

Summarised inspection findings

Harlaw Academy

Aberdeen City Council

4 February 2020

School Name Harlaw Academy
Council: Aberdeen City Council
SEED number: 5243238
Roll (Sep 2017): 899

Key contextual information

Harlaw Academy is located in the centre of Aberdeen, outside the school's catchment area. As a result of its easily accessible location, young people enrol from more than forty primary schools in addition to the four associated schools.

The substantive headteacher is currently seconded to fulfil a part-time (0.5FTE) national role in education. He is supported by a shared acting headteacher/ part-time depute headteacher; two full-time substantive depute headteachers; and one full time and one part-time (0.5FTE) acting depute headteachers. One member of the senior leadership team (SLT) has recently taken up a national secondment.

A high percentage of young people are identified as requiring additional support with their learning. This includes a significant number of young people, almost 25% of the school roll, for whom English is an Additional Language. It also includes young people who experience a range of barriers to their learning, including the autism spectrum.

Attendance figures have improved in 2018/19 and are at slightly over 90% having been relatively stable at about 89% for the previous four years. In 2018/19, there was a reduction in both authorised and unauthorised absences. In February 2019, 13% of pupils were registered for free school meals. In September 2018, nearly 8% of pupils live in 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

The school's exclusion rate has been consistently above the national average for all three years for which data is available.

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

- Members of the SLT bring a range of skills and experience to their roles. Over the past few years, there have been acting and shared roles in this team. These changes in the SLT have coincided with plans to drive forward a wide range of important improvements. There has not been sufficient stability during this time for SLT to become established as a cohesive team and to grasp and drive forward key aspects of their roles and remits. The substantive headteacher consulted staff, parents and young people in reviewing the values and aims. He introduced a three-year cyclical approach to this review to ensure that the values and aims continue to reflect the school's context and priorities. He has successfully designed a set of core 'actions' around the central theme of respect. These 'core actions' are linked to local and national improvement priorities. They are captured in the improvement plan which has a strong focus on raising attainment. Senior leaders need to ensure that all members of the school community embed these 'actions' consistently within the life of the school. These 'actions' should be visible in all behaviours and communications.
- Senior leaders need to work collegiately with staff across the school and local authority. They need more effective approaches to leading and managing change. These approaches should ensure that change is manageable, measurable and sustainable. Senior leaders should consult more widely to reflect the views of all stakeholders. Importantly, they should ensure a clear strategic overview of improvement priorities and effective procedures to evaluate impact. Senior leaders should take action to streamline whole school priorities and associated working groups.
- Senior leaders need to maintain more regular professional dialogue about improvement priorities with middle leaders. This much-needed discussion should support the development of consistently high standards of learning and teaching across all departments. It will also help all staff to share a more coherent understanding of national guidance and expectations.
- Staff have taken initial steps to improve the learning environment through a focus on positive relationships and reviewing approaches to learning and teaching. The full impact of this work is not yet clear. It would be beneficial for staff and young people to create together expectations of what it means to be an effective learner and teacher at Harlaw Academy.
- The school has implemented plans for its allocation of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), which include additional staffing to provide extra support for identified young people. Early indications are that these interventions are having a positive effect on young people's progress and engagement with learning. Senior leaders should develop further their approaches to monitoring impact, ensuring that the most successful interventions are sustained.
- The majority of middle leaders are beginning to manage change more effectively within their departments and faculties. Most staff are at the early stages of engaging in self-evaluation and

using a range of data to drive improvement. Senior leaders are encouraging teachers to make better use of Insight and other data based on learner needs and progress as tools supporting planning for improvement. This increasing use of data should be closely linked to planning the priorities for raising attainment and achievement. There is a need for a more effective whole school approach to identifying and agreeing required improvements. Moving forward, senior leaders should work as a team with all staff to ensure that improvement planning is based on effective self-evaluation. It should provide clear strategic direction for curriculum development and improving learning and teaching.

- Almost all staff engage in professional development, including leadership opportunities within the school. Staff need to access wider professional learning activities to support more effectively the range of learners who require support with learning, in particular those with English as an Additional Language (EAL). Senior leaders should continue to share the expertise that teachers gain from involvement in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) duties. This will help to develop a greater understanding of the standards required in qualifications. Senior leaders ensure protected time for staff to participate in a range of professional learning activities. This includes supporting teachers in their understanding of national standards regarding achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level. Teachers engage in professional review and development processes that are closely linked to General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) Standards. There is scope to align their professional development needs and interests more closely with improvement priorities. A few members of staff are undertaking professional enquiry and collaborative practice including looking outwards beyond the Associated Schools Group (ASG) and local authority.
- There are opportunities for young people to engage in a range of leadership activities across the school. Members of the pupil council and a few young people more widely, talk proudly about how their influence has led to change. Commendably, the 'young leaders of learning' are beginning to have a voice in shaping improvements to learning and teaching. They look outwards to other schools across the local authority and work with the national How good is OUR school (HGIOURS) guidance. It is too early to measure the impact of young people's involvement in shaping aspects of improvement. Young people would welcome more opportunities to influence school improvement. Importantly, this should include how they can have a say in improving their experiences in what and how they learn. The school is well placed to build on this positive start.

