

Summarised inspection findings

Charleston Academy - Acadamaidh Bhaile Thearlaich

The Highland Council

1 July 2025

Key contextual information

School Name: Charleston Academy - Acadamaidh Bhaile Thearlaich
Council: The Highland Council
SEED number: 5143837
Roll: 701

Charleston Academy - Acadamaidh Bhaile Thearlaich is a comprehensive school in Inverness. The substantive headteacher was appointed in August 2023. In a six-year period, there have been five headteachers. This has caused the school community instability in direction and leadership. In addition, the school has faced significant staff absences and vacancies.

Attendance is generally below the national average.

Exclusions are in line with the national average in 2022/23 and has moved from being above the national average in previous years.

In September 2023, 11.5 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2023, 18 per cent of pupils live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2022, the school reported that 56.3 per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

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

- Across the school, relationships between staff and young people are positive and respectful. Peer relationships in most classes are underpinned by the school values of kindness and teamwork. In most lessons there is a calm and supportive learning environment where young people are motivated to learn. Staff should now continue to embed the recently refreshed school values in everyday practice across the school, with a particular focus on ambition for all learners.
- Young people engage fully when they are provided with a variety of teaching approaches, including collaboration with others and active learning. In a majority of lessons, learning is overly teacher led. This results in a few young people being passive in their learning and not meaningfully engaged. In a few lessons in the senior phase, young people lead their own and the learning of others confidently. Teachers should now create more opportunities for young people to lead learning.
- The new Headteacher has a clear vision for improving learning, teaching and assessment, which is set out in the school improvement plan. Senior leaders and staff have worked collaboratively to create and implement a new learning and teaching standard. Almost all staff use this framework to provide a clear structure for lessons. This is supporting teachers to use a consistent approach to classroom routines and delivery of lessons. As a next step senior leaders now need to work further with staff to develop the quality of learning and teaching outlined in the agreed standard.
- In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. Teachers share the purpose of learning in almost all lessons. The quality of this learning is variable. In a few lessons, teachers do not link the intended learning and success criteria well enough, with too much focus on completion of tasks. In a few lessons teachers refer back effectively to the purpose of learning and criteria of success throughout the lesson. This is helping young people evaluate their progress and success. There is a need for teachers to use more effective plenaries which allow young people to reflect on their learning.
- In most lessons, staff use digital technology to engage and support young people with their learning. This includes the use of interactive whiteboards, research tasks, assistive technology and online platforms for revision materials. Staff should utilise further the one-to-one devices to develop more creative digital approaches.
- A minority of young people feel their views are listened to. In a few departments young people's views are sought on learning and teaching. Senior leaders have planned to extend this practice further across the school. This will allow more young people to have a greater say in what and how they learn.

- Most teachers demonstrate awareness of young people's additional support needs. In a minority of lessons tasks and activities are adapted well to meet the needs of young people. Senior leaders now need to implement a rigorous whole school system which records strategies for young people who require additional support. This has the potential to support teachers to have access to more accurate information to help inform their planning appropriately plan young people's learning.
- In a majority of lessons, the pace of learning is too slow, and activities are set to the whole class. Senior leaders identify appropriately the need to improve pace and challenge. This includes more challenging work for young people who need to extend their learning. This will provide more stimulating and engaging learning experiences for all young people.
- In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to check young people's knowledge and understanding. In a few departments questioning is used very effectively to challenge and extend young people's learning. In addition, a majority of departments are beginning to use self-assessment and peer assessment to support young people to reflect on their learning. Teachers should use this information to inform future planning of learning, teaching and assessment.
- Young people receive verbal feedback in most faculties. A few departments have formalised approaches to feedback, using a variety of methods which support young people to make progress in their learning. Senior leaders should now develop a systematic overview of the approach and quality of feedback provided by departments. This will ensure that feedback is used consistently across all departments, within the broad general education (BGE) and senior phase. This will support all young people to be clear about how to make progress in their learning.
- All faculties use Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes to plan learning in the BGE. The quality of this planning is inconsistent across faculties. Senior leaders should continue with plans to review most BGE courses to ensure that learning and assessment is aligned with benchmarks and progression frameworks. This will support teachers to make more reliable judgements of a level and will support young people in the BGE understand what level they are working at.
- All departments have individual approaches to gathering information about young people's progress. The quality of these tracking approaches is variable. In a few departments teachers track and monitor the progress of young people well and use the information to suitably adapt tasks and activities to meet the needs of learners. Senior leaders now need to moderate the quality of departmental tracking approaches to ensure that all teachers can monitor young people's progress over time effectively. This will also support the strategic overview of young people's progress and the use of data to inform improvement.
- Teachers engage in moderation activities with colleagues from within their own departments. There is a need for the majority of teachers to increase their range of moderation activities with other schools. This will ensure assessments are robust and teachers have a better understanding of national standards and expectations. Senior leaders must ensure that all departments have a systematic approach to moderation within and out with the school for both the BGE and the senior phase. This will support teachers' confidence in determining achievement of a level, particularly within the BGE.

