# Summarised inspection findings

**Kinlochleven High School**

The Highland Council

28 January 2025

School Name: Kinlochleven High School - Àrd-sgoil Ceann Loch Lìobhann
Council: The Highland Council
SEED number: 5135521
Roll (Sep 2023): 135

Kinlochleven High School - Àrd-sgoil Ceann Loch Lìobhann is a small, rural secondary school providing education for young people in S1-6. The school is part of a campus provision offering 3-18 education and community services. It is part of the associated group of schools for St. Bride's, Ballachulish, Duror, Glencoe and Kinlochleven Primary Schools. St. Bride's Primary School is also in the catchment area for Gàidhlig (Gaelic) Medium at Bun-sgoil Loch Abar and Àrd-sgoil Loch Abar - Lochaber High School.

The headteacher has been in post for eight months. Her remit is for 3-18 education provision on the campus. Over time, recruiting and retaining staffing has been challenging. The school has had four headteachers over a five-year period.

The headteacher is supported by a depute headteacher and five principal teachers.

Attendance is generally below the national average but is improving.

Exclusions are generally below the national average in 2022/23.

In September 2023, 14.1 per cent of young people were registered for free school meals. This is in line with the national average.

In September 2023, 3.7 per cent of young people lived in 20 per cent of the most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2023, the school reported that 56 per cent of young people had additional support needs.

| 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment | Weak |
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| 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:<br><br>■  learning and engagement<br>■  quality of teaching<br>■  effective use of assessment<br>■  planning, tracking and monitoring | |

■  Staff and young people enjoy positive relationships in almost all classes. The majority of young people participate well in their learning. Young people appreciate the support they receive from the majority of teachers to make progress in their learning. Most young people demonstrate positive behaviour in classrooms and corridors. This results in a calm learning atmosphere where young people are keen to learn. This impacts positively on the culture of the school.

■  The majority of staff are aware of young people who have an additional support need (ASN). Almost all teachers would benefit from professional learning to improve their support for young people with ASN to achieve well. Senior leaders need to ensure that relevant information to support young people with ASN is more thorough and readily available to staff. All teachers

should use this information to plan suitable learning and increase young people's equity to a well-delivered curriculum. Almost all teachers should develop approaches to monitor and evaluate the impact on young people's progress from using strategies for ASN.

■ School and local authority-based senior leaders have recently led professional learning for teachers on aspects of what constitutes effective learning and teaching. This professional learning is starting to stimulate thinking on how to structure a lesson successfully. For the majority of time, teachers use starter tasks to engage young people promptly in their learning. In most lessons, teachers use clear explanations and instructions. This supports young people to complete planned activities. The majority of teachers use questioning effectively to check understanding and to elicit prior learning. In a few lessons, teachers use skilled questioning to challenge learners. Young people's learning experiences vary significantly across the school.

■ The majority of teachers share the purpose of the lesson. In these cases, young people know the aims of the lesson and how they will be successful. In a few lessons, teachers link learning effectively to the skills that will be developed. In the majority of lessons, teachers do not sufficiently link the purpose of the lesson and what young people need to do to be successful. Young people would benefit from more consistent approaches to support their understanding of their progress. Teachers should summarise more effectively main learning points to enable young people to reflect on their learning. This would help young people understand fully their strengths and next steps in learning.

■ In a few lessons, young people benefit from well-structured collaborative learning, as well as tasks that require independent or critical thinking. In the majority of lessons, activities are too often overly led by teachers. This results in a few young people being passive and losing motivation. The majority of teachers need to increase the pace of learning to ensure that young people's potential to achieve is maximised. The majority of teachers need to deliver learning that is appropriately challenging, well-paced and matched to the individual needs of young people.

■ All young people have a one-to-one digital device. In a few lessons, young people use digital devices well to enhance learning with research and a greater range of resources. All young people in S1 and S2 study Gaelic (Learners). Young people use their digital skills to create a short film for the national competition, Film G. This also gives young people an insight into how the Gaelic language is used for real purposes and in employment. The headteacher leads the learning of Gaelic as an additional language. Senior leaders at the school all have teaching commitments. They model very well making learning interactive, engaging and purposeful. Young people access an online platform where a few teachers share learning resources. Teachers should develop further the use of digital technology to enhance learning and support young people.

■ In a few classes across S1-6, teachers plan learning effectively to use a range of assessment strategies to elicit how well young people are progressing. Young people answer questions on individual boards to give teachers a quick overview of progress. Young people also undertake peer- and self-assessment. A minority of teachers adjust their lessons effectively to respond to young people's progress in meeting their learning needs. All teachers would benefit from a more thorough approach to sharing the most effective formative assessment strategies to improve their planning of learning for all young people.