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

- Senior leaders ensure young people's rights are embedded in the work of the school. The school has achieved a gold award in a national values-based programme. A minority of young people are very actively involved in self-evaluation and planning for improvement through the pupil council, the Young Leaders of Learning pilot project and the school governance group. The majority of young people do not yet feel that staff take their views into account. Staff should build on these innovative whole school approaches and empower all young people to have a voice in evaluating, planning and improving their learning experiences across all curricular areas.
- Overall, relationships between young people and most staff are positive and in line with the school's vision to show 'respect for people, respect for learning and respect for community'. Teachers need to do more to embed these values across the school. In classes where they set high expectations of behaviour, young people readily achieve these standards. The behaviour in a minority of classes needs to be of a higher standard. Persistent low-level disruption is impinging on the rights of a few young people to learn and make progress, particularly in the broad general education (BGE).
- Learning experiences are not always sufficiently well-matched to young people's needs. Staff should continue to develop approaches to differentiation to ensure that all young people experience appropriate support and challenge. The majority of lessons are overly teacher led which results in young people being too passive in their learning. This also leads to reduced opportunities for young people to be actively involved in planning and leading their learning. A few teachers have developed a range of highly effective interactive and collaborative approaches to learning which enhance young people's motivation and engagement. The school should improve opportunities for teachers to share this good practice. This will help to support an informed and shared understanding of what effective learning, teaching and assessment look like.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. Staff should share the examples of good teaching which exist. In almost all lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. There is scope to develop the use of questioning so that young people become more engaged in their learning and develop higher order thinking skills. Most teachers share the purpose of learning and evidence of success with young people. A clearer focus on learning and developing skills will help young people become increasingly aware of their progress. This will help deepen their learning. In a few classrooms, young people agree in advance with their teachers what success will look like. The school should build on this good practice by sharing these examples. Self-assessment is taking place in the majority of classrooms. Staff should ensure that this is clearly linked to evidence of success so that young people have a deeper understanding of their strengths and next steps in learning. Young people would benefit from

improved feedback that is based on criteria for successful learning that they have agreed in advance with the class teacher.

- When given the opportunity, young people use digital technology confidently, most frequently for research. Young people benefit from access to a virtual classroom which they find useful for home learning. To ensure equity of access, senior leaders have put in place arrangements to support access to technology for all. There is considerable scope to extend the use of digital technology in learning.
- A few young people talk confidently about the skills for life and work they are developing across curricular areas. Young people would like to see an increase in learning activities that are relevant, related to real life and develop their skills for work.
- Staff have identified the need to extend the range of approaches used in the BGE to assess knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities. There are opportunities to build on the practice developed in a few departments. Teachers use a range of attainment data to inform their assessment judgements and are increasingly using the National Benchmarks. Moderation activities are also underway in most departments. These vary considerably in the quality of approach and the impact on young people's learning and attainment. In a few subjects, faculty heads are looking outwards to moderate their assessment judgements with staff in other schools. As a result, they are more confident in their assessment judgements. There is considerable scope for all staff to engage in this moderation activity.
- Young people in the senior phase value opportunities to take part in learner conversations with their teachers. These discussions are helping them to develop an understanding of their progress and set targets to improve their learning. Staff should now extend this practice to all curricular areas in the BGE.
- Middle leaders have made progress in developing approaches to tracking and monitoring the progress of learners in the BGE. To ensure that these systems are fully effective, most staff need to have a better understanding of how to make judgements about progress towards achieving a level. This should include information about how much and how well a young person is learning and applying their skills, based on a range of assessment evidence.
- Senior leaders should continue to develop tracking systems to maintain an overview of the progress of individuals and groups of young people, particularly in the BGE. This is needed to support a strategic approach to raising attainment. All staff receive information about those young people who face additional challenges in their learning for a wide range of reasons. Teachers at all levels are not yet using this information consistently to monitor the progress of vulnerable groups of young people and plan appropriate interventions to improve their attainment.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff at Harlaw Academy are in the process of reviewing the curriculum. Senior leaders recognise the curriculum as a key driver for improving young people's attainment and achievement. In reviewing the curriculum, senior leaders should consult widely with young people, staff, parents and partners taking appropriate account of local Labour Market Information and Regional Skills Assessment. This will ensure that that the curriculum better meets the needs of all young people.
- In the BGE, learning is planned using third level CfE experiences and outcomes. Teachers should further develop curriculum planning to enable young people to access fourth level learning as appropriate to their needs and aspirations. As part of the review of the curriculum, senior leaders should ensure that young people receive their full entitlement to learning across all curriculum areas. In S3, young people welcome the opportunity to personalise their curriculum. Senior leaders need to ensure that young people are not limiting their options as they enter the senior phase as a result of this personalisation. A few young people in S3 and in the senior phase are unable to access their preferred curriculum pathway. In the BGE, young people are not always clear about the curriculum level they are studying. Staff should communicate clearly with them about CfE levels they are studying. This would allow young people to identify clearly next steps to improve progression.
- All young people in S1-S5 have opportunities to reflect and develop their skills through religious and moral education (RME), physical education, personal and social education (PSE) and Study and Work Skills. The school is not fulfilling its duties with regard to the provision of RME in S6. Senior staff should evaluate, as planned, the impact of PSE and Study and Work Skills programmes. There is a need to review the skills which young people are developing and the extent to which these are being applied a meaningful way across learning. The school is at an early stage of developing a strategy for learning for sustainability.
- Young people benefit from a transition programme that involves learners from the associated primary schools accessing subject departments in a series of visits. There are a few examples of partnership activities between secondary and primary colleagues, for example, English, modern languages and social subjects. Senior leaders identify correctly the need to formalise such working.
- Young people experience a few planned interdisciplinary learning (IDL) opportunities in the BGE, for example, a 'building your future' competition and an outdoor space design project in partnership with local employers. The school is at an early stage in planning to enhance further IDL provision, particularly in relation to skills development.
- Young people across all stages use the school library well. In S1 and S2, the accelerated readers programme encourages increased engagement with reading and is improving the reading age of most learners. Teachers in the English, social subjects and science departments liaise well with the librarian to complement curriculum provision in a range of ways including author visits, projects and competitions.
- Teachers in English and mathematics faculties lead the teaching and assessment of literacy and numeracy. The school is at an early stage of revisiting literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as responsibilities of all. Senior leaders recognise the need to ensure that all staff have greater clarity on how they contribute to the development of young people's literacy and numeracy skills and their health and wellbeing. This aims to raise achievement for all.