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

Senior leaders acknowledge that further work is required to raise attainment across the BGE and senior phase. Senior leaders report that young people's attendance has been below previous levels and the national average in the past few sessions. This has impacted on the quality of learner attainment. Young people's attainment has also been affected adversely by the significant recruitment challenges across a majority of curricular areas. Senior leaders are currently implementing improved systems to monitor young people's progress and attainment. They are considering approaches to use this data effectively to inform impactful interventions so that all young people attain well. Staff are currently strengthening their presentation policy to ensure that young people are taking the appropriate course level and then completing their course with an award. It is too soon to measure the impact of this work on addressing gaps in young people's attainment as these approaches are at a very early stage.

Literacy and numeracy

BGE

- Most young people achieved CfE third level in literacy and just over half of the cohort have achieved CfE fourth level literacy by the end of S3 in 2023/24. Performance at CfE third level literacy shows a fluctuating pattern, increasing in 2023/24. This increase is the result of strengthened moderation work. Staff who lead literacy improvements acknowledge the need to improve further staff's confidence in making judgements about young people's achievement of a level.
- Almost all young people achieved CfE third level in numeracy in 2023/24. Performance in third level numeracy shows a three year pattern of improvement. Most young people achieved CfE fourth level numeracy by the end of S3 in 2023/24. This has shown a substantial increase on previous session's levels. This data shows significant variance and is not fully reliable. Staff need to take steps to improve the accuracy of their judgements in young people's achievement of a level in numeracy.
- Staff who lead on literacy and numeracy are aware of the need to ensure clear articulation with BGE levels achieved and how this translates to young people's outcomes in the senior phase. They should continue with plans to improve young people's literacy and numeracy attainment.

Senior phase

Leavers

- Most young people leaving school have achieved Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better in literacy between 2018/19 and 2022/23. A majority of young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy. Although performance is in line with the Virtual Comparator (VC), young people's attainment at SCQF level 5 is showing a pattern of decline with key measures 2022/23.

- A majority of young people who left school between 2019/20 and 2022/23, achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy, in line with the VC. The percentage of young people who achieve SCQF level 5 or better is following a clear pattern of decline from 2019/20 until 2022/23. Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, a minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 numeracy on leaving school. Although performance fluctuates at this level, it is generally stable and in line with the VC.
- Attainment of leavers who require additional support with their learning is in line with the VC. There is an inconsistent pattern of improvement with key measures declining in 2022/23.
- Staff identify young people who are at risk of leaving school without a literacy or numeracy qualification. They are currently developing approaches which intend to support all young people to be able to achieve a literacy and numeracy qualification.

