' programme is developing them as global citizens. Young people engaging in community projects are gaining in confidence and identifying and addressing local issues. All S2 pupils engage in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative. As a result they are gaining an increased awareness of issues and challenges in their local community. In addition, they are displaying care for others through fund raising endeavours for local charities. Further development of leadership opportunities across the school is required, particularly in the lower school.
- Young people take part in a wide variety of activities as part of the wider curriculum offer. Effective use is made of an increasing range of wider accreditation awards available across the school to recognise achievement. In 2018/19, this included young people achieving Hi5

Awards, Saltire Awards, Dynamic Youth Awards, Youth Achievements Awards and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Young people have developed a range of skills and attributes through their work to achieve these awards including, leadership skills, team-working skills and communication skills. The school should further increase accreditation opportunities across all year groups. Buckie Rotary Club works well with the music and drama Departments to organise and fund 'Young Musician of the Year'. This is providing learning opportunities for a range of young people and supporting the development of performance skills. A few young people are supported well to represent and compete at local, national and international levels. Young people using their ICT skills produced a video, which won a national 'Quality in Planning' Award. A few young people at S3 benefited from attending a BCHS Community Alert event on Mental Health. As a result, S3 boys are now more able to talk about mental health concerns.

- Young people's achievements are recognised and celebrated in a range of ways across the academic year. Whilst the school is improving recognition and celebration of wider achievement, further work is needed to develop a clearer overview of achievement taking place. It is not yet able to quantify accurately the proportion of young people benefiting from wider achievement opportunities or to identify trends in levels of participation. Senior leaders have plans to introduce a new tracking system that records young people's participation in wider achievement both within and outwith school. The achievements would be linked to the development of skills. Through the new system, staff would be better able to identify young people who are currently not participating in planned opportunities. A strategic approach to planning wider achievement would help to ensure that all young people could participate, progress in their skills and gain recognition or accreditation where appropriate. Ensuring equity of access to opportunities should be supported by emerging developments in this area. Similarly, the facility to evaluate how young peoples' participation is potentially compromised by socio-economic factors should be included.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a good knowledge of young people, their families and personal circumstances. They work well to ensure that personal circumstances are not a barrier to achieving positive outcomes. For example, they ensure equity of access to aspects of school life such as wider achievement opportunities. There is a need to ensure that this applies for all at all times, including young people from the enhanced provision unit when in mainstream classes.
- A recently appointed PT Raising Attainment, funded from Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is focussing on raising attainment of a targeted group of young people. A new PEF plan with a set of actions, outcomes for learners and measures of success has been recently established. Early indications are that a few of these interventions are beginning to have a positive effect on a few young people's attendance, progress and engagement with learning. As the monitoring and tracking system at the BGE develops this will support measuring the impact of any improvements in attainment of young people from S1 to S3.
- Positive Destinations: Over the five-year period between 2014 and 2018, almost all young people leaving BHCS moved to an initial positive destination. The percentage of young people leaving school at the end of S4 has generally been higher than the VC and national average over the last five years. The percentage of positive destinations for those leaving during or at the end of S5 was significantly much lower than the VC in the latest year. Senior leaders report that young people leave school throughout the year in S5. They are hoping to see a reduction in this with the changes that are being made to the curriculum.

Attainment vs deprivation

- Sixty-five point nine percent of the school's young people lived in SIMD 5 to 7 when the data was last recorded in 2018. The school does not consider SIMD to be the most relevant measure of socio-economic deprivation in its context. It is aware of socio-economic issues due to rurality and informally monitors barriers to achieving outcomes.
- Through the school's self-evaluation approaches, it has identified that boys have consistently underachieved in comparison to girls. This has not yet appeared as a priority for improvement to be addressed.

School empowerment

■ Improvement

Professional learning and leadership development for improvement

- The school's approach to career-long professional learning is empowering staff to bring about improvements in their practices. For example, the school has a programme of in-house professional learning through its teaching and learning communities. Across the academic year teachers engage in dialogue in planned sessions focussing on academic research on learning and teaching. They are empowered to use their learning from this to influence their classroom practice.

Improvement planning processes and ways of working

- Senior leaders protect time for professional learning opportunities through the WTA. Staff views for how best this time should be used are taken into account. Staff currently use much of this time to work with primary colleagues from across the ASG in a range of professional development activities. For example, science staff correctly identified a need to work more collaboratively with primary colleagues to work towards joint learning programmes of work to support seamless progression in learning for young people. They used some of their time to successfully broker additional funds to provide key science equipment for all primary schools across the ASG. This has been an important step in working towards improving joint planning of learning programmes. The recently established YLOL group, have begun to work with staff within the school and beyond the ASG. This initiative is at the early stages of empowering young people to have a greater say in improving learning experiences across all departments of the school.

Collaboration for improvement

- Almost all subject departments recognise the need to engage as regularly as possible with colleagues from across the ASG. They cite the benefits streamlining planning and adopting reciprocal approaches to sharing standards and expectations of learners across all stages of the BGE. This is proving to be very effective in a few subject areas and empowering staff to bring about improvement in their planning and assessment.

Evidenced-based approaches to improvement

- All staff are involved in the teacher learning communities (TLCs). The purpose of this is to effect change and improvement to the quality of teaching across the school from a research and evidence base. A forum for professional dialogue are the teacher 'triad' groups and regular 'teach meets.' These approaches to sharing effective practice across the school are helping to generate enthusiasm and confidence amongst staff. This is helping them feel empowered to try out more creative approaches to engaging young people in their learning.

Quality of provision of Special Unit

Context

The Special Education Department (SED) within BCHS is an onsite enhanced provision to meet the additional support needs of young people from S1 to S6 who live in the Buckie area. At the time of the inspection nineteen young people accessed the service. Within the SED, young people access individualised learning programmes including learning within SED classes, in small SED groups, within the mainstream school and where appropriate within mainstream classes.

