

# Summarised inspection findings

**Robert Gordon's College**

Independent

7 May 2024

## Key contextual information

Robert Gordon's College (RGC) is a co-educational independent day school situated in Aberdeen city centre. The college has a nursery, junior school and senior school. At the time of the inspection, there were 64 children enrolled in the nursery, 391 children at the junior stages, and 1064 young people in the senior school.

The Head of College was appointed in August 2020. The Head of Junior School took up post immediately prior to the inspection in February 2024. The College Executive Group consists of the Head of College, Director of Finance, Head of Junior School and Head of Senior School. There are two deputy headteachers in the junior school and three deputy headteachers in the senior school.

The nursery has a long-standing partnership with Aberdeen City Council to deliver 1140 hours of early learning and childcare. The nursery is open 48 weeks per year which helps to meet the needs of families.

The school has historical links with Robert Gordon's University and Aberdeen Art Gallery that children and young people still benefit from today.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

very good

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

- Robert Gordon's College (RGC) was founded in 1750 with the charitable mission to provide education, care and a sound foundation for life for boys from impoverished families. This ethos of philanthropy and service to others remains a strong feature of the RGC co-educational community today. The school's founding motto is still in use, adapted in modern terms, as 'be all you can be'. Teachers' high expectations for all children and young people underpin the daily work of all staff. Around 15% of young people receive full bursaries to attend senior school. Plans are in place to extend bursary places to children from P1 to P7 in the junior school next year.
- The school's established core values of community, curiosity, innovation, leadership and resilience are clearly understood by all. The sense of community is highly evident across the life of the school, and in daily interactions between staff, children and young people. The Head of College has plans in place to revisit the core values with the whole school community to ensure these are still relevant to current cohorts of learners.
- The Head of College provides astute and very well-judged leadership and direction for the school community. He is very well supported by the highly skilled and experienced team of promoted staff across the junior and senior schools. They have a shared, ambitious vision to transform the curriculum offer at RGC, making the most of the 3 to 18 context of the school. As

a result, staff are working collaboratively to plan and deliver coherent curricular programmes from nursery to the senior stages. They have a clear aim to build on children and young people's prior learning as they move through the school. Parents appreciate that senior leaders keep them well informed about this change process and the resulting benefits for children and young people.

- Senior leaders have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school and have identified key areas for further development. The priorities within the college improvement plan include continuing to implement an electronic management system that tracks learners' progress in learning and any wellbeing concerns. This has the potential to help senior leaders and staff to use the data and information they gather on individuals and groups of learners increasingly effectively.
- Senior leaders and middle leaders, such as heads of department and depute heads in the junior school, carry out a range of quality assurance activities across the year. For example, they check on standards of attainment and the quality of teachers' planning. In the junior school, depute heads meet weekly with teachers at each stage to discuss children's progress and learning. In the senior school, heads of department have responsibility for evaluating the work of subject teachers to identify what is working well and areas to develop. Young people contribute well to this self-evaluation process, offering their views and ideas on aspects of provision. Senior leaders should proceed, as planned, to sample, moderate and share best practice in the use of self-evaluation for improvement across the whole school team. There is scope to involve more children and young people in helping to evaluate the quality of their learning experiences.
- Arrangements for the governance of the school are robust. In recent years, the constitution of the Board of Governors (Board) has been refreshed and extended to include more diversity and expertise within the Board. Sub-committees and groups provide oversight of specific areas, such as finance, education, health, safety and security, and safeguarding. Governors provide a very well-judged blend of strategic guidance and practical advice for school leaders. There is a strong ethos of mutual respect between governors and school staff, which helps the school to improve continuously. The finance officer provides valuable assistance to the Board. Governors have established a clear, long-term vision for the future of the school. They have taken forward a thorough programme of workforce planning to ensure financial security, whilst expanding the curricular offer for children and young people. Governors take a keen interest in the day-to-day experiences of children, young people and staff. For example, governors conduct learning walks and meet focus groups of staff and learners to hear their views and opinions. As a result, governors provide strategic advice and guidance for improvement based on an informed insight into school life.
- The Head of College has a strong, collaborative approach to leadership and school improvement. He encourages all staff to take on areas of responsibility and to develop their own leadership skills and professional knowledge. Senior leaders facilitate a very supportive working environment in which staff share their expertise and skills. Promoted staff and teachers undertake training, research, enquiry projects and additional qualifications to enhance their own skills and professional knowledge. Staff willingly volunteer to take on leadership responsibilities and participate in working groups to design bespoke 'professional learning pathways' that are highly relevant to the context of the school. The head of senior school has undertaken significant work to link these pathways to professional review and development, aligned closely to the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards, including for middle leadership. This enables all staff to reflect regularly on their practice, and to recognise their own strengths and areas for development. This reinvigorated approach to tailored professional learning is supporting staff to lead change successfully.

