Summarised inspection findings

Caldervale High School

North Lanarkshire Council

26 March 2024

Key contextual information

School Name: Caldervale High School
Council: North Lanarkshire
SEED number: 8505632
Roll: 1050

Attendance is generally below the national average.

Exclusions are generally above the national average.

In September 2022, 21 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2022, 43 per cent of pupils lived in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2022, the school reported that 19 per cent of pupils had additional support needs. This figure was updated during the inspection to 35 per cent in November 2023.

The headteacher is supported by four substantive depute headteachers and one acting pupil equity funded depute headteacher post. The substantive headteacher led the initial part of the inspection process. An acting headteacher completed the inspection.

In 2022, 21 per cent of young people in S4 left school at the end of S4.

Pupil Equity Funding was £154,350 in 2022/23.

1.3 Leadership of change	weak

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

■ Senior leaders recognise that the current vision, values and aims, which were reviewed with stakeholders in 2018, do not have a high profile across the school. They do not provide the school community with a unifying sense of purpose and direction. Appropriately, senior leaders identify aspiration and inclusion as themes requiring strengthening. Senior leaders should continue with plans to review the vision, values and aims to ensure they better reflect the current school context.

■ Senior leaders recognise that the pace of change across the school has not been fast enough in recent years. They identify accurately factors which have impacted on the pace of change. These include the pandemic, staffing challenges, including changes in senior leadership and a reduction in learners' attendance following the pandemic. Senior leaders should now work with staff, young people, parents and partners to significantly increase the pace of change to drive much needed improvements.

■ There is a significant need to improve strategic leadership across the school. Senior leaders spend too much time focused on operational activities at the expense of clear and effective strategic leadership and direction. A few principal teachers provide effective leadership to their departments. All middle leaders need to play a stronger role in the leadership of improvement.

■ Senior leaders are supporting the pupil support middle management team to develop approaches to monitor and track young people's wellbeing, attendance and engagement. These approaches are helping pupil support staff to identify and target young people for appropriate interventions, with early indications of positive impact for individuals. As planned, the pupil support team should now take responsibility for the full implementation of these new approaches. This will enable senior leaders to focus more on evaluating the success of these new approaches and determining whether further change is required.

■ Currently, senior leaders identify priorities and share improvement priorities with staff to seek their views. Departmental action plans align with the school improvement plan (SIP) and improvement priorities broadly reflect local and national priorities. Senior leaders recognise that departmental improvement plans need to be more robust with explicit actions and interventions to support improvement. Whilst these plans are clear about what improvements are sought, they do not provide sufficient detail about the specific actions or strategy to be undertaken to support change. It is also unclear from them how success will be measured over time. Senior and middle leaders are not yet able to clearly demonstrate fully which strategies are leading to improved outcomes for young people. Senior leaders should ensure the SIP has a sharper focus on improving outcomes for young people. They should develop rigorous approaches to reviewing and monitoring the SIP fully. A recently introduced staff SIP group should support the wider staff to contribute meaningfully to whole school improvement planning.

- Senior and middle leaders have implemented a clear quality assurance calendar. The calendar details events such as reviewing monitoring and tracking data, conducting lesson observations and supporting teachers to moderate young people's work. However, the quality assurance calendar is not being used systematically by all staff. Quality assurance is not robust enough to demonstrate how evidence informs improvement. Senior and middle leaders need to ensure robust quality assurance is conducted routinely across the school and is used to evaluate progress and inform next steps.

- Senior leaders meet with middle leaders to review the yearly Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) attainment results. Senior leaders should ensure that these meetings also support middle leaders to consider alternative courses and pathways to better meet the needs of all learners. A majority of middle leaders demonstrate increasing confidence in using data to inform their next steps in designing appropriate and challenging learning. Senior and middle leaders need to focus on developing the curriculum to provide appropriate pathways for all young people.

