Summarised inspection findings

Holyrood Secondary School

Glasgow City Council

12 December 2023

Key contextual information

School Name: Holyrood Secondary School
Council: Glasgow City Council
SEED number: 8434530
Roll: 2253

Holyrood Secondary School is located in the southside of Glasgow. It is a Roman Catholic denominational school. There are nine associated primary schools. In September 2022, 45 per cent of pupils lived in the 20 per cent most deprived data zones in Scotland. In September 2022, 35 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.

The headteacher has been in post for six years. She is supported by six depute headteachers.

In September 2022, the school reported that 54 per cent of pupils had additional support needs. The school is a multicultural community with over sixty different languages spoken by young people and their families. In September 2022, the school reported that 51 per cent of pupils' main home language was not English. This is much greater than the national average.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average. For session 2022/23 attendance was 89 per cent. Exclusions are generally below the national average. Exclusions have decreased from 63 per 1000 pupils in 2016/17 to 8 exclusions per 1000 pupils in 2022/23.

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

■ The quality of the learning climate characterised by respect for learning and positive relationships is a major strength across the school. Teachers, parents and stakeholders describe a strong sense of togetherness, inclusion and a very well-established faith-based ethos. These drive the very strong, positive learning environment at Holyrood Secondary School.

■ Most young people enjoy their learning experiences. They have regular opportunities through various pupil voice activities to shape and improve these experiences. However, young people would benefit from having a greater say in what and how they learn, including leading aspects of their learning more consistently, across all curriculum areas.

■ In almost all lessons, young people participate very well. They have regular opportunities to work with their peers and engage effectively in peer assessment and paired and group activities. This is helping more young people to be responsible for, and confident in, their learning. Almost all young people are very motivated to learn.

- Most teachers plan learning well which is appropriately challenging for most young people. This is enhanced further by teachers who work with targeted groups of young people, for example those with English as an additional language (EAL), to help improve their progress in learning and achievement. This is allowing most young people to make very good progress in their learning and develop their skills in thinking and decision-making. Teachers should ensure they set tasks at higher levels of challenge for some young people.

- Almost all teachers set out very clear explanations of planned learning activities. A minority of teachers use a variety of high-quality questioning techniques that encourage young people to participate fully in class discussion and learning activities. Teachers should work together to develop high-quality questioning across the school. Teachers set high, aspirational expectations for young people which encourages an eager curiosity in most learners. This is supporting almost all young people to engage fully in their learning.

- In most subject areas, teachers enhance learners' experiences very well through the planned creative use of digital technologies. This is helping to motivate and support most learners in their class-based and home-based learning. This is also helping to raise awareness amongst parents of how best to support their children's learning at home. In a majority of subject areas, young people receive regular, high-quality digital feedback through a few different online platforms. Parents also access this feedback which helps them to support their children's learning at home.

- School staff are increasingly strengthening outdoor learning within the curriculum. Young people are a central part of this development through work they are undertaking in the Learning for Sustainability group. Young people have also capitalised on opportunities to access funding through partners, present at Glasgow City Council, and worked with staff to develop an outdoor learning space.

- Most staff use a wide range of effective approaches to assess regularly as part of the day-to-day learning and teaching the progress of young people at all stages. These approaches include peer and self-assessment, rich tasks, homework, quick quizzes, portfolio, and formal assessments. Most staff use highly effective and well-planned assessments that allow young people to apply their learning in a range of contexts. Almost all teachers provide frequent, quality feedback to learners. This includes helpful digital feedback which makes effective use of young people's one to one device.

- Young people at all stages describe regular learner conversations that take place with their teachers. Importantly, these conversations allow young people to identify strengths in their learning, as well as next steps. Young people value discussing with their teachers how they are progressing and what steps they need to take to improve their learning and progress. As a result, almost all young people have a clear understanding of how to progress in their learning. Almost all young people report that they receive regular feedback from teachers on how to improve their learning. Teachers provide this feedback in a variety of formats, following assessment, as well as at other progress review points throughout the year. Teachers ensure feedback to young people provides them with specific strategies to help them address areas for improvement identified through assessment. In a few departments, focused 'feedback lessons' are used effectively in addition to individual learner feedback.

