

Summarised inspection findings

Hazlehead Academy

Aberdeen City Council

21 January 2020

School Name Hazlehead Academy
Council: Aberdeen City Council
SEED number: 5243432
Roll (Sep 2018): 872

Attendance is generally in line with the national average.

Exclusions are generally above the national average.

The percentage of young people leaving school at the end of S4, and at the end of S5, is higher than national.

In February 2019, 10.7 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.

Aberdeen City Council have rezoned catchment areas for secondary schools in the city. From 2017, this changed the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) profile of the school. No young person residing in SIMD one attends the school. In September 2018, 9.5 per cent of pupils live in SIMD two.

In September 2018, the school reported that 23 per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

Key contextual information

Hazlehead Academy is the designated secondary for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in Aberdeen City Council. It provides continuity in GME from Gilcomstoun Primary School.

Hazlehead Academy is the designated Scottish Football Association Performance School for the North East of Scotland.

The school has had considerable changes to staffing. The headteacher has been in post for three years. In the past two years, three depute headteachers and five faculty heads have been appointed. A significant number of teaching and non-teaching appointments have been made. Some staffing vacancies have been challenging to fill, particularly mathematics, information and communication technology, and support for administration and business. The senior leadership team have taught their subject specialisms at times of vacancies.

Some of the senior phase curriculum is delivered by a consortium arrangement with other schools in the city. This is known as Aberdeen City Campus. Hazlehead Academy is a designated school for German within Aberdeen City Campus.

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 classes through the medium of English and Gaelic, young people enjoy learning. Senior leaders have been promoting values as important to the life and work of the school. Most relationships across the school are positive. Teachers should consistently embed the values within classroom practice. To assist them in doing this, senior leaders need to advance plans to refresh the policy for relationships to include restorative and rights-based approaches.
- In most lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. Most teachers share with young people the purpose of learning. This is helping young people know how to be successful. Teachers should regularly link the purpose of learning to the school's bespoke skills framework. In most lessons, questioning is used to check young people's knowledge and understanding. A next step is for teachers to increase their range of questioning to develop young people's higher-order thinking skills. In the broad general education (BGE), almost all teachers need to provide more opportunities for young people to reflect upon their learning and evaluate their progress.
- In lessons characterised by important strengths, young people work effectively individually, in pairs and in groups. Young people articulate in e-portfolios the skills and attributes they develop through the use of such approaches. Too often, teachers use the same approach for the whole class. Tasks and activities are not always well matched to the needs of all learners. In these situations, young people have insufficient opportunities to lead their own learning and develop independence. As a result, a few young people disengage from their learning resulting in low-level disruption. Their motivation would be increased with more personalisation and choice in learning.
- In the majority of faculties, digital technology is being used creatively to enhance learning experiences. In almost all lessons, teachers use interactive whiteboards to present information in a variety of formats. Young people are supported by online platforms. These provide opportunities for young people to receive feedback and encourage them to work independently at home. In 2019, the school has been accredited with the Digital Schools Scotland Award. Young people in GME have made successful use of the national digital platform, e-Sgoil for course delivery through the medium of Gaelic. The use of digital technology should be more fully embedded into classroom practice through the medium of English and Gaelic.
- Staff should continue to prioritise sharing and learning within Hazlehead Academy that is of high-quality. Senior leaders' focus on improving learning and teaching needs to be captured in a strategic statement of the expected standard within classrooms. This, along with teachers' further professional dialogue on the design principles of the curriculum, would be beneficial in pursuing consistency in meeting the needs of all young people.