- A senior leader worked collaboratively with staff to develop the 'Caldervale Lesson'. This framework details the shared expectations in relation to high-quality learning and teaching. The work involved significant consultation with staff and young people and well-considered professional learning. The framework has supported some teachers to improve their practice, but it is not yet leading to consistently high-quality learner experiences across the school. A majority of teachers need to self-reflect and use feedback to improve their practice. Most staff would benefit from best practice from across the school being shared widely to support improvements.

- A majority of middle leaders and teachers seek young people's views on their learning informally and discuss this feedback with colleagues. Senior leaders use questionnaires to seek information on young people's experiences. However, only around half of young people feel that the school listens to their views. A minority of young people and parents feel that the school takes their views into account when making changes. Senior leaders should develop the role of young people and parents in self-evaluation and school improvement, including identifying priorities for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). The Parent Council is keen to be much more involved in school improvement and could help significantly increase parental involvement.

- Senior leaders encourage all staff to develop their leadership capacities. However, only a minority of staff have whole school responsibilities. A representative from each department participates in the Learning and Teaching Improvement Group. This is supporting the leadership of the learning and teaching framework. Teachers engage in professional review and development (PRD) processes and identify appropriate and helpful professional learning opportunities to inform their progress. Senior leaders should ensure PRD plans capture how all staff develop their leadership skills and what impact there is on improving outcomes for young people.

- A few young people adopt leadership roles supporting the work of the school. This includes the Pupil Parliament, and young people taking on ambassador roles in areas such as children's rights and equality, charity links and sport. Young people arrange events and support the 'Future Fridays' achievement initiative. A few young people are undertaking a sports leadership award and visit local primaries to deliver sports workshops for their peers. Staff should extend and promote these opportunities to all young people, particularly those in the broad general education (BGE). This should help to ensure that all young people have opportunities to develop their skills.

■ Senior leaders responsible for Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) meet with careers advisors from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) regularly. They put in place, track and monitor interventions for young people at risk of not achieving a positive post-school destination. Staff should establish stronger partnerships with employers to support more young people to develop important skills for learning, life and work. A few young people would benefit from increased support to identify and complete a work experience placement. This would help them to make more informed career choices for their future.

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, staff foster positive relationships with young people. Most young people are motivated and participate well in tasks and activities set by their teacher. In a few lessons, young people lead aspects of their learning, or the learning of others. This helps to develop young people's independent learning skills. At times, lessons are overly teacher-directed. This leads to all young people undertaking the same tasks and activities and learning at the same pace. In a minority of lessons, teachers lead too much of the learning which results in young people being too passive. There is scope to meet the needs of young people better by improving the pace and challenge of learning, particularly in the BGE. Teachers should continue to develop their use of creative and relevant contexts for learning. Senior and middle leaders should support teachers to share and embed good practice identified across the school.

■ A majority of teachers support young people successfully to make links between prior and current learning. In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning and in a majority of lessons this is linked appropriately to success criteria. In a majority of lessons, success criteria are too focused on the completion of tasks rather than on how young people demonstrate progress in their learning. Teachers should work with young people to co-create success criteria. This would help young people understand what successful learning looks like and support greater ownership of their learning. In a few lessons, teachers use starter activities effectively to focus young people on the topic being explored. They should make more effective use of plenaries at the end of a lesson to help young people understand and evaluate their progress.

■ In most lessons, teachers offer clear instructions and explanations. In most classes, teachers use questioning to routinely check understanding and recall of information. A minority of teachers use skilled questioning to support young people to think more deeply about their learning and to develop their higher order thinking skills. This practice needs to be shared more widely across the school. Digital learning is used by teachers in a few classes to support or enhance learning.

■ Senior leaders recognise the need to improve the quality of teaching as key to raising young people's attainment. They have prioritised this rightly in the school improvement plan. Teachers have recently focused on improving differentiation and being clearer about the purpose of learning. It is too early to assess the impact of the teaching and learning framework the 'Caldervale Lesson'. Senior leaders should consider how they measure its impact moving forward. Most teachers use a range of summative assessment approaches to measure young people's progress. They should now develop the regular use of formative assessment to gather information on young people's attainment in class. A few teachers use well-considered self and peer assessment activities to help young people recognise where they are in their learning.