Cohorts

- At S4, most young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in 2023/24. This has increased greatly on previous sessions' attainment and is now significantly much higher than the VC. By S5, as a percentage of the S4 roll, a minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in 2023/24. From 2020/21 until 2022/23, this had been significantly higher than the VC, decreasing in 2023/24, to being in line with the VC. By S6, a majority of young people achieve SCQF level 6 or better in literacy and although performance fluctuates over the five-year period, for the latest two years, performance has been significantly higher than the VC. Senior leaders and staff literacy leaders acknowledge that there is a gap at National 5 and plan to address attainment gaps to sustain literacy improvements across the senior phase.
- At S4, a majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy in line with the VC between 2019/20 and 2022/23. In 2023/24, this decreased to just under half of the cohort achieving at this level with performance now significantly lower than the VC. At S4 performance at SCQF level 5 or better in S4 has been following a steady pattern of decline between 2019/20 and 2023/24, with performance in 2023/24 being at its lowest level across the five-year period. By S5, as a percentage of the S4 roll, just over half of young people achieve SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. In 2022/23 and 2023/24, performance is significantly lower than the VC. A minority of young people achieve SCQF level 6 or better in numeracy, in line with the VC, although following an inconsistent pattern of improvement over the five-year period from 2019/20. By S6, as a percentage of the S4 roll, a minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in numeracy. Performance at this level is generally following an inconsistent pattern of improvement, declining on previously positive performance in 2019/20 and 2020/21 where this measure was significantly higher than the VC.
- There is a substantial difference between the young people who gain the literacy and numeracy award as opposed to the full course qualification in English and mathematics.
- Young people's attainment in National Qualifications (NQs) in English and mathematics is generally in line with national levels, with a few measures declining over the five-year period from 2020 until 2024. Entries at N5 English are in line with national levels. Attainment fluctuates over the five-year period, decreasing in 2023/24. Higher English entries are declining with attainment generally in line with national levels between 2020 and 2024. Entries of young people in N5 applications of mathematics are above national levels with pass rates comparable to national levels. N5 mathematics entries and passes are comparable to national levels. These are showing signs of declining across the five-year period from 2019/20. Higher mathematics entries are declining with attainment fluctuating from 2020 until 2024. Staff introduced higher applications of maths in 2024, with entries and attainment above national

levels. Staff are aware of the need to fully comply with national expectations on dual presentation.

Improving attainment for all BGE attainment over time

- Senior leaders are beginning to capture young people's overall attainment of CfE levels across all curricular areas. Senior leaders are collating an overview from existing data across subject areas to develop a whole school overview of young people's attainment over time. They are aware that this data from subject areas shows significant variance, is not wholly reliable, shows under performance and generally does not articulate well with performance in the senior phase.
- Senior leaders should continue to develop their approaches in measuring all young people's attainment over time. They should also use this information to explore the accuracy of staff's judgements of young people's achievement of a level across all curricular areas. Staff should, as a priority, strengthen their understanding of BGE levels and take steps to make robust judgements of young people's achievement of a level. Senior leaders are considering approaches to support staff in using more reliable information consistently to identify and support young people who are not making appropriate progress across all of their subjects. They should also use this information to monitor young people's attainment across curriculum areas and ensure the appropriate progression of learners through the BGE to the most aspirational level of qualification in the senior phase.

Senior phase

- Senior leaders and staff are beginning to use data about young people's progress more consistently to identify young people who are not on track to attain appropriately in line with their level of ability. Senior leaders should proceed with plans to ensure that young people receive impactful interventions to make the best progress through the senior phase.

Leavers

- Attainment for the lowest attaining 20%, the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people, when using complementary tariff scores, has been in line with the VC from 2018/19 until 2022/23. There is no consistent pattern of improvement.
- The attainment of leavers who require additional support with their learning is similar to the VC. The performance of the lowest attaining 20% and middle attaining 60% of young people who require additional support is showing a three-year pattern of decline.

Cohorts

- At S4, by S5 and S6 based on the S4 roll, attainment of the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people has been in line with the VC between 2019/20 and 2023/24. This is with the exception of the highest attaining 20% of young people in S6, based on the S4 roll, where there is a pattern of decline from 2020/21 and is now significantly lower than the VC in 2023/24.
- In S4 the performance of the lowest attaining 20% of young people increased in 2023/24 as a result of a targeted and improved course choice offer. By S5, based on the S4 roll, performance of the lowest attaining 20% and middle attaining 60% of young people is showing clear patterns of decline from 2021/22 to 2023/24. By S6, the attainment is generally declining with attainment at its lowest level in five years. Senior leaders acknowledge the need for young people in S6 to be undertaking a greater level of demand and challenge in their curriculum.