- More work is required on the use of differentiated approaches to learning. Most teachers need to collaborate further with support for learning staff and classroom assistants to effectively plan how they support young people in classes, and take forward interventions.
- Teachers use a range of assessments to inform their professional judgements about young people's progress in the BGE. Their professional judgements need to be supported with more regular moderation activities. In the senior phase, teachers share their experience of national standards from being markers and examiners with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). Others attend events to maintain their knowledge of assessment arrangements. Teachers can increase the impact of this professional learning to raise young people's attainment in the senior phase.
- In a few classes across stages, young people engage well in peer-assessment and self-evaluation. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their progress. Young people in the senior phase engage in regular learner conversations with their teachers. This is increasing young people's understanding of the progress they are making. At the BGE stage, teachers need to work collaboratively to improve the quality of feedback to learners. In most cases, young people need to be more confident in knowing how to make better progress.
- Senior leaders have improved reporting to parents by ensuring comments are more specific to progress and next steps. Parents' initial feedback is positive.
- In the BGE, faculty heads track young people's progress, using a range of approaches. These need to be streamlined to include consistent features, such as how well groups of learners and individuals are making progress. Staff need to make better use of assessment information for young people who are experiencing disadvantage and barriers to their learning. They should ensure that appropriate interventions for equity and support are in place to improve outcomes for young people. For GME, young people's engagement in activities to maintain and extend their fluency in Gaelic needs to be tracked and monitored to ensure that fluency is improving at an appropriate pace. The majority of teachers within faculties track homework. In the senior phase, teachers record detailed information to track the progress of young people as they work towards National Qualifications. Across the school, staff's conversations about progress should be aligned further to tracking and monitoring of progress. This should evidence how well barriers to learning, and challenges faced by young people, are being addressed.
- Senior leaders' planned review of the school's learning, teaching and assessment policy should include guidance on summative assessment and learning within unfamiliar contexts. This would build on the existing clear guidance on SQA procedures and assessment within courses, leading to National Qualifications. Where practice needs to improve, teachers need more direct feedback in achieving a better standard across the school. For this, senior leaders need to ensure a robust approach to quality assurance at faculty and whole-school level.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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 in the broad general education through the medium of English

- Between 2016 and 2018 in the BGE, the school reported that attainment in literacy and numeracy is improving. Almost all young people achieved third Curriculum for Excellence levels or better in literacy and in numeracy.
- By the end of S3 in 2018, the majority of young people achieved fourth Curriculum for Excellence levels in listening and talking, and reading. Less than half of young people achieved fourth level in writing. The majority achieved fourth level in numeracy. The Pupil Equity Fund has effectively supported the use of interventions to increase attainment in reading at third and fourth Curriculum for Excellence levels. All staff need to take responsibility for developing literacy and numeracy across all contexts of learning.
- The school reports that teacher professional judgements of literacy levels are becoming more reliable. For numeracy, teachers need to increase the reliability of professional judgements of levels by using robust moderation activities. These should inform appropriate curriculum pathways across the school, with young people well guided to the most appropriate course.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy at the senior phase through the medium of English

- The school could better secure continuous improvement in literacy and numeracy for all young people. There are some constraints on young people's attainment in S4 and by S5. It would be beneficial to improve planning of courses and for staff to have higher expectations of what young people can achieve. By S6, young people's attainment is in line with the virtual comparator (VC). Senior leaders should continue to be proactive in ensuring that all young people leave school with an award in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment of leavers in literacy and numeracy

- Almost all young people leave with a literacy award at SCQF level 4 or better. Most young people leave school with a numeracy award at SCQF level 4 or better. In 2018, there was a decline in the percentage of young people leaving with a numeracy award at SCQF level 4 or better and SCQF level 5 or better. As a result, the school performed significantly lower than the VC.
- As young people with additional support needs leave school, they are achieving well in literacy and numeracy. Senior and middle leaders do not have a robust overview of the progress of groups of learners in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy in the senior phase as young people move through the school.

- Between 2015-2018 in S4, the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 5 or better in literacy has been significantly lower than the VC in three out of four years. In 2019, attainment declined further to be significantly much lower than the VC. By S5 in the latest two years, the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 5 or better has fallen to significantly lower than the VC. The percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 6 or better, has been significantly lower than the VC in four out of five years between 2015 and 2019.
- Between 2018 and 2019 by S5, there have been improvements in numeracy at SCQF level 6 or better to be in line with the VC. In S4, the percentage of young people attaining numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better has declined to be significantly much lower than the VC. By S5, attainment has declined to be significantly much lower than the VC in 2019. The percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 6 or better, has been in line with the VC for the latest four years. In 2019, the percentage of young people attaining at this level is the highest in the past five years.