- In the BGE, staff are becoming more confident using national Benchmarks to plan relevant assessment activities. Senior leaders have confirmed plans to further develop staff capacity in moderation practice to ensure higher levels of consistency and a holistic approach to planning assessment.

- In the senior phase, staff have designed assessments well to articulate with national course specifications. Staff have engaged in a range of professional learning focused on moderation of assessment processes. As a result, the validity of assessment outcomes is in the process of becoming more reliable. Within the senior phase, a high number of staff have assumed formal roles with the SQA. This has led to a stronger understanding of assessment requirements within certificate courses, which should help improve the attainment of young people.

- In most lessons, teachers use attainment data to inform conversations with young people that focus on the progress they are making. As a result, most young people are aware of the level at which they are learning. Most young people feel staff help them to understand how they are progressing. They welcome feedback they receive. A minority of young people can clearly articulate their strengths and areas for further development. A few teachers use techniques that support young people to reflect thoroughly on their learning through, for example, learning logs. Most teachers also suggest strategies for improvement within reports produced for parents. An important next step for leaders at all levels is to ensure that all young people know the next steps they need to take to secure further progress.

- In most departments, teachers use attainment data and information about learners' needs to plan learning. In most departments, teachers have implemented systems to monitor the progress of young people. The quality of these systems is robust in the senior phase but is too variable in the BGE. In departments such as English and mathematics, staff have planned learning at transition to the school following informative cross-sector dialogue. Transition staff provide flexible learning pathways for young people in literacy and numeracy in S1. They use developmentally appropriate pedagogy to address gaps in learning in literacy and numeracy for young people in S1.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ All young people follow the same curriculum in S1. In S2, young people choose an elective course alongside their core provision. The list of elective courses available is decided by teachers. There are no planned progression pathways from these choices into S3 options and beyond to the senior phase. Staff need to provide more flexible pathways through the BGE and beyond into the senior phase, to better meet the needs of learners.

■ Senior leaders are aware that learners do not receive all their entitlements across all stages of the curriculum. Young people do not receive their entitlement to 1 + 2 modern languages in the BGE. Young people receive high-quality physical education until S5, but not in S6. Young people receive their entitlement to religious and moral education (RME) from S1 to S4. Young people in S5 and S6 do not receive this entitlement.

■ In S3, learners make choices within all curriculum areas. In S3 there is a partnership with New North Lanarkshire College in the areas of construction, automotive and childcare. The latter are delivered in school by college staff. These pathways continue to the end of S4 and articulate with the post-school college offer. While all learners can access these vocational pathways, they are not widely promoted and young people are not all aware of them.

■ In the senior phase, young people choose between a wide range of National, Higher and Advanced Higher options. This has been expanded to include Highers in politics and sociology and National Progression Awards in film, travel and tourism and the very popular criminology. Senior leaders do not have a clear vision for the strategic leadership of curriculum and employability in their provision of pathways through the senior phase. Senior leaders should make clearer the links between labour market intelligence, employability and the planning of curricular pathways.

■ There are no enrolments for Foundation Apprenticeships for this academic year of 2023-24. The school acknowledges the need to further develop its relationships with the local college to increase the number of pupils undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships.

■ English and mathematics staff use information from primary to secondary transition to ensure continuity of learning. As a result, transition pathways for young people are well planned. Staff use formative assessment to ensure that next steps in learning result in further progress. This is the first year of a transition project and the transition teacher has worked in partnership with the principal teachers in English and mathematics to ensure clear progression routes into the core provision in S2 and S3. There are early indications of success in the improved attainment of a few young people.

■ The school library is used regularly and senior pupils benefit from the leadership opportunities in managing the lending of books to their peers. Young people's wellbeing is supported effectively in the library during lunchtimes by staff and a few young people in the senior phase.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ Most parents feel staff treat their child fairly and with respect. A majority of parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions or if they have an issue that needs resolved.