- Across the junior and secondary stages, children and young people are provided with meaningful and relevant opportunities to help aspects of their school experiences to continue to improve. This includes in their roles as prefects, house captains, ambassadors and mentors, and in their engagement in a variety of pupil councils and committees. Most learners across the school are very positive about the difference they make. For example, children in the junior school are very pleased about the range of lunchtime and after-school clubs they helped to create. In the senior school, young people are very proud of their role in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. They feel there is a highly successful whole-school approach to challenging discrimination, and importantly, to celebrating difference. Young people say that they have ownership of this work. They feel strongly that their ideas, opinions and leadership are key to the direction and success of this initiative.
  
- In the senior school, staff use annual surveys to gather data relating to young people's experiences at RGC. Senior leaders seek learners' views on aspects of health and wellbeing, for example through committees and pupil councils, to inform improvements. Senior leaders recognise the need to continue to develop approaches to communicating the results of consultations with young people. This includes highlighting the findings and actions taken. This will help to ensure all young people feel that their views count and are acted on by staff. Well-planned and responsive assemblies reinforce the school values and promote an ethos of respect across the school community. These are often led by or include positive inputs from children and young people.

## 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

### Junior school

- Children across the junior school experience very positive relationships with adults and their peers. All staff have very high expectations of what children can achieve. They have a sharp focus on ensuring all children achieve the school motto 'be all you can be'. Almost all children demonstrate the school values in their learning and participation in activities beyond the classroom.
- Overall, children in the junior school experience learning that is very well-matched to their needs and abilities. Almost all children settle quickly to tasks and engage well in their learning. They work effectively in pairs and groups and encourage and support each other well. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to provide appropriate and timely support to children who require additional help with their learning. This includes providing children with extra time to complete tasks and one-to-one support within the classroom. Children across the school would benefit from increased opportunities to engage in learning that promotes their curiosity and creativity. Teachers should work together to share effective practice and agree the features of innovative approaches to learning across the junior school.
- Children in the junior school are respected members of the wider RGC community. They participate in an extensive range of co-curricular activities and work regularly with teachers from the senior school. They represent RGC at a wide range of sporting, cultural and community events. As children move through the junior school, they articulate confidently how these many opportunities enrich their learning. Staff make very effective use of the range of learning spaces, such as the drama studio, swimming pool, music rooms, Countesswells sports facilities and library. Children's experiences are enriched through high-quality learning and the wide range of opportunities to apply their learning. Children at all stages participate in sporting events, school shows and musical performances. Teachers create attractive displays across the school to showcase children's learning and progress. Children are very proud of their school and their individual and collective successes.
- All teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Almost all children understand the purpose of their learning and the steps they need to take to be successful. Almost all teachers are highly skilled at using questioning to deepen and extend children's thinking. This supports children very well to articulate confidently their thinking, ideas and opinions. Almost all teachers make very well-considered use of digital technology to enhance children's learning. They use interactive boards to structure lessons and show video clips. They use visualisers to share children's work. Children use tablet computers ably to create texts, access online resources and create videos to share their learning. Children are developing strong digital literacy skills across the curriculum.