Attainment in literacy through Gaelic in the broad general education and the senior phase

- Across the school, the numbers studying literacy and Gàidhlig are small. As such, trends cannot be ascertained. Analysis of individual's attainment shows that most young people progress well within literacy and Gàidhlig. Young people do not have sufficient opportunities to develop fluency in a range of situations and apply their skills in unfamiliar contexts.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders do not have a systematic strategic overview of progress over time in the BGE. Staff make variable use of data from primary. Teachers need to collaborate with primary colleagues to increase their knowledge of young people's prior learning to improve progression.
- Senior leaders review attainment at the senior phase. From this, they are gleaned a clearer picture of gaps in attainment, and where approaches to continuous improvement need to have more impact. Business partners' mentoring of young people is one of the effective strategies realising improvements in young people's attainment. As yet, the curriculum is not providing appropriate progression to improve attainment.
- Senior leaders should extend their approach for reviewing attainment to the BGE. They recognise that an essential next step is to have an outward perspective to their review of attainment through professional dialogue and analysis.
- Over time, young people could be making much better progress as they move through the school. Between 2017 and 2019 for the lowest-attaining 20% in S4, the school is performing significantly lower than the VC. By the end of S5 in 2018 and 2019, the lowest-attaining 20% achieve significantly lower and much lower than the VC. For the middle-attaining 60% in S4 and S5 in 2019, attainment declined to be significantly below the VC. In 2019, by the end of S5, for all young people and the highest-attaining 20%, attainment improved to be in line with the VC.
- Young people may study six courses in each year of the senior phase. Senior leaders are beginning to refresh the curriculum to improve outcomes for young people. This should be taken forward as part of a manageable number of priorities for improvement, underpinned by a clear, shared vision, whilst ensuring well-paced change. In 2019 for young people in S4, at SCQF level 5C or better and SCQF level 5A or better, the percentage of young people

attaining all possible number of qualifications is significantly much lower than the VC. In the latest year, there has been a fall in the percentage gaining between three and six qualifications at SCQF level 5 or better. By S5, there are improvements to be in line with the VC at SCQF level 6A or better. There is an increase in the percentage of young people attaining five or more qualifications.

- At pace, staff should improve continuity and progression from the BGE to senior phase courses. As senior leaders use data to plan enhanced curricular outcomes, they should ensure that they regularly evaluate the impact of these changes on attainment. Faculty heads and teachers need to be very focused on having high standards of learning and teaching, and high expectations of what young people can achieve. In a few cases, they would benefit from professional learning to support improving the quality of passes in National Qualifications.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Young people feel valued by the range of ways their contributions to the wider life of the school and community are celebrated. The school's offer for personal and wider achievement is extensive and very well supported by staff. This has led to the school being awarded two Sport Scotland Gold Awards. There is a very well established inter-house programme, with very regular activities taking place. The programme affords young people a wide range of leadership opportunities. An increasing number of young people achieve Saltire and Sport Scotland Awards from leadership roles. Young people develop their understanding of social care from their responsibilities in the "Dementia Café" set up within the school. A few young people achieve very well in the Scottish Football Association Performance School initiative.
- Commendably, senior leaders and business partners have identified key employability skills that young people need for their future careers in Aberdeen city and beyond. These have been captured by the acronym, CATAPULTS. Most young people are aware of their progress in developing these skills by relating these to their wider achievement activities. Senior and middle leaders should continue to embed CATAPULTS to enable young people to connect the skills they are acquiring across all contexts of the curriculum. Staff are aware that they need to increase accreditation resulting from opportunities for achievements, including through a planned approach with partners. Senior leaders should ensure that all young people's achievements and accreditation awards are tracked. From this, they should analyse patterns of participation to be confident that all young people are benefitting from achievement opportunities.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders are raising staff's awareness of how well their pupils could attain when compared to other young people living in the same SIMD across Scotland. They are removing costs associated with learning to ensure every young person has the same opportunity. The achievements programme is free of charge. Costs for classroom activity, such as cooking, have been removed. Young people in S4 benefit from mentoring to support their learning and wellbeing. Senior and middle leaders should continue as planned, to ensure that interventions close gaps in attainment and remain sustainable.
- In SIMD deciles two to four, average complementary tariff scores are in line with the national average in 2017-18. For young people residing in SIMD deciles seven to ten, average complementary tariff scores have been significantly lower or much lower than the national average in 2017-18. Senior leaders describe some successful interventions but recognise that more impact is required. More staff need to raise their expectations of what all young people may achieve.