- In the broad general education (BGE), planned assessment across all curriculum areas articulates well with the benchmarks for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). All teachers engage in well-established verification and moderation activity. This includes a partnership with staff from other schools across the local authority. A few teachers are trained as quality assurance and moderation support officers (QAMSOs). They effectively support departments'

understanding and application of moderation activity. The QAMSOs benefit from frequent opportunities to look outwards across the local authority and more widely, to identify effective practice. This is enabling highly effective approaches and understanding around moderation.

■ Teachers are continuing to develop their understanding of young people's progress through CfE levels. This is resulting in more robust teacher judgements of young people's attainment and achievement. A few subject areas have begun to engage in moderation activities with cluster primary colleagues. This is leading to staff having an enhanced understanding of achievement and progression data at points of transition. Further to this effective work, colleagues from all subject areas would benefit from similar professional engagement with colleagues across the cluster.

■ Every department has embedded well-developed methods of tracking young people's progress. Teachers use this monitoring and tracking data effectively to subsequently plan learning which is more relevant and challenging for young people. Senior leaders and teachers also use this tracking information well to feed into the whole school tracking system which is used for reporting to parents. Young people are fully involved in the regular tracking discussions, ensuring that they fully understand their grades prior to tracking reports being shared with parents. Following tracking periods, teachers put in place interventions involving pastoral care staff and support for learning staff.

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.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	very good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- Senior leaders, in conjunction with staff, have developed highly effective approaches to improving the literacy attainment of young people who have English as additional language. This is a major strength of the school. Young people who have English as an additional language make very good progress from prior levels of attainment. Staff have also been successful in ensuring young people achieve very well in both the number and quality of awards they achieve.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy
BGE
- In 2022/23, almost all young people achieved CfE third level or better in literacy by the end of S3. The majority achieved CfE fourth level. In 2022/23, most young people achieved CfE third level or better in numeracy. A majority achieved fourth level.

- Young people who require additional support are very well supported by a range of targeted interventions which are accelerating their progress towards achieving expected levels. Most young people with English as an additional language are achieving both literacy and numeracy at CfE third level by the end of S3.

- Staff have developed very effective programmes to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy across the BGE in partnership with associated primary schools.

- Teachers leading on literacy have developed a highly effective bridging project with primary schools. This is helping all young people to receive appropriate support in literacy, with a particular emphasis on those with English as an Additional Language. A range of strategies are in place to develop literacy levels. These strategies include reciprocal reading, S6 Literacy Ambassadors, activities led by the school librarian and the use of a reading programme. As a result, targeted young people are making significant progress in their reading ages.

- Teachers leading on numeracy have a strong understanding of standards in the BGE. Effective tracking, monitoring and assessment through a mastery approach are ensuring almost all young people are on track with their learning in numeracy. Those young people who are not yet on track are well supported through well-planned interventions.

Senior phase
- Recent changes in the English and mathematics departments are leading to improvements across most measures in literacy and numeracy. Almost all young people leave with SCQF level 3 or better in literacy and numeracy.

Leavers (literacy)

■ Most young people leaving school between 2018/19 and 2021/22 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. This is significantly lower or much lower than the virtual comparator (VC). The majority of young people leaving school in the same time period achieved SCQF level 6. This is in line with the VC, except in 2019/20 and 2020/21 where it was significantly lower.

■ The majority of young people leaving school who have an additional support need achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. The majority achieved this in numeracy.

Cohorts (literacy)

■ As young people move through the school their achievements in literacy are broadly in line with the VC. By S6, most have achieved SCQF level 5 or better and the majority have achieved SCQF level 6 in literacy. This is significantly higher than the VC for SCQF level 6 in 2022/23.

Leavers (numeracy)

■ The majority of young people leaving school between 2018/19 and 2021/22 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This is in line with the VC for 2020/21 and 2021/22, having been significantly lower in 2018/19 and 2019/20. A minority of young people leaving school achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy. This is significantly higher than the VC for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

■ A minority of young people leaving school who have an additional support need achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy and in numeracy. The percentage of young people leaving school with an additional support need is notably above the VC for SCQF level 6 in numeracy.