- Across the junior school, teachers provide children with helpful verbal feedback on their learning. In a few classes, teachers give children written feedback that highlights what children are doing well and what they need to do to improve. This is particularly effective in writing lessons where teachers provide clear feedback linked directly to the success criteria. A next step is for teachers to work together to share effective practice and agree a more consistent approach to feedback across all classes and all curricular areas.
- Teachers use a range of summative assessments throughout the year to check children's progress. They make very effective use of assessment information to plan next steps in learning and support for children who may require help to stay on track. Senior leaders facilitate learning and teaching meetings with staff at each stage every week. Staff share detailed information about children's wellbeing, learning, progress and next steps at these meetings. This very regular discussion and moderation with colleagues ensures that all teachers make accurate judgements about children's attainment and progress.
- Teachers use whole school programmes of study to inform their planning across the curriculum. This ensures all children experience a breadth of learning. Senior leaders prioritise time each week for teachers to plan with stage partners. Teachers use these weekly planning sessions to share ideas and approaches and to ensure they have shared, high expectations of what children can achieve. This collaborative approach to planning leads to consistently high-quality learning experiences across the junior school. Almost all teachers are highly responsive to the needs of children and adapt planned learning to ensure the pace of learning is right for all learners. Across the junior school, children are ready to take a greater role in planning their own learning.

## Senior school

- Young people learn in a highly supportive environment, underpinned by positive and nurturing relationships. Staff encourage young people to develop a strong sense of community by promoting high expectations of behaviour. Young people respond very positively to these expectations, and standards of behaviour across the school and shared spaces is high. Overall, young people speak very positively about the whole-school policy that does not permit mobile phone use at any time during the school day. They report that this change has improved their concentration levels in lessons and has helped them to develop better socialisation and communication skills. Heads of department ensure that young people have a significant voice in improving their learning experiences in all subject areas.
- Young people are confident to seek help and they receive extensive support from caring staff who know them very well. In a majority of lessons, young people have regular opportunities to work collaboratively, and they support each other thoughtfully. All young people benefit from a range of quality facilities in the school, as well as high-quality outdoor learning.
- Young people use digital devices regularly to enhance and deepen their learning. They learn through an impressive range of useful applications, well-developed online tasks and research activities, as well as accessing additional support materials when required. Staff use a well-established digital platform to share their teaching resources with young people. Learners value these materials being readily available to support their learning and revision outwith class.
- Young people are highly motivated by enthusiastic, knowledgeable and passionate teachers. Almost all teachers deliver well-organised lessons through a variety of carefully considered approaches and activities. These include starter tasks to engage young people quickly in their learning. Teachers share the purpose of learning appropriately in most lessons. In the majority of lessons, teachers use plenaries well to help young people reflect on their learning. Teachers

should develop approaches to ensure these plenaries are more closely aligned to focused success criteria. There is scope for teachers to now offer young people more independence, ownership and choice within lessons. Staff use questioning consistently well to check for understanding and to help young people recall prior learning. In a few highly-effective examples, teachers use questioning very skilfully to develop learners' higher-order thinking skills.