■ Senior leaders and staff have recently improved how they communicate with parents, including through a regular newsletter. A few parents highlight that they find it difficult to speak to appropriate staff members, and that they do not receive feedback following an incident or issue. They also do not always feel well informed about their child's homework and find it challenging to support young people to meet deadlines. Senior leaders should work with parents to develop and embed an effective communication strategy.

■ The Parent Council is very keen to significantly increase parental involvement in school improvement. Senior leaders now need to improve their collaborative working with the Parent Council and define clearly how this group can better contribute to the school.

2.1 Safeguarding

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

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	weak

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

■ The wellbeing of most young people is supported across the school through positive relationships with staff and with most other young people. A majority of young people feel safe in school. Most young people feel they have a trusted adult that they can speak to if they require support. However, a significant minority of young people feel that their interactions with their peers are not always based on mutual respect and as a result they don't always feel safe in school.

■ Principal Teachers of Pupil Support (PTPS) use the wellbeing indicators to provide young people with opportunities to reflect on their wellbeing. They use information gathered to identify young people requiring additional support with their wellbeing. Most young people do not demonstrate a strong understanding of the wellbeing indicators, or the relevance of wellbeing to their lives. Principal Teachers of Pupil Support should now raise the profile of the wellbeing indicators across the school. They do not yet use them to track and monitor young people's progress consistently. They should support all staff to develop their individual and collective responsibility to promote and support the wellbeing of all young people across the school.

■ Most young people talk knowledgeably about the importance of living healthy and active lives. A few young people in S6 are trained mental health ambassadors. Positively, they support their peers during personal and social education (PSE) by focusing on strategies to promote positive mental health. These young people work to try to reduce any stigma associated with mental health. This focus on mental health is helping a few young people to recognise more clearly habits and behaviour which impact on their mental wellbeing.

■ Staff are developing their understanding of statutory duties in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Whilst all care-experienced young people are considered for a coordinated support plan, staff should improve how this is recorded. Support for learning staff should develop their understanding and use of young carers' statements to help young people share information more easily about their caring roles and support needs. This will help to ensure young people feel respected and included in school.

■ Support for learning staff have ensured all young people with an additional support need now have plans in place. Staff use a local authority planning process to support the assessment of the additional support needs of young people. These documents capture the views of young people and parents and are used at points of review to reflect on young people's progress and next steps. Whilst these processes are helpful, the quality of the plans is variable. Staff should ensure they use the plans to capture fully young people's strengths and development needs, using all the wellbeing indicators to support their assessment. Young people would benefit from more specific and relevant targets. Principal teachers of support for learning should ensure all

staff use information about young people's progress in their targets to inform planning for learning and support.

■ The pupil support team offers a range of targeted interventions to young people requiring support with their wellbeing. These focus on developing young people's confidence and resilience, social skills and engagement. The progress of targeted young people is reviewed during regular 'assessment of need' or 'team around the child' meetings. Pupil support staff do not identify clearly at the outset what outcomes are sought from the young person's involvement in an intervention. This information should be used to measure young people's progress and to evaluate interventions fully. Staff work effectively with partners to support young people with barriers to learning. Partnership working helps young people feel supported effectively to participate more fully in school.

■ Staff have developed an enhanced and helpful transition for young people requiring additional support in moving from primary to secondary school. The programme helps these young people to get to know staff and it develops their sense of belonging to the school.

■ A few young people adopt ambassador roles in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. The equality group helped the school to achieve the Rights Respecting School silver award. Group members are now working towards gold. Whilst this work is positive, children's rights are not well understood across the school and are not being used effectively to support all young people's sense of participation or belonging. Senior and middle leaders should increase opportunities for more young people to lead on aspects of wellbeing, inclusion and equality. This will help young people learn from each other and develop their leadership skills and sense of responsibility.