- The incidences of exclusions have been above the national average for all of the three years for which data is available. The school reports that the number of exclusions continued to increase in 2018, with a reduction in 2019. Despite this reduction, the incidences of exclusion remain relatively high.
- Between 2013 and 2018, almost all young people left Hazlehead Academy for an initial positive destination. In two out of five years between 2013 and 2018, the percentage of young people from S4 leaving for a positive destination is significantly much lower than the VC. Overall, the percentage of young people leaving for a positive destination from S5 and S6 is in line with the VC. Senior leaders are aware that they need to encourage more young people to stay on at school to gain qualifications. For this, they should continue to develop curriculum pathways that give a choice in next steps.

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

Context

Hazlehead Academy offers Gàidhlig as a National Qualification at SCQF level 5 to SCQF level 7. No other subject is offered through the medium of Gaelic. Young people learning through the medium of English have an option to learn Gaelic as a taster course in S3. In the senior phase, Gaelic (Learners) is an option in the wider achievement programme, leading to a National Qualification at SCQF level 3.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Staff and young people enjoy very positive relationships. The classroom teaching environment is driven by the use of quality fluency in Gaelic. Young people are motivated by their experiences and are keen to use the language they are acquiring.
- Young people's understanding of the place of Gaelic and GME in Aberdeen is being opened up by the availability of Gaelic (Learners) to those in English medium. A next step would be to create a learning pathway for Gaelic (Learners), with a progressive range of National Qualifications.
- Commendably, the teacher of GME delivers a P7 GME transition project. This is beginning to result in a much needed increase in young people continuing with GME as they move from primary to secondary stages.
- Partners and organisations need to have a bigger role in collaborating with the school to increase the totality of learning and teaching through Gaelic.
- Senior leaders should monitor and track the attainment and achievement of those in GME as a group of learners. This would help ascertain if the best possible outcomes are being achieved. Young people should be encouraged to assess their progress with CATAPULTS through the medium of Gaelic and English. Young people who are no longer accessing Gaelic in the curriculum, should be supported to maintain their fluency.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Over time, young people have gained skills and fluency from their involvement in national immersion opportunities. Currently young people in S3 studying Gaelic (Learners) are developing skills in making short films by being involved in the national project, Film-G. Young people's further participation in a full range of national events, and through the use of e-Sgoil, would support their fluency in Gaelic.
- In supporting equity for young people in GME, a deputy headteacher has recently produced an action plan to address how provision can be improved. Going forward, planning for improvement needs to be integrated within the school's strategic planning and the rationale of the curriculum. It would be valuable to support empowerment for Gaelic by having a strategic group of partners collaborating with the school in taking forward the action plan. This should include representation from the education authority and Comann nam Pàrant (Parents' Association for Gaelic Medium Education).

- In planning for equity, senior leaders should look at ways of providing a proportion of the totality of the curriculum through Gaelic. E-Sgoil could be used to increase individual learning pathways through Gaelic to meet statutory requirements for GME. Consideration should also be given to maximising further the contribution of existing specialist staff of Gaelic, including through Aberdeen City Campus. The creativity and flexibility in curriculum design, encouraged in Education Scotland's Advice on Gaelic Education, is still to be maximised by the school. Young people should have daily opportunities to speak Gaelic.

Other relevant information for GME

- Senior leaders need to be evidencing impact towards the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. There is potential for pace of change to be much brisker. Senior leaders should ensure that the school prospectus promotes GME and Gaelic (Learners).
- A depute headteacher who is new to post has responsibility for GME. This should be written into her remit so that GME is central to the work of the school. A principal teacher of modern languages has Gaelic as a language as part of her remit. There should be clarity on how the requirements for GME, as opposed to a language only within a curricular area, are taken forward. The teacher of GME is empowered to drive change with resultant impact. All those with responsibilities for Gaelic should access bespoke professional learning to support them in their roles. This should include learning from the sharing of effective practice with other secondary schools and local authorities.
- The education authority should support the school in improving young people's continuity with learning through the medium of Gaelic as they move from primary to secondary, and then onto a Gaelic-related sustained destination. Gaps in transitions are not helpful in supporting growing Aberdeen's own speakers of Gaelic to support the local labour market. Working with the local authority, they should address barriers to 'grow your own' approaches, including opportunities for promoted staffing structures.

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.