- Young people benefit from regular and helpful learning conversations with staff, particularly in the senior phase. They receive high-quality verbal and written feedback which helps them to understand their next steps. Young people in S1 and S2 need more support to be able to understand better their individual next steps in all curricular areas.
- Staff use a range of well-planned summative assessments to measure young people's progress effectively. All staff use assessment information constructively to discuss the progress of individual learners. Promoted staff use assessment data very well to inform interventions, such as individual support for learners. Young people in most classes use assessment feedback positively to set personal targets for improvement. Staff should continue with plans to use a greater range of formative assessment to inform their planning processes.
- All staff are involved in moderation processes within school to improve the validity and reliability of judgements of young people's progress and attainment. Positively, teachers in all senior school subject departments are moderating the P6-S2 curriculum with colleagues in the junior school. This is resulting in stronger course planning processes, as well as cross-sector collaborative working. Staff maintain strong links with other schools locally and nationally. High numbers of teachers have roles as Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) markers. This increases staff confidence further in applying professional judgements. As a result, young people in the senior phase are very well prepared to be successful in examinations.
- Teachers in all subject areas have well-established systems in place to track and profile young people's progress. They use this information very effectively to support young people's progress in learning. Senior leaders have recently introduced a new system to gather a whole-school overview of young people's progress. Senior leaders and key staff use this data astutely to ensure young people receive the appropriate support to attain well. Staff also use this information to learn from other schools and improve learners' experiences. Staff should continue, as planned, to align this development with the whole-school approach to profiling and target-setting. This will support young people to track their own progress more consistently across all subjects.
- Teachers engage in a range of appropriate and impactful professional learning that develops their knowledge and skills in meeting learners' needs. A significant number of staff are undertaking professional learning about neurodiversity to support all learners better. Support for learning teachers (SfLTs) share helpful information with staff about children and young people with additional support needs. This includes appropriate strategies to help children and young people learn. SfLTs work successfully to identify children and young people requiring assessment for a support need. In the junior school, SfLTs identify specific and relevant targets for children, with very clear measures of success. This helps staff to assess the impact of interventions they provide for individual children. Across the school, SfLTs should continue to improve how the views of learners and their parents are sought and recorded during reviews.

## 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, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Inspectors have identified both good practice and a few minor areas for further development in child protection and safeguarding procedures.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

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

- Children and young people benefit from a nurturing and inclusive ethos across the school. Staff recognise fully their role in supporting the wellbeing of all learners. They have positive and mutually respectful relationships with children and young people across the school. Staff know learners very well as individuals and use this knowledge to inform approaches to universal and targeted support. As a result, most children and young people feel safe and recognise they have a trusted adult they can speak to when worried or upset.
- In the junior school, senior leaders and teachers skilfully use the wellbeing indicators during assemblies and learning. They use daily emotional check-ins to identify where children may need support. In the senior school, Heads of Guidance (HoGs) use wellbeing wheels and pupil conference meetings to explore young people's wellbeing and progress in learning. As a result, children and young people speak confidently about what it means to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.
- Children and young people make the most of the extensive range of sports and physical activities which helps them to live healthy and active lives. They benefit from high-quality physical education, including training by specialist coaches. Children and young people speak enthusiastically about their high levels of achievement and success in team and individual sports. They demonstrate sound knowledge of the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise.
- Children and young people access highly relevant learning in health and wellbeing. The health and wellbeing curriculum is meaningful and helps children and young people to develop important skills, such as resilience and teamwork. Senior leaders offer parental information events to ensure parents can support children's learning in health and wellbeing. These events are very well attended by families. In the senior phase, young people value their learning in personal and social education (PSE) which reflects issues relevant to the school community. They particularly enjoy informative presentations by guest speakers on a range of topics. Young people could play a greater role in the planning and evaluation of the PSE programme. This will help to ensure all learning in this area continues to be relevant and progressive.
- Staff understand very well their statutory responsibilities in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Staff meet their obligations to child protection and safeguarding. The school's approaches align well with legislation and national codes of practice, such as Getting it right for every child. This is helping children and young people feel respected and safe.
- Children and young people experiencing barriers to their wellbeing are supported very effectively. Support for learning staff have strong approaches to tracking and reviewing those needing support. This helps staff put in place timely interventions for individual learners. As a

result, all learners who require additional support make very good progress in their learning. Support staff respond very well to the social and emotional needs of children and young people. For example, in the senior school, the school counsellor and nurses in the wellbeing centre actively promote strategies for positive mental health issues. This helps young people to feel confident in sources of help they can access should they need this. HsoG should continue to develop their use of the wellbeing indicators to evaluate fully a young person's strengths, as well as development needs when planning targeted interventions. This will help them to identify the outcomes sought and better measure success.