■ Senior leaders appropriately identify improving attendance and reducing exclusions as a priority area for improvement. Currently attendance levels are too low. Senior leaders and the PTPS monitor and track attendance data rigorously and use this data to identify young people requiring support. They are developing a clearer understanding of the factors impacting on young people's attendance and engagement with school. For example, young people with poor mental health or those who require adaptations to their curriculum. A few young people in the BGE belong to an attendance group, which aims to remove individual barriers which limit the attendance of these young people. Home school partnership workers offer impactful support to young people and families. As a result, the PTPS can demonstrate improvements for individual young people which are beginning to impact positively on the overall attendance trends. The number of young people being excluded from school has dropped in recent years, although remains too high. The PTPS should continue to prioritise continued improvements in the overall school attendance and exclusion rates.

■ Young people are not able to demonstrate a well-developed understanding of the importance of celebrating diversity and difference, and challenging discrimination. Staff should work with them to improve the PSE programme to explore issues related to equalities, the protected characteristics, and ethnicity, sexual orientation and stereotypes. The impact of the behaviour of a few young people means that, at times, other young people feel that they are not sufficiently recognised by their peers as belonging to the school community. Young people across the school would like to contribute to a review of PSE to ensure topics are consistently relevant to their needs and offer them progression and depth in their learning.

■ 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 young people through food in school. Several areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory

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

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- In September 2022, the school reported that 19.4% (213) of pupils had additional support needs. However, senior leaders highlighted that there are approximately 150 young people with an additional support need who were not entered correctly on the school's management information system. Therefore, the correct school percentage for this session is approximately 35% of young people requiring additional support.

BGE

- In 2021/22 and 2022/23 almost all young people achieved Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level or better in literacy by the end of S3. Most achieved CfE third level or better in numeracy by the end of S3. A majority achieved CfE fourth level in reading and writing, with most achieving CfE fourth level in listening and talking in 2022/23 by the end of S3. A majority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in numeracy in 2021/22 and 2022/23 by the end of S3.

Leavers

- Most young people leaving school achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy between 2017/18 and 2021/22. This was significantly higher than the virtual comparator (VC) in 2018/19 and 2019/20. Around half of young people leaving school have achieved SCQF level 6 in literacy over the last five years. This is in line with the VC.

- Almost all young people with additional support needs who left school in 2020/21 and 2021/22 achieved SCQF level 4 or better in literacy. A majority of young people with additional support needs leaving school achieved SCQF level 5 or better from 2017/18 to 2020/21, improving to most in 2021/22.

- The school has significantly improved attainment at SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy for young people who leave school, with most young people attaining at this level. This is significantly much higher than the VC in the last two years. From 2017/18 to 2021/22, less than half of young people leaving school achieved a course award at SCQF level 5 or better. There is a notable difference between the success young people have in achieving numeracy through units in comparison with the percentage who achieve this through a course award. A minority of young people leaving school from 2017/18 to 2021/22 achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy, in line with the VC.

- Almost all young people with additional support needs leaving school in 2021/22 achieved SCQF level 4 or better in numeracy, with most achieving SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy in

that year. This shows a steady improvement at SCQF level 5 in numeracy for young people with additional needs leaving since 2018/19.

Cohorts

Literacy
- At S4, most achieve SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in line with the VC, with the exception of 2022/23, when almost all young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. This is significantly much higher than the VC in 2022/23. By S5, based on the S5 roll, most young people achieved literacy at SCQF level 5 or better in 2021/22 and 2022/23, generally in line with the VC. A majority of young people by S5 achieved literacy at SCQF level 6 or better in 2021/22 and 2022/23. This is significantly above the VC in 2021/22 and significantly below the VC in 2022/23. By S6, based on the S6 roll, most young people achieve literacy at SCQF level 6 or better, in line with the VC.

- In S4, the percentage of young people achieving a grade A to C at National 5 in English was significantly lower than the national figure in 2022/23.

Numeracy
- At S4, the majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better from 2018/19 to 2022/23. This is significantly much higher than the VC in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and significantly higher than the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. A minority of young people achieved numeracy as a course award at SCQF level 5 or better at S4. By S5, based on the S5 roll, most young people attained numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better from 2020/21 to 2022/23, significantly much higher than the VC in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and significantly higher than the VC in 2022/23. A minority achieved SCQF level 6 from 2018/19 to 2022/23. This is significantly lower than the VC in 2022/23. By S6 based on the S6 roll, a minority of young people achieve SCQF level 6 in line with the VC.