Cohorts (numeracy)

■ In S4, a minority of young people achieved numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better. This is a decline from 2020/21 and is now significantly lower than the VC. By S5 and S6, the majority of young people achieve SCQF level 5 or better, in line with the VC. Numeracy attainment at SCQF level 6 is strong. Attainment at this level is significantly higher than the VC from 2019/20 to 2022/23.

National Qualifications

■ Young people attain well in both National 5 (N5) English and N5 Mathematics in S4. Attainment at this level is significantly higher than national figures. Young people also have success at Higher in both English and mathematics. These are in line with national figures. Teachers are aware of the need to improve presentation rates in English and also the attainment level in National 5 Mathematics at S5 and S6.

Attainment over time
BGE

■ Young people are making very good levels of progress from prior levels of attainment. Senior leaders have an established tracking system in place to monitor the progress of young people across the BGE. By S3, almost all young people achieve CfE third level across their curricular choices. The majority achieve CfE fourth level.

Senior phase
Improving attainment for all
Leavers

■ When compared using average complementary tariff points, the attainment of young people leaving school between 2017/18 and 2021/22 is general below that of the VC. The attainment of the lowest 20% of young people leaving school is significantly lower or much lower than the VC for 2019/20 to 2021/22. Senior leaders correctly highlight the challenges related to attendance for specific groups of young people as having an impact on these figures. Staff,

particularly those in the EAL department are working well to support young people from these communities. The attainment of the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of leavers is in line with the VC for the same time period.

Cohorts

■ In S4, S5 based on S4 and S6 based on S4, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people is in line with the VC for the latest five years. For the middle attaining 60% of young people attainment is mostly significantly higher or much higher than the VC from 2021/22 to 2022/23. For the highest attaining 20% of young people attainment is broadly in line with the VC. The exception being in 2022/23 for the S5 based on S4 where it was significantly much higher.

■ The attainment of the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people leaving school who have an additional support need is generally above that of the VC.

Breadth and Depth

■ Senior leaders have a clear focus on attainment. They have been highly successfully in targeting improvements in attainment at SCQF level 3 for young people at risk of not attaining. There is also notable success in ensuring the quality of passes at SCQF level 5 and level 6.

■ In S4, almost all young people achieve one or more to five or more awards at SCQF level 3 or better. This is significantly much higher than the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. Most young people achieve five or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better. This is significantly higher than the VC in 2021/22 and 22/23. Most young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better, a minority achieve five or more at this level. The percentage of young people achieving one or more to five or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better is significantly higher than the VC for 2021/22 and 2022/23. The majority of young people achieve one or more award at SCQF level 5A or better, significantly much higher than the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. The percentage of young people achieving two or more to four or more awards at SCQF level 5A or better is significantly higher or much higher than the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

■ By S5, the majority of young people achieve five or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better. Attainment at this level and at SCQF level 5A or better is significantly higher or much higher than the VC in 2022/23 for one or more to five or more awards. The majority of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better. The percentage of young people achieving one or more to four or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better is significantly higher than the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. A minority of young people achieve one or more to two or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better. This is significantly higher than the VC for 2022/23.

■ By S6, the majority of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better. The percentage of young people achieving one or more to three or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better is significantly higher than the VC between 2020/21 and 2022/23. A minority of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better. This is significantly higher than the VC for 2019/20 to 2022/23. A minority of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 7C or better and a few achieve this at SCQF level 7A or better. This is broadly in line with the VC.

■ Staff are introducing an increasing range of courses, such as National Progression Awards to meet the needs of learners beyond National Qualifications more effectively. These are primarily improving the breadth of attainment at SCQF level 4 and level 5 for young people in S6.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

■ Young people participate in a very wide range of clubs, activities and programmes, enabling them to contribute to the life of the school. Young people develop their knowledge, skills, and attributes through these activities, enhancing their capacity to succeed in life and work. A few young people are able to identify the skills they are developing and speak about shaping further some of these achievement opportunities through pupil voice.