- A key strength of RGC is staff's well-developed and highly successful approaches to promoting equality and diversity. The Head of College has a determined focus on ensuring all children and young people feel respected and part of the school community. He is proactive and responsive to situations which may impact on learners' feelings of inclusion. The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) liaison group, consists of children and young people, former pupils, parents, staff and stakeholders. They add significant value to the review of school policies and practices. They successfully promote and celebrate the highly effective approaches to inclusion, particularly for those members of the school community with protected characteristics. As a result, RGC is a highly inclusive school where individuals are supported to feel confident and respected by all.
- Senior leaders and all staff are committed to ensuring all children and young people are treated equally and have the same opportunities to participate fully in school life. There are a range of events offered to support children and young people's learning about respect and diversity. These include Refugee Awareness Week and events relating to Black History Month. Staff and young people celebrated the cultural diversity of their school community during a very successful diversity day. Young people are now planning a diversity week to incorporate a range of events and speakers. As a result, children and young people are developing their ability to recognise and value difference, as well as to challenge discrimination. Staff are well-placed to continue to develop children and young people's understanding of children's rights and their relevance to their daily lives.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

excellent

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

### Junior School

- Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is outstanding. All children achieve highly across their learning, in line with national expectations. A significant minority of children across all stages of the junior school exceed expected standards. Teachers use Curriculum for Excellence guidance to plan learning, teaching and assessment. They track children's progress very well across all aspects of literacy and numeracy.

### Attainment in literacy

#### Listening and talking

- Across the junior school, children's listening and talking skills are developing particularly well. They are highly articulate and can apply their learning in a wide range of ways including school performances and co-curricular activities. Almost all children at early level listen well to others and share their own ideas and views with confidence. They enjoy listening to stories and ask interesting questions about texts. Almost all children at first level listen respectfully to their peers and adults. They engage well by maintaining eye contact and building on the ideas and opinions of others. By second level, almost all children contribute effectively to discussions and debates. They share their views and are skilled at asking their peers probing questions to deepen their understanding of differing opinions.

#### Reading

- Almost all children have a deep enjoyment of reading. They look forward to their regular visits to the school library. They choose books and talk confidently about the types of books they enjoy, and their favourite authors. They summarise texts very well when recommending them to others. Almost all children at early level hear single sounds and blends in words confidently. They use their knowledge of sounds and letter patterns exceptionally well to read new and unfamiliar words in their reading books and across their environment. They use puppets with expression to retell familiar stories. Almost all children at first level read fluently and with expression. They summarise texts and answer literal and inferential questions very well. Almost all children at second level make detailed notes of the main ideas of a text. They recognise a range of writers' techniques and the reasons they use them, such as rhetorical questions and emotive language.

#### Writing

- Across the junior school, standards of children's writing are of an exceptionally high quality. A significant number of children at each stage are working beyond national expectations. Children's presentation of written work is consistently of a very high standard. Almost all children at early level write one or more sentences independently. They use capital letters and full stops correctly and apply their strong knowledge of sounds to spell tricky words. Almost all

children at first level write very well for a wide range of purposes. They organise their ideas logically and use a variety of interesting sentence openers and increasingly sophisticated vocabulary. At second level, all children successfully apply their impressive knowledge of writing techniques across the curriculum. They write for a very wide range of purposes and audiences. Almost all children independently select the appropriate styles and formatting techniques depending on the purpose of their writing.

## **Attainment in numeracy**

### **Number, money and measure**

- Almost all children at early level recognise correctly the number of objects in a group. They match numerals to number names accurately. Almost all children add and subtract confidently within ten. A few children add and subtract within twenty. Almost all children at first level use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division very well to solve multi-step problems. They use their knowledge of money very well to calculate total amounts and to calculate change. Almost all children at second level demonstrate strong numeracy skills. They work confidently with increasingly complex equations and use formula accurately to calculate the area of irregular shapes.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- Almost all children at early level recognise common two-dimensional (2D) shapes. They create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. Almost all children at first level describe three-dimensional (3D) objects using appropriate vocabulary such as face, edges and corners. They identify lines of symmetry in regular and irregular 2D shapes. Almost all children at second level work confidently to measure angles accurately. They plot points on a four-quadrant grid using coordinate notation correctly.