■ All teachers use a range of assessments. This includes standardised assessments and summative assessments, such as tests and examinations. Senior leaders should guide teachers in developing a more strategic approach to assessment. The staff team need to develop a clear shared understanding of the purpose and aims of assessment. This would

support teachers' improved consistency in the use of assessment. In the majority of subjects, assessment data is not yet being collected systematically and used effectively to plan next steps in learning. Senior leaders should use the learning, teaching and assessment cycle to plan meaningful, relevant and coherent learning experiences. Young people should have a clear role in planning and evaluating learning.

- The majority of teachers are at initial stages of engaging in moderation activities. In a few subjects, teachers are improving the moderation activities they use. Teachers should promptly develop consistent, effective and thorough approaches to moderation across S1-6. This should be based on a shared understanding of assessment. Teachers need to collaborate closely with associated primary schools to support young people's improved progress as they move from primary to secondary. Such steps would help to increase teachers' knowledge and confidence of applying national standards and expectations of young people's progress. Teachers should continue to ensure they glean from their networks the benefits of part-time appointees with the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

- Teachers and young people engage in one-to-one conversations on learning in a minority of subjects. These learning conversations are stronger in S4-6. Most young people in S4-6 know how to progress successfully in their learning. An important next step will be to develop consistently one-to-one conversations in S1-3. Young people value both written and verbal feedback from all teachers. This is supporting young people understand how to make better progress in their learning. A more consistent approach to written feedback is an important next step.

- Young people's progress and attainment is monitored and tracked in all subject departments. For young people in S4-6, monitoring and tracking of learning and progress provides an overview of assessment data. This overview is still to be developed for younger people in S1-3. In a few subjects, staff identify young people who are underperforming and put in place effective classroom and departmental strategies to support them with their learning. Teachers' approaches to monitoring and tracking are not yet of a consistently high enough standard. Teachers' records of young people's assessments and progress do not have enough detail at times. Senior leaders need more consistent and reliable assessment data to underpin more effective monitoring and tracking approaches. Staff now need to use information from monitoring and tracking more effectively to inform subsequent planning of learning, teaching and assessment.

- At a whole-school level, senior leaders track young people's progress across the school over the past two years. As a result, senior leaders identify and track individuals and different attainment themes in S4-6. This information should be more formal and more effectively collated to plan and monitor appropriate interventions for young people to improve their outcomes. Teachers would benefit from middle and senior leaders' greater consistency of expectation in the use of data. This will support teachers to plan more responsive and challenging learning experiences for young people. Senior leaders need more consistent and reliable assessment data from across the curriculum when developing further effective tracking and monitoring approaches. This should ensure appropriate supports are in place for all young people to make expected progress.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

| 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement | Weak |
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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

The number of young people in some courses is small. In such situations, HM inspectors have not always used quantitative terms. Generic statements about attainment and progress are made over a five-year period, or similar. This ensures that no young person is identified.

**Attainment in literacy and numeracy**
**S1-3**
■ In 2023/24, teachers report that almost all young people attained Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level or better in literacy by the end of S3. For the same period, most young people attained CfE third level or better in numeracy. Less than a half of young people attained CfE fourth level in reading and writing. A majority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in listening, talking and numeracy in 2023/24 by the end of S3. Since 2021/22 to 2023/24, attainment in literacy and numeracy at the fourth CfE level is declining.

■ All teachers need to ensure that their evidence for literacy and numeracy reporting on CfE levels is based on thorough moderation. Teachers should build on young people's progress at the primary stages in a progressive way into the senior phase. Young people need more opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills across their learning in a planned and meaningful way. Teachers' shared higher expectations of young people's writing, spelling and presentation of their written work is a priority.

**Senior phase**
■ The school is not yet sustaining a pattern where all young people leave school with an award in literacy and numeracy. The staff team work with Skills Development Scotland to increase a few young people's chances of achieving some awards. Senior leaders need to prioritise further that all young people attain literacy and numeracy awards as part of their strategy to closing the attainment gap. In 2022/23, leavers attained significantly much lower than the virtual comparator (VC) at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 3 or better in literacy. This was also the case in 2020/21. Senior leaders' planning for raising leavers' attainment should take account of the high proportion of young people leaving school at the end of S5. In 2023, the majority of young people in S5 left school.

**Literacy (Leavers)**
■ Between 2018/19 and 2022/23 the school is in line with the VC for literacy at SCQF level 5 or better (through units) and at SCQF level 6. During this time period, most leavers attained SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. In the same time period, a minority of all leavers attained SCQF level 6 in three out of five of these years. Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, a majority of all leavers with ASN attained a literacy award at SCQF level 5 or better as part of a course award. During the same period, a minority of young people with ASN attained a literacy award at SCQF level 6 in four out of five of these years.