Breadth and depth

- Middle leaders need to take steps to improve young people's attainment across the majority of faculties. This includes increasing pass rates and high-quality passes at National 5, Higher and in other qualifications offered.
- Senior leaders and staff are beginning to increase the range of opportunities available to young people beyond National Qualifications (NQs) to improve young people's learning pathways in the senior phase. It is important that senior leaders and staff give greater consideration to their curriculum offer. They should keep this under review to provide young people with the most progressive and aspirational courses at the correct level, in line with their needs and abilities.
- At S4, most young people gain one or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better with the majority achieving three or more awards. The percentage of young people gaining four or more qualifications at S4 in 2023/24 is now in line with the VC having been significantly lower than the VC in the previous two sessions. Performance at this level is generally static with no clear pattern of improvement. The percentages of young people attaining at SCQF level 5A or better is generally following patterns of decline.
- By S5, a minority of young people gain up to four or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better in 2022/23 and 2023/24, in line with the VC. Performance in three or more or four or more awards has returned to being in line with the VC, having been generally significantly lower than the VC between 2020/21 and 2022/23. Performance of young people at SCQF 6A or better is declining or with no consistent pattern of improvement.
- By S6, just over half of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better with a minority attaining three or more awards at these levels. This has been in line with the VC from 2019/20 to 2023/24. The percentage of young people attaining four or more awards at SCQF level 6C has fallen in 2023/24 to being significantly lower than the VC. The percentage of young people gaining two or more to five or more awards has been following a four-year pattern of decline from 2020/21 until 2023/24. Performance is at its lowest level in four years with attainment of four or more awards now significantly lower than the VC in 2023/24. The percentage of young people achieving top quality passes at SCQF level 6A is generally showing a four-year pattern of decline for all measures at one or more to five or more awards. Performance is significantly much lower than the VC for three or more awards and significantly lower than the VC for four or more and five or more awards in 2023/24. A few young people gain one or more to two or more awards at SCQF level 7C or better. This is significantly lower than the VC in 2023/24. Performance at SCQF level 7 is declining. Senior leaders recognise the need to ensure young people in S6 follow the most aspirational pathways through the senior phase.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Young people demonstrate a broad range of skills, including confidence and resilience through engagement in a variety of achievement activities. This includes, for example, 'Be the Change' choir, debating club, climbing club and a range of school trips. Young people have enhanced their skills further in Physical Education through achieving the Gold school sport award.
- A minority of young people are benefiting from leadership activities and achieving recognition through initiatives such as Highlife Highland Leadership programme and the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). This is supporting these young people to demonstrate employability skills and confidence. Young people's achievements are enhanced through collaborative working with partners, such as Inverness College and the school based Youth Development Officer.

- Young people demonstrate skills and knowledge in customer service and skills for work within the school café, through the Hospitality- and Barista Skills for work provision.
- Senior pupils gain accreditation and demonstrate leadership skills through success achieving National Progression Awards in football coaching and the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme. A minority of young people are demonstrating resilience and problem-solving skills through experiences such as the Duke of Edinburgh award. All young people in S2 take part in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) which develops their sense of community and responsibility.
- Young people value existing reward and recognition initiatives, such as praise postcards, 'Pupil of the Block,' and 'Star of the Week.' These approaches are viewed as motivational and contribute positively to the school's ethos. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to increase opportunities for acknowledging achievement more widely. Existing examples of effective practice, such as the Creative Faculty Awards evening, should be built upon to embed a culture of recognition and aspiration further. A few young people receive accreditation for their achievement. Staff should explore further opportunities for a greater number of young people to receive accreditation.
- Senior leaders now need to have a fully-developed system for capturing and tracking young people's achievements. A more systematic approach is required to ensure that all young people's participation is recognised and that those who are not engaging can be identified and supported.

Equity for all learners

- Staff are beginning to use data to identify and support young people, where poverty may be a barrier to learning. Senior leaders have used Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide nurture, support and resources for a targeted group of young people. All of the young people in this group achieved their literacy, numeracy and attainment targets, improved their attendance and accessed a positive destination on leaving school. Senior leaders should continue to review the targets for the current supported group, as part of the tracking and monitoring process. This can ensure the level of challenge meets the needs of all the young people.
- There is strong collaboration with partners who support young people to attain and achieve. This includes a local football club, the 'Growing2Gether' charity, the council's 'Home to Highland' programme and other local organisations who provide helpful support for different groups of young people. These group activities and individual mentoring support is leading to improved attendance and engagement for a few young people, including those who are care experienced. Senior and middle leaders should now work with partners to develop coherent systems to track and monitor the impact of this work.
- The attainment of young people, who require additional support, is in line with virtual comparator over the past four years. The complementary tariff points for this group, however, shows patterns of decline since 2019/20. Senior leaders should continue to monitor closely the attainment of this group.
- In 2022/23, young people in Decile 3 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) who may face socio- economic disadvantage, attain much lower than national levels. Young people living in deciles 2 attain above national levels. Senior leaders should now develop approaches to capture progress and evidence that poverty related attainment gaps are closing for young people in line with national expectations.