### **Information handling**

- Children's ability and skill in data handling is a strength across the junior school. Almost all children at early level ably sort objects by one or more categories. Almost all children at first and second levels answer questions from a variety of graphs and tables. They create their own surveys and questionnaires and use a range of ways to display data. They create graphs of an appropriate scale with a title and correct labels on both axes. Almost all children ably analyse and interpret data from a range of data sets. They display data in a range of graphs and charts, using a suitable scale.

## **Senior school**

### **Attainment in literacy and numeracy**

#### **S1 to S3**

- Young people's attainment and progress in literacy and numeracy in S1 to S3 is outstanding. Senior leaders and teachers carefully track the progress of those young people who require additional support to be successful in their learning. As a result, this group of young people attains very well.

#### **S4-6**

- Young people's overall attainment in is outstanding. Over the last five years, all young people left school with a minimum of a National 5 qualification in English, Mathematics or Applications of Mathematics.
- In 2021/22 and 2022/23, almost all young people in S4 achieved a National 5 qualification in English. Over the last five years, most young people have attained at grade A in National 5

English. Over the last two years, almost all young people in S4 also achieved a National 5 qualification in Mathematics or Applications of Mathematics. Of those young people who attained National 5 mathematics, a significant majority attained a grade A award. A significant minority attained a grade A in National 5 Applications of Mathematics. The school's attainment is consistently above the national averages for English and mathematics.

- Almost all young people choose to stay on until the end of S6. Young people's attainment in English and mathematics at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level six or better is very strong and consistently above national averages. Almost all young people presented for Higher English, Mathematics and Applications of Mathematics in 2022/23 achieved the qualification. Attainment at grade A in these subjects at SCQF level six or better is consistently above national averages.
- Young people's attainment in English and mathematics at SCQF level 7 is very strong, with A grade passes well above national averages. Additional qualifications at SCQF level 7 are available in statistics and mechanics. Young people's attainment in these subjects is very strong.

## Attainment over time

### Junior school

- Across the junior school, consistently very high levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy are maintained over time. Senior leaders have introduced a new digital system to improve further their approaches to tracking children's progress in literacy and numeracy as they move through the school. They are extending this tracking approach to include information about children's progress across the curriculum.

### Senior school

- From S4 to S6, across SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7, young people's attainment is outstanding. Almost all young people attain their chosen courses at grades A-C consistently. Across all subject areas over time, the proportion of young people who achieve at grade A is consistently well above the national averages. Young people are encouraged to study the maximum number of subjects available to them at each stage.
- Senior leaders and teachers are currently embedding an improved system to track and monitor the progress of young people in all curriculum areas. This is helping staff to design bespoke interventions to support young people to continue to maintain the outstanding levels of progress and attainment across the school. Senior and middle leaders, together with class teachers, monitor the progress of young people rigorously to ensure that they support them very well to achieve expected outcomes.
- Young people at various stages achieve additional national awards beyond SQA examinations, for example in music, mathematics and classics. Young people who choose to work towards these awards attain very highly. Where young people show a particularly strong aptitude in a subject for example, in modern languages, music and mathematics, teachers frequently provide options for them to access earlier than expected national examinations. This leads to successful outcomes for almost all young people who pursue these options. Teachers across all subject areas track and monitor young people's progress using Curriculum for Excellence national Benchmarks. There is a wealth of highly motivational and bespoke wider learning opportunities for young people to become involved in, which are geared towards their interests in a variety of curriculum areas. Some of these lead to recognition through high profile regional and national events and competitions, for example, Mathématiques sans Frontières.