- In S4, the percentage of young people achieving a grade A to C at National 5 in both applications of mathematics and mathematics was significantly lower than the national figure in 2022/23. By S5 and S6, the percentage of young people achieving a grade A to C at National 5 in applications of mathematics was significantly lower than the national figure and in line with the national figure in mathematics in 2022/23. By S5 and S6, the percentage of young people achieving grade A-C at Higher level in mathematics was significantly lower than the national figure in 2022/ 23.

Attainment over time

BGE
- At present, senior and middle leaders are unable to demonstrate reliably improvements in attainment over time in the BGE. Senior leaders have developed an overview of how young people are attaining in S1 to S3 across all curricular areas. At present, teachers do not have a sufficient understanding of young people's attainment outcomes in terms of CfE in the BGE to ensure appropriate progress is being made across all curricular areas. They should continue with plans to ensure that staff are secure in their professional judgment of a level across all curricular areas.

Senior phase
- Senior leaders and staff have had a particular focus on increasing presentation levels in the senior phase, particularly in numeracy and literacy. The impact of this can be seen in the increased numbers achieving SCQF level 5 or better in literacy and numeracy. In future it will be important for teachers to maintain a focus on the number and quality of passes across the senior phase in course awards in National Qualifications, as well as on success in units.

- Effective tracking and monitoring in the senior phase is supporting staff to make targeted interventions for those not on track after prelims. It is also improving outcomes for a few young people through close working between class teachers, principal teachers and PTSPCs. A few young people are closely mentored through an intensive programme of intervention. At S4, staff have introduced a programme aimed at supporting young people at risk of not achieving any qualifications. This was successful for most of the young people involved in 2021/22 and almost all in 2022/23.

- Attainment of young people leaving school, using average complementary tariff points, has remained fairly constant, in line with the VC from 2017/18 to 2021/22. Attainment for the lowest attaining 20% and middle 60% of young people leaving school is in line with the VC between 2018/19 and 2021/22. Attainment of the highest attaining 20% of young people is generally significantly lower than the VC.

- At S4, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% is generally in line with the VC from 2018/19 to 2022/23, using complementary tariff points. By S5, based on the S5 roll, the attainment of the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% of young people is in line with the VC, with the exception of 2022/23, where attainment is significantly much lower or lower than the VC. By S6, based on the S6 roll, attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people is in line with the VC from 2018/19 to 2022/23. The attainment of the middle 60% is in line with the VC, with the exception of 2022/23 which is significantly lower than the VC. The attainment of the highest 20% is significantly below the VC from 2019/20 to 2022/23.

Breadth and depth
- At S4, a minority achieve five or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better. This is generally in line with the VC. A minority of young people achieve one or more to four or more awards at SCQF level 5A or better. This was significantly lower than the VC in 2022/23.

- By S5, attainment at SCQF level 5C or better and SCQF level 6C or better shows a decline in recent years with the school performing significantly much lower than the VC in 2022/23. The majority of young people achieved two or more awards at SCQF level 5A or better in 2022/23. This is significantly lower than the VC. A minority of young people achieved two awards at SCQF level 6A in 2022/23. This is significantly lower than the VC, having previously been in line from 2018/19 to 2021/22.

- By S6, the school has maintained levels of attainment at SCQF level 6C or better over the last five years, in line with the VC. A minority of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 7C or better, in line with the VC. A few young people attain at SCQF level 7A, lower than the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Overall quality of learners' achievement
- Young people take part in a few wider achievements. These include sporting activities on "Future Fridays" and through a variety of sports teams. The school show also enables young people to develop a range of skills related to drama, music and dance. Young people represent the school in a variety of contexts, including at sports events, and festive activities in the local primary schools. Young people are encouraged to engage in activities beyond the school day,

and many attend a local youth club facilitated by the local church. These experiences support young people to develop a range of skills and attributes including confidence, communication, teamwork and problem solving. Senior leaders and staff should now develop a system to track the skills that young people are developing through their wider achievements.