**Literacy (Cohorts)**

- The school is not achieving continuous improvement in literacy as young people move through stages. In 2023/24, attainment declined in S4. Between 2019/20 and 2023/24, for two out of five years, a majority of young people attained at SCQF level 5 or better. In 2022/23, most young people attained at this level. This is through units. The school performed significantly much lower than the VC at SCQF levels 3 or better and SCQF level 5 or better, and significantly lower at SCQF level 4 or better in 2023/24. Between 2020/21 and 2023/24 by S5 based on the S5 roll, a minority of young people attained literacy at SCQF level 6. In 2023/24 by S5, attainment declined at SCQF level 6 to be significantly much lower than the VC. By S6, based on the S6 roll, at SCQF level 6 the school performs in line with the VC. Broadly, a majority of young people by S6 attain SCQF level 6 between 2019/20 to 2023/24.

**English**

- The percentage of young people presented for SCQF level 6 in English is declining between 2020 and 2024. The school needs to increase presentations in English and improve the quality of passes. In 2023 and 2024, no young person attained a grade A or B-pass at SCQF level 6.

**Numeracy**

- The school is not sustaining improvements in numeracy. The staff teams' tracking of young people's progress and curriculum planning needs articulated to raising attainment.

**Numeracy (Leavers)**

- Between 2018/19 and 2022/23 the school's performance is in line with the VC. A majority of all leavers attained a numeracy award at SCQF level 5 or better through units. This is also the case for young people with ASN for two out of the five years within this time period. Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, attainment declined at SCQF level 6 in numeracy, including for young people with ASN. Only a few young people leaving school attained numeracy at SCQF level 6 in 2022/23.

**Numeracy (Cohorts)**

- Between 2019/20 and 2022/23, a minority of young people in S4 attained numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better, as part of a course award. By S5, based on the S5 roll, the majority attain SCQF level 5 or better. By S5 and by S6, based on each respective year roll, there is no consistent improvement in attainment.

**Mathematics**

- Very few young people attain applications of mathematics at SCQF level 5. The mathematics department do not present for this course regularly. In 2024, the majority of young people attained a no award in mathematics at SCQF level 5 or better. Senior leaders and staff need to improve outcomes for young people as a high priority.

**Attainment over time**
**S1-3**

- The staff team are not able to identify long-term patterns from their collated data in young people's attainment across S1-3 over time. Senior leaders need to be able to demonstrate attainment over time in S1-3. This data should be used to raise attainment, and inform professional learning and quality assurance.

**Senior Phase**

- The majority of the staff team need to be much clearer of their role in raising attainment for whole-school and classroom-level standards. Senior leaders' discussions with staff should focus more clearly on impact and next steps to making individual and collective difference to

young people's attainment. The staff team should aim to sustain continuous improvements for all groups of young people from year to year. This includes those who require additional support with their learning. Between 2020/21 and 2022/23, the attainment of the middle 60% and highest attaining 20% of leavers declined. In 2022/23, the highest attaining 20% of leavers' attainment was significantly much lower than the VC. For the lowest attaining 20% and the middle attaining 60% of leavers, attainment is broadly in line with the VC. There is potential for continued improvement.

- In 2023/24, as the middle attaining 60% of young people move through the school their attainment on S4 declined to be significantly much lower than the VC. For all other groups of young people on S4, their attainment is in line with the VC although high standards are not sustained.

- In 2023/24, at S5 based on the S5 roll, the highest attaining 20% of leavers attained significantly much lower than the VC. This was also the case in 2020/21 and 2021/22. In 2020/21 by the end of S5, the attainment of middle attaining 60% and lowest attaining 20% attainment was significantly much lower than the VC. Since then, attainment has been in line with the VC, but not consistently improving.

- In 2023/24, by the end of S6, based on the S6 roll, the highest attaining 20% of young people's attainment improved from being significantly much lower. Broadly, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20% and the middle attaining 60% is in line with the VC.

**Breadth and depth**
- In the senior phase, the staff team should have greater aspirations for young people's highest possible presentations in suitably matched courses. Young people should remain within courses for their total duration, as far as possible, with their attainment recognised. Teachers should aim to improve the quality of passes in most subjects. In 2023-24, the number of young people receiving no awards increased in subjects like Mathematics. Senior leaders and staff are introducing some new courses, such as Mental Health and Wellbeing at SCQF level 5. Gaelic (Learners) is delivered in school within the broad general education, rather than through online approaches.

- A majority of young people at S4 attained four or more course at SCQF level 4 or better in 2023/24. During the same time period, a minority of young people attained five or more and six or more courses at SCQF level 4 or better. This is significantly much lower than the VC for four or more to six or more courses at SCQF level 4 or better.