Leadership of change

- Lead by the principal teacher, staff have are developing a welcoming, caring and nurturing ethos. Staff have an understanding of the socio-economic and family backgrounds of the young people who attend, and of their needs. In reviewing the vision, values and aims, the school should foster more collaborative approaches between the whole school community to take better account of the SED and ensuring a shared vision for improving outcomes for all young people.
- Staff work effectively together and are committed to achieving positive outcomes for young people. Staff regularly discuss young people's learning and progress and how best to support individual needs. The recent increased focus on professional learning is supporting staff to better meet the needs of the young people in areas such as communication and interaction strategies. As a result, staff feel increasingly confident in their skills to support young people in their learning.
- Staff have developed positive relationships with parents who feel well supported and involved in shaping the learning experiences of their children. The use of a range of tailored communication strategies, such as the daily school diary, review meetings, social media posts and newsletters is resulting in parents feeling well-informed about their child's progress. Parents feel included and feel that the school seeks their views and acts on them. They feel that this shapes the offer of support to their child.
- To continue to build on this positive start, senior leaders should ensure that the SED is a more prominent feature of the cycle of self-evaluation to create a robust and coherent whole school approach. The development of systematic approaches to monitor and evaluate the work of the SED should provide clearer strategic leadership and direction including development in approaches to learning and assessment, curriculum development and monitoring the progress of young people.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- Positive and nurturing relationships between staff and young people contribute to a positive learning environment, which is calm and purposeful. In most lessons, almost all learners are motivated and engaged. In a few lessons, young people have the opportunity to be active in their learning in different contexts, for example, in the kitchen baking muffins. Staff provide clear and helpful explanations and instructions during teaching. This supports learning well and young people are encouraged to be independent. In planning lessons, teachers should continue to develop young people's awareness of what they are learning, and how they can improve. The use of plenaries would allow teachers to check for understanding and evidence progress.

- A wide range of information and plans is used to support young people's learning. This has been developed with key partners and evidence has been gathered range of assessments and from a variety of sources. Individualised education programmes (IEPs) offer tailored individualised support to address the barriers and learning needs of young people and identify clearly their additional support needs. This creates a clear basis for planning their next steps in relation to learning needs. Staff should review this information to extract the most significant details. This would help them to better link next steps to children's planned learning and allow for the tracking and evidencing of progress.
- Teachers plan a curriculum through a range of experiences including real-life contexts for learning. This does not yet incorporate fully the experiences and outcomes of CfE. Staff have correctly identified that they now need a more coherent progressive approach to planning, tracking and monitoring young people's progress in learning within the BGE. Assessment is not yet an integral part of learning and teaching.
- At the BGE teachers are at the early stages of professional dialogue and engaging in moderation activities. This is improving assessments and increasing their confidence in making professional judgements. Teachers are beginning to engage with National Milestones and National Benchmarks in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Planned opportunity to work collaboratively with staff should further develop an understanding of national standards. In the senior phase, teachers are more confident in planning tracking and assessing progress.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- Young people in the SED feel secure and included. Staff are sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing of each individual. High-quality interactions and dialogue between young people and staff leads to young people feeling that they are heard, understood and supported.
- Relationships between staff and young people are strong. Young people from across the school including buddies and peers from mainstream classes regularly choose to access the SED during break and lunch times. These young people speak highly of the supportive and inclusive culture of the SED and the enjoyment in interacting with staff and peers alike.
- Almost all young people are supported to attend their review meetings. Young people work with staff to create short presentations to evidence their learning from across the year. This is allowing young people to lead and shape their contributions at important stages in their learning. As a result of this, young people are developing confidence.
- The curriculum offer for young people in the BGE and course choice for those in the senior phase need to be reviewed to ensure that all learners are receiving their full entitlement.

Raising attainment and achievement

- Flexible and responsive IEPs are, for most young people, leading to positive outcomes in learning. As a result of this work young people are able to demonstrate their learning by using new skills and strategies to engage better in learning.
- From the schools attainment information most young people in the BGE are making progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy taking account of their additional support needs. In the senior phase, most young people are making progress from prior levels of attainment. Almost all young people are studying a small range of courses at National 2, National 3 as well as working towards personal development awards in areas such as leisure,

cookery and finance. Staff need to increase the range of courses and levels to ensure that there are appropriate progression pathways leading to qualifications for all young people. Where possible, they should be able to access resources to best support engagement in learning.

- Young people's progress is evidenced in learning folders and IEPs. The school now needs to further develop tracking and monitoring of young people progress. In doing so it should take account of national guidance to provide a clearer picture of young people's progress over time. This should better support staff to identify how well young people are progressing against targets and to plan next steps more effectively.
- Young people's achievements in the BGE are recognised in class, displayed within the SED and within the newly introduced learner folders. Within the senior phase young people are receiving formal qualifications such as National Qualifications from SQA and wider achievement awards. Young people are proud of their achievements and enjoy seeing their progress displayed on the wall. Most young people are able to talk about their learning in a positive way and recall the events on display.
- A range of learning environments are used well to support young people to develop their understanding of the local community. This includes young people visiting the woods to learn about nature and survival skills. The SED should now consider how effectively these learning environments contribute to supporting progression in young people's learning.

Other information

- Supported by the principal teacher, parents have increasing opportunities to come together, for example in the newly established coffee and chat events. These sessions are facilitating parents to share their experiences and pull on the strengths and knowledge of each other to offer guidance and support. Recent topics have included discussions around guardianship and self-directed support. This is resulting in parents being supported as a unit and building a purposeful sense of community.

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.