## Overall quality of learners' achievement

- RGC offers an extensive range of co-curricular activities which promote and enhance the breadth and depth of children and young people’s learning experiences beyond the classroom. The school offers over 170 clubs each week. All children in the junior school engage in at least two activities each week. Across the senior school, most young people participate in at least one co-curricular activity each week, with many averaging over three clubs or activities. For example, the school fields 23 rugby teams with over 300 girls and boys participating each week. The school is exceptionally highly achieving in sport, nationally and internationally. For example, the girls first eleven hockey team won this year’s Scottish Challenge Cup final. These activities are highly successful in developing young people’s sports leadership, teambuilding skills, personal confidence, and community involvement.
- The school actively recognises the range of learners’ achievements in a variety of effective ways. For example, in the junior school the contribution of every child is recognised through the Golden Gordonian Award. In the senior school, there are termly celebrations of achievement, as well as an end of year prizegiving. There is extensive use of social media by the school to celebrate the success of teams and individuals.
- Across the school, children and young people contribute to the life of the school and broader community very effectively. For example, the school has a ‘projects week’ which has a strong focus on citizenship and service in the local community. Young people volunteer in activities ranging from working alongside local charities, participating in local food kitchens, litter-picking, and the Youth Philanthropy Initiative. RGC promotes a strong sense of civic responsibility in learners. For example, the accomplished school pipe band has a high national profile, regularly performing in public and at prestigious events, such as the investiture of King Charles III in Edinburgh.
- A significant number of young people’s leadership and citizenship skills are further developed through their participation in the Combined Cadet Force and through the Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) Award Scheme. In 2023, 146 pupils achieved the DoE bronze award, 67 achieved silver and 25 achieved the gold award. Across the school, children and young people are encouraged to innovate and to lead by example. For example, young people in S6 run a popular Humanities Club for their peers. Children were instrumental in the introduction of rugby for girls in the junior school.
- The school very successfully celebrates the full range of children and young people’s achievements. Currently, senior leaders are reviewing arrangements for formal prizegiving events to ensure these are fully inclusive of all achievements and successes of children and young people, as well as acknowledging academic and sporting esteem.

## **Equity for All**

- At RGC, all young people move on to positive, high-quality post-school destinations. In 2022/23, almost all young people moved on to study an undergraduate course. A few young people chose to continue their learning in further education, enrol in a modern apprenticeship or enter employment. Specialist staff support all young people skilfully to make well-informed choices for their post-school destination options.
- Senior leaders and governors use their knowledge of the individual circumstances of children, young people and their families very thoughtfully. A very diverse range of children and young people benefit from the wealth of academic and enriching wider opportunities on offer at RGC, despite socio-economic and other challenges. An outstanding range of wider activities, clubs and teams is accessible to all children and young people. Often these experiences take place at little or no cost to children, young people and families. Senior leaders monitor very successfully each learner’s participation in wider learning experiences and activities. This helps

staff, children and young people to create experiences to suit the interests and aspirations of all, even where this involves only a few children and young people.

- Many young people, regardless of individual circumstances, secure consistently high-profile post-school destinations nationally and internationally. To this end, the school has built up a very involved alumni community from across the globe. Former pupils add significant value to young people's learning, for example by sharing their knowledge and experience of different career paths and opportunities.
- During the pandemic, senior leaders and staff set up the digital learning environment 'RGC Online' for children and young people, so that high-quality, real-time learning and teaching could continue at home. Commendably, the college has made this resource available for any user across Scotland and beyond. Today, RGC Online offers live-taught SQA accredited Higher Computing Science and Higher Applications of Mathematics to young people across Scotland. In addition, RGC Online offers access to the college's 'super-curriculum' diploma modules on artificial intelligence, data science, game design, cyber security, entrepreneurship and quantum computing. In this way, senior leaders and staff from Robert Gordon's College contribute actively to system-wide improvement.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

- Career Long Professional Learning Pathways: a bespoke research and enquiry-based approach to professional learning
- 'RGC Online'
- International partnerships
- Equality, diversity and inclusion



## 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.