- A majority of young people at S4 attained one or more courses and two or more courses at SCQF level 5C in 2023/24. While the school is broadly in line with the VC, performance is declining for one or more courses to seven or more courses at SCQF level 5C between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

- The school's performance is very variable at SCQF level 5A or better. Between 2019/20 and 2022/23, a majority of young people at S4 attained one or more courses at SCQF level 5A or better. This then declined to a minority in 2023/24. This is significantly much lower than the VC.

- By S5, a majority of young people attained one of more awards at SCQF level 6C or better. This is between 2019/20 and 2023/24. Broadly, a minority of young people attained three or more courses at SCQF level 6C or better during the same time period. In 2023/24, no young person attained four and five or more courses at SCQF level 6C or better. This is significantly much lower than the VC. Broadly between 2019/20 and 2023/24, a minority of young people attained one or more courses at SCQF level 6A or better. In 2023/24, no young person attained two or

more to five or more courses at SCQF level 6A or better. For two or more courses at this level, the school performed significantly much lower than the VC.

■ By S6, a minority of young people attain one or more course SCQF level 6A or better between 2019/20 and 2023/24. In four out of five years between 2019/20 and 2023/24, a minority of young people by S6 attained SCQF level 7C or better.

■ Senior leaders are taking action to ensure that the curriculum is taught to a consistently high standard. The local authority needs to maintain a persistent and proactive approach in supporting the headteacher to continue addressing the school's capacity to accelerate raising attainment. The broad general education needs to provide much better progression into the senior phase. Young people would benefit from more teaching of study skills and access to national revision e-learning offers.

**Overall quality of learners' achievement**
■ A minority of young people develop skills and capacity through their wider experiences in school. A few young people develop empathy through volunteering in the local community. In 2024, most young people in S4-6 attained an award in Volunteering Skills: Level 5 to recognise their achievements. Young people's successes are celebrated through school assemblies and in newsletters. This recognises young people's skills in sports, music and drama, both in and beyond the school.

■ A minority of young people in the senior phase develop leadership skills through roles on the pupil leadership team and being house captains. A few young people act as sports leaders and ambassadors in physical education and Active Schools programme. Young people need to develop key skills in enterprise and sustainability. The staff team should continue to work with young people to ensure their views shape their leadership capacity.

■ Senior leaders and staff should significantly improve young people's wider achievements. Where appropriate, this should be developed with local partners. The staff team should track and monitor young people's skills and capacities, while ensuring that all young people participate.

**Equity for all learners**
■ A minority of young people reside in SIMD 4. For three years over the period, 2018/19 and 2022/23, young people performed significantly higher than other young people residing in similar areas of Scotland. In 2022/23, this declined to be in line with young people residing in similar areas of Scotland.

■ In 2022/23, most young people secured a positive initial destination. In the four years prior to that, almost all young people secured a positive initial destination. Senior leaders monitor the impact of seasonal employment on young people's sustained destinations.

■ Young people's attendance is improving, although still below the national average. Support staff monitor attendance. They involve other agencies in supporting young people. Exclusions have decreased in the last 12 months.

■ Senior leaders have consulted a few young people on reducing the cost of the school day. As a result, young people access a supply of consumable resources and personal items. The staff team should enable young people to access these items freely and independently to ensure their dignity is respected. Senior leaders' use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) should more clearly focus on improving outcomes for young people who face socio-economic disadvantage. The staff team should measure thoroughly the impact of interventions to support young people

to attain and achieve well. They should also consult young people and parents on the use of PEF.

■ The staff team works closely with a local church to provide breakfast daily for all young people across the school. This is provided free to foster a positive start to the day. This important partner to the school also provides lunch for young people attending a club for sports. Young people socialise together, engage intergenerationally and participate in physical activity during this lunchtime club.

# Other relevant evidence

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

- Young people receive the minimum national expectations in physical education (PE) in S1-3. By S4, all young people attain a SCQF course award for their efforts in PE between 2020 and 2024. In S5-6, young people who do not study physical education as an SCQF course receive one period of physical education a week.

- Young people study French in S1-2 as a first additional language. In S3, young people study the first additional language only if they wish. There is a very low uptake for modern languages in the senior phase over time.

- Young people study Gaelic (Learners) in S1 and S2 for one period as a second additional language. Senior leaders should detail what progression for Gaelic (Learners) may look like into the senior phase. Young people's studying of Gaelic (Learners) assists them in showing evidence towards the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. It also helps young people understand the visibility for Gàidhlig that surrounds them in their school and in the local environment.

- Religious and Moral Education is planned but not always delivered in S1-3. It is not delivered in the senior phase. Local church members assist with delivering religious observance.

- The community library is housed in the Kinlochleven Campus. This location facilitates young people's ease of access to the library.

# 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.