- Almost all young people left school in 2022/23 to a positive destination, in line with the VC. The number of young people going into further and higher education on leaving school, is lower than national and virtual comparators. The proportion of young people going into employment is much higher than national and virtual comparators but in line with local authority averages. Young people are supported well to undertake Foundation Apprenticeships. This has enabled development of employability skills and supports positive destinations.

Context

Gaelic (Learners) is part of the business and languages faculty. It is led by a principal teacher. There is not a dedicated promoted post for Gaelic (Learners).

All young people study Gaelic (Learners) in S1-2 in Acadamaidh Bhaile Thearlaich – Charlestown Academy. They may choose to continue to do so in S3 and S4 and throughout the senior phase. The senior phase runs as one multi-level class for Gaelic (Learners) with different time allocations for year groups. In 2024-2025, young people study Gaelic (Learners) Advanced Higher through the digital platform, e-Sgoil. Timetabling constraints do not enable any further expansion of Gaelic (Learners) in 2024-2025.

Quality Indicator 2.3: Learning, teaching and assessment

- The staff team and young people enjoy very positive relationships as a basis for their learning experiences. Young people are respectful and have a sense of belonging to the community for Gaelic (Learners) at Acadamaidh Bhaile Thearlaich as they move through stages. The young people have chosen to name in Gàidhlig the café they run as part of the curriculum - Srùbag. The staff team and young people should continue making Gàidhlig visible and audible in the everyday life of the Acadamaidh Bhaile Thearlaich.
- The language model where all young people in Acadamaidh Bhaile Thearlaich learn Gàidhlig in S1 and S2 works well. It promotes equality and inclusion in young people's access, and helps inform a positive attitude to the Gàidhlig language. A minority but improving number of young people continue with Gaelic (Learners) as they move from S2 into S3. This number reduces again in S4. More young people are beginning to return to Gaelic (Learners) in the senior phase. This is based on their experiences in the S1-3. The younger learners would benefit from having a stronger sense of purpose and connection for why they learn Gàidhlig. This could be a continued outcome of language teaching. Staff should continue to build on the cross-curricular approach adopted in literacy and English where contexts related to Gàidhlig are integrated into learning. This also supports the school's recent focus on the school's identity. Across the school, there are speakers and learners of Gàidhlig enthusiastic about supporting young people's learning of Gàidhlig.
- Staff across the school have embarked on the first stage of recognition for children's rights. Going forward, young people should be clear how Gàidhlig connects to rights for indigenous languages. Senior leaders should continue to show how their adoption of local and national policy impacts on Gàidhlig.
- Young people learn in a range of motivating contexts. Their learning is planned well on curriculum criteria defined in aims, success criteria and recognised through planned assessments. By the end of S2, young people aim to have achieved third level outcomes for the CfE Gaelic (Learners). Senior leaders should continue to monitor that the time allocated to languages enables this to be realised. Teachers should also, with the support of partners, encourage liaison with associated primary schools to promote continuity in learning.
- Young people make regular use of digital technology. They enjoy consolidating their learning through game-based learning. Young people have choice in how they present their work, with many using tablet technology. This adds to the numerous resources available to young people online.

- Young people learn about the associated culture of Gàidhlig. For example, young people learn how Gàidhlig influences placenames. Young people in S3, on a two-yearly basis, attend a careers fair to learn of the employment opportunities for speakers of Gàidhlig. Leaders with responsibilities for Gàidhlig should consider how young people in S2 get more timely careers advice and information. This bespoke advice would help young people make more informed choices when choosing whether to continue with the language in S3 and beyond.
- Young people engage well with local and national networks and partners for Gàidhlig to ensure meaningful and relevant learning. Recently, young people joined a Fèisgoil event as part of celebrations for Seachdain na Gàidhlig. This increased young people's understanding of how learners of Gàidhlig use the language in employment and travel. Young people's engagement with European Day of Languages builds their understanding of how Gàidhlig links with learners of other languages. The staff team for Gàidhlig are building again their partner programme of visits to enhance learners' experiences in Gàidhlig.
- The staff team access a range of career-long professional learning. This includes working with national organisations such as the Scottish Qualifications Authority. This is helping build confidence in assessment, moderation and making professional judgements on standards across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders and the staff team should continue to develop lifelong and inclusive learning pathways from opportunities beyond the class, such as lunch time clubs. This should assist all young people continue learning Gàidhlig in different learning contexts at Acadamaidh Bhaile Thearlaich.