■ Staff are beginning to track the participation of young people in clubs and committees within school. Senior leaders and staff should develop a systematic approach to gathering information about the activities young people participate in during their time out of school.

Equity for all learners

■ There are a number of interventions designed to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of a few young people that are having a positive impact. These young people have been identified through the use of standardised assessments. Specialist staff provide intensive programmes of support which are enabling young people in S1 to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. This is supporting them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. This is enabling them to access the curriculum more fully. There is a focus for young people on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, including gaps in knowledge and understanding. Young people in S1 are more confident about engaging in their learning with their peers as a result.

■ When compared using average complementary tariff points, young people leaving school in 2021/22 who reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles two to nine attain broadly in line with young people living in the same deciles across Scotland. Attainment in decile one has been improving in recent years but is significantly lower than national for young people residing in decile one in 2021/22.

■ Senior leaders are aware of the need to continue with the positive steps they have taken to raise attainment. Further work to monitor different groups of young people, including those entitled to free school meals will support this. It is important to clearly show the impact of planned interventions in closing any gaps in attainment and indicate where accelerated progress is being achieved.

■ Most young people have achieved a positive destination. However, this is significantly much lower that the VC in 2021/22.

Quality of provision of Special Unit

Context

The Language and Communication Support Centre (LCSC) makes provision for young people who have language and communication difficulties. All of the young people who are allocated a place in the centre have specific communication needs. The most recent intake is initially spending the majority of their time in the LCSC, but increasing amounts of time in subject classes is planned. A team of specialist teachers, additional support needs assistants and external agencies support young people in the LCSC and across their subject classes.

Leadership of change

- Staff have a shared vision across the LCSC to meet the varying needs of young people. They aim to provide the highest possible standards for learners and increase their inclusion in mainstream classes.

- The LCSC principal teachers provide the centre with strong leadership, supported by senior leaders. They model good practice across the centre and get directly involved with young people to help meet their needs as appropriate. LCSC staff have a clear understanding of the context and needs of each learner. They build very good relationships with families.

- Staff in the LCSC engage in regular consultation with stakeholders through questionnaires including pupils, parents and additional support needs assistants. These are used to review and improve aspects of LCSC work such as primary-secondary liaison and planning for post-school transition.

- Staff feel that they have a range of opportunities to be involved in the work of the department and to take up leadership roles. They share their views through keyworker meetings, departmental meetings or directly to principal teachers.

- Risk is appropriately assessed for each young person and taken into consideration through planning, including curriculum, fire arrangements, etc. Professional dialogue is built into the timetable through keyworker meetings and departmental meetings.

- Language and Communication Support Centre staff work together, led by the principal teachers, to agree an annual departmental improvement plan. This reflects the school's priorities as well as those of the LCSC. In recent years this has included improving learning and teaching, raising attainment and improving attendance. Each improvement plan is evaluated regularly by staff at keyworkers' meetings and departmental meetings. Principal teachers also regularly seek the views of others to improve provision including young people, parents and additional support needs assistants. A pupil-friendly version of the improvement plan has also been produced, featuring the use of communication symbols. The centre should consider how best to involve young people developing a pupil-friendly version of the next improvement plan and investigate sharing it more widely with parents, carers and partners.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- The school is developing its approach to young people's rights. These are an important part of the work of LCSC. Young people are enthusiastic learners and are very motivated by the lessons from LCSC teachers. They are very skilled with digital technology and enjoy putting these abilities to good use in the classroom. They generally understand the purpose of their learning and respond positively to learning activities. Young people from the LCSC are increasingly confident when volunteering for leadership roles across the school including mental health ambassadors, library monitors and running lunchtime clubs.

■ Teachers are skilled practitioners who are well aware of the needs in their classes and plan carefully to meet them. Teaching in LCSC is creative and well differentiated. Senior leaders should consider how best to share this effective practice across the remainder of the school.