■ Staff are using the achievement tracker to capture young people's engagement activities across the school. Senior leaders should continue as planned to develop the use of this tracker more widely. They should ensure that all groups of young people are taking part and that appropriate and relevant accreditation opportunities are put in place. Senior leaders and staff should also now consider mapping wider achievements across potential learner journeys into the world of work. Building a skills framework will assist staff in planning for learning and skill development across the curriculum. This will support young people to make informed choices about the activities which would be of most value to them in progressing their skills for life and work.

■ Young people take on leadership responsibilities, for example, as digital ambassadors, sports ambassadors, music leaders, and Columba 1400 wellbeing ambassadors. Young people in the senior phase are involved in leadership activities throughout the school community in a variety of ways, such as supporting learning in the BGE as literacy and numeracy coaches and as sports leaders in primary classes. As a result, young people are growing in confidence and improving their teamwork, problem-solving and presentation skills. The majority of young people feel that the school is helping them to become more confident. A few young people were able to describe the progression of their skills over their learner journey and related this to the wider achievement activities they had been involved in.

■ The Pupil Parliament is a strong force within the school. It has led to a number of other related and important groups. For example, the rights respecting school group, ECO Schools group, anti-racism working group, mental health ambassadors, mentor in violence prevention leaders, period dignity Group and Cost of the School Day Action group. This is empowering young people to drive change and to impact on school improvement. Young people are proud of their parliament and are very clear about its ability to represent all young people.

■ Staff's approach to celebrating achievement in the school is very strong, taking place through the annual prize giving ceremony and throughout the school year through digital platforms, the merit system, assemblies and newsletters. Young people are proud of their achievements and value the recognition given to them.

Equity

■ Staff are very aware of the unique context of their school community and work very effectively with a wide range of partners to reduce barriers for young people and their families to address the effects of poverty on young people's attainment. Staff use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to offer out-of-school support, tuition, extended study support and both Easter and summer schools for individuals and targeted groups for a range of subjects. This is enabling gaps in learning to be addressed.

■ There are well-developed courses across subject areas at various levels to allow all learners, including those with additional needs, to access appropriate correct levels and enable them to be successful and attain. Senior leaders are aware of the need to monitor the gender balance across some curricular areas and activities. They are already considering options to address this.

- Attendance figures for the school are in line with national figures. All staff are very aware of the challenge related to attendance, particularly for different groups of young people. A range of staff work well with partners to improve attendance for targeted young people. Senior leaders now need to improve approaches to rigorously monitor all young people's daily attendance across the school.

- A variety of partner groups support young people to attain and achieve. There is very strong collaboration between school staff, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Family Action in Rogerfield and Easthouse (FARE), Motivation, Commitment and Resilience (MCR) pathways, Active Schools and other business partners. This is leading to improved attendance and the engagement of a few young people.

- Staff track the progress of all young people who have various barriers to learning. They work very well with partners to ensure appropriate interventions are in place that lead to improvement for those learners. This is reflected in the senior phase results for those young people leaving school from 2017/18 to 2021/22 who reside in SIMD deciles one and two. They attain well compared to young people living in the same deciles in other schools. Attainment for these young people is mostly significantly higher than national data.

- The Parent Council have been consulted on the use of PEF. Senior leaders should now consider how they can consult more widely with all parents and young people. Senior leaders should also monitor the impact of PEF more closely to accelerate the progress of young people who are targeted by this funding.

- Almost all young people leave school to a positive destination. This was significantly higher than the VC for 2021/22 and has been improving over recent years. This improvement includes those young people from SIMD one and two, care experienced and those who have English as an additional language. The majority of young people leave school to go to higher or further education. A minority leave to training or employment.

Other relevant evidence

■ The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of people through food in school. Several areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

■ Staff who lead whole-school approaches to parental engagement run very well-received parental engagement evenings. These focus on how parents can best support young people in their learning. These sessions are very well attended. They are encouraging more parents to become confident to support their young people's learning. More generally, these sessions are also helping more parents to become engaged and involved in the life and work of the school.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Staff's approaches to improving the literacy skills of young people who have English as an additional language. They are highly successful in improving the reading skills of young people that enable them to access the curriculum. As result, young people have success in attainment, in addition to achieving opportunities as they move through the school and on to a positive destination.

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.