Quality Indicator 3.2: Raising attainment and achievement

- Young people's successes in Gaelic (Learners) are highlighted in The Highland Council's collation, 'Naidheachdan Matha'. These are also shared strategically with wider council elected members at Comataidh Gàidhlig – the elected members' committee for Gàidhlig. Young people demonstrate skills in music, performance and culture by taking part in Inverness Gàidhlig Mòd. Comunn na Gàidhlig have a specific prize at the annual prizegiving to recognise raising attainment in Gaelic (Learners). Young people's skills in the economic benefits from Gàidhlig in business and tourism are increased through analysing how a new project, Inverness Castle Experience will result in benefits.
- By S6, young people's fluency in Gaelic (Learners) is developing very well. Young people speak confidently in a range of unrehearsed situations. In S1-3, not all young people experience Gaelic (Learners) at the primary stages. This makes pace of progress look different, with young people commencing first level outcomes in S1. As yet, there is no clear pattern of improvement in attainment in S1-2. In 2023/24, most young people achieved second level CfE levels by the end of S3. A minority of young people achieved third level outcomes. Senior leaders should continue to monitor the impact of only one period a week being allocated to teaching languages in S1. Young people should be encouraged to be more spontaneous in taking part in everyday conversations in Gaelic (Learners). They should respond with increasing detail in personal contexts. Staff in primary and secondary should work together on a common purpose to improve outcomes in young people's fluency.
- All young people do not get their entitlement to learn Gaelic in S3 covering the third level CfE levels. They sit SCQF level three units to get recognition for their Gaelic learning. The entry requirement for this is at staff's discretion. In 2024, the A-grade passes for National 5 Gaelic (Learners) were higher than the national average. This is an improvement with just under a half of young people achieving this grade.

Other relevant information

- To meet the outcomes of a 1+2 Approach to Languages and the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017, all young people learn French and Gaelic (Learners) in S1-2. The underpinning rationale includes helping young people make more informed choices on languages. Young people's learning specialises at the end of S2, with a majority of young people not continuing with a language. This model is yet to increase uptake for languages in the senior phase.
- The staff team are making positive progress in implementing the statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. They have significantly increased the numbers learning Gàidhlig in S1-2. The school handbook should promote the Gaelic (Learners) curriculum offer. It should also support the city-wide catchment for Gàidhlig Medium drawn round Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis - Inverness Royal Academy.
- The faculty improvement plan links to whole-school priorities. This results in positive impact for the Gaelic (Learners). Currently, this is in areas as learning, teaching and assessment, wellbeing and raising attainment and achievement. The staff team's continued use of national quality improvement frameworks, with more specialist resources such as the 'Advice on Gaelic Education', would deepen self-evaluation for improvement. Senior leaders should link whole-school and departmental planning with the council's Gaelic Language Plan. Such approaches would raise awareness of how staff and young people's successes and accountability are part of a bigger legislative framework. Senior leaders should report the impact of their work in Gaelic in the Standards and Quality Report. This would enhance the strategic role of senior leaders for Gàidhlig.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- The staff team promote an inclusive approach to Gaelic (Learners). They have a continuous focus on increasing the numbers learning Gàidhlig as part of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. The S1 and S2 language model entails all young people learning Gaelic, building on some young people's learning at the primary stages. This increases the total numbers of learners of Gàidhlig as an outcome of national planning for Gàidhlig. Young people decide at the end of S2 if they continue with Gaelic (Learners) into S3 and the senior phase. Recently, there is an increasing number of young people choosing Gaelic in S3, while also better meeting expectations of a 1+2 Approach to Languages. Young people learn about Gaelic culture, economic and employment opportunities to make more informed choices about the language. Young people's successes in Gaelic (Learners) are highlighted in The Highland Council's collation, 'Naidheachdan Matha'. This ensures a high profile for young people's successes by being shared at strategic level with wider council elected members at Comataidh Gàidhlig – the elected members' committee for Gàidhlig. Young people demonstrate skills in music, performance and culture by taking part in Inverness Gàidhlig Mòd. Comunn na Gàidhlig have a specific prize at the annual prizegiving to recognise raising attainment in Gaelic (Learners). Young people's knowledge on the economic benefits from Gàidhlig in business and tourism are increased through analysing how a new project, Inverness Castle Experience will result in benefits. The staff team continue to focus on sustaining the impact of increased numbers into the senior phase.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.