■ Teachers in the rest of the school are kept updated about the needs of young people in their classes by LCSC staff, including keyworkers, and through the online targeted support spreadsheet. LCSC staff have a range of interventions available to them and these are evaluated for effectiveness on an ongoing basis, including at weekly keyworker meetings. LCSC staff assess effectively the progress of young people in a number of ways, principally through observation. The targets in each young person's Getting It Right For Me (GIRFMe) Plan are also tracked and evaluated by keyworkers on a regular basis. LCSC staff have regular cluster meetings with colleagues in similar provisions across the authority. This enables them to moderate their assessment approaches and interventions with each other. Staff encourage young people to self-assess their work at the end of lessons, choosing whether or not they need help, are making progress or completely understand what was being taught. LCSC staff also negotiate and provide special arrangements for young people when undertaking subject assessments.

■ Progress is evaluated for young people through progress against their GIRFMe plan targets. It is also discussed at weekly keyworker meetings. Attainment information is available across all subject areas in which a young person is involved and this is reported to parents by the mainstream teachers.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion
■ Ensuring the wellbeing of young people is central to the work of the LCSC. Staff work to improve outcomes for young people, developing very positive relationships with them and their families. They ensure that young people feel safe, nurtured, respected and included, providing several study bases for those who need to take some time out from particular classes. To ensure inclusion, LCSC staff then work with young people to address the problems they are having.

■ Staff are aware of the relevant statutory requirements and duties related to their area of work and comply with these to improve outcomes for young people.

■ The work of LCSC staff is focused on preparing young people for life beyond school and helping them to develop the appropriate skills to be a fully included member of the community. They understand the needs of each young person and how best to meet them. They can also help young people to better understand what their own diagnosis means for them.

■ LCSC staff run regular sessions for subject staff so that they understand the needs of young people and how best to meet them. They can observe the impact of these sessions through the change in practice in the classroom. Keyworkers discuss the progress of individual young people with their mainstream teachers and record this in their notes.

Raising attainment and achievement

- Young people in LCSC are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy.

- LCSC staff have a very good understanding of the needs of young people. They are confident in making well-informed judgements about how well young people are progressing in their learning. They plan well for points of transition and help to prepare young people for them. They have a wide range of information available to them about young people's progress over time, including subject assessments and attainment, GIRFMe plans and targets, keyworker notes and pastoral notes.

- Attainment in the senior phase has been inconsistent in recent years, due in part to the successive cohorts of young people who have had increasingly complex needs. In 2020, 24 young people attained 15 Highers, 14 awards at National 5, 30 awards at National 4 and 3 awards at National 3. In 2021, 23 young people attained 1 Advanced Higher, 18 Highers, 17 awards at National 5 and 33 awards at National 4. In 2022, 10 young people attained 2 Highers, 14 awards at National 4 and 1 award at National 3. In 2023, 13 young people attained 19 awards at National 5, 61 awards at National 4 and 13 awards at National 3. Overall, young people are now attaining a greater number of awards across a wider range of courses, but at a lower level than previously.

- Young people are achieving well and the LCSC has introduced new opportunities for them to develop their social skills. These include "Earn Your Stripes" from the Scottish Badger Society, and Pony Therapy, which can lead to a Dynamic Youth Award. One of the partner agencies, Enable Scotland, offers Saltire Awards for services to the community, such as litter picking. Young people can also develop valuable skills through involvement in whole-school activities such as primary liaison, library work and gaining retail experience. Younger people are engaged in experiments in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) to find practical solutions to design problems. They will then have the opportunity to apply for Young STEM Leader certification.

- Staff work hard to engage young people who are having difficulty attending school. They explore options with a range of providers and agencies to help the young person to re-engage with education, training or work experience.

- In recent years, almost all young people from the LCSC have moved on to positive destinations.

Other information

- Most young people from the LCSC who attend mainstream classes follow the same curriculum as their peers, with slight modifications such as increased scaffolding of responses. However, the LCSC staff are aware that the profile of younger pupils is likely to lead to the need for revised curriculum pathways in the future. This issue should be discussed with subject staff as soon as possible to give appropriate notice for these pathways and courses to be developed.

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.