- The senior phase is based predominantly on courses leading to National Qualifications (NQs). Where appropriate, it is timetabled with S4, S5 and S6 as a single cohort. This has resulted in increasing flexibility for individualised pathways and a suite of courses at different levels. In reviewing the curriculum, senior leaders should ensure that there are appropriate curriculum pathways for all young people in the senior phase. Young people choose up to six courses in S4, five in S5 and four in S6. They have the opportunity to study courses through links with North East Scotland College and neighbouring schools as part of Aberdeen City Council's senior phase partnership. This provision supports a few young people to undertake Foundation Apprenticeships. A few senior pupils study Open University modules via the Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS).
- Senior staff analyse subject choice data. This highlighted a gender imbalance in a few subject areas including physics and engineering science. The school should explore and develop initiatives that promote gender equality across the curriculum.
- Staff make limited use of local and national labour market information to inform curriculum planning and young people's future aspirations for employment. A few staff use local knowledge and contacts to engage effectively with employers. Across the curriculum, there are a number of employer links which support well the school's partnership working with local industries. For example, a joint initiative with a local hotel supports well-identified skills shortages in the local hospitality industry. This has led to some young people considering employment in this area. Links with employers are not yet extensive or developed sufficiently or systematically to support Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) priorities.
- The Career Education Standard and Career Management Skills are not yet incorporated fully within subject delivery. As a result, young people do not make connections or articulate clearly their career management skills. School leaders should provide clear strategic direction to address this.
- Those young people who benefited from placements with local employers last session found them helpful preparation for making career choices. The school focusses its work placements on young people identified as being at most risk of not achieving a positive destination. It has not yet sufficiently developed its provision for work placements for senior phase pupils. The school recognises the value of work placements and the need to continue to develop its approach in line with the Work Placements Standard.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- See choice QI

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.

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

- Young people's wellbeing is promoted as a whole school priority. Staff are aware of the importance of supporting young people's wellbeing. They should continue to develop their approaches to delivering this support so that the learning environment provides a consistently strong foundation on which to learn and achieve effectively. Most staff understand young people's wellbeing needs well. The majority of young people speak positively about pastoral care support. Most say that there are members of staff they can speak to if they have any concerns. Young people are beginning to become familiar with the framework of the wellbeing indicators. This will help them reflect on their wellbeing.
- Staff, in particular pupil support staff, take part in professional learning activities to improve their impact on young people's wellbeing. These include raising awareness of the wellbeing indicators and topics relevant to the local community such as knife crime and risks associated with social media. There is not yet a strategic approach to professional learning related to wellbeing. Specific gaps in this learning include strategies for the significant number of young people with EAL and alternatives to exclusion. As a result, substantial numbers of young people have needs which are not met fully. This adversely affects their progress and attainment.
- Most young people feel safe in the school. A few however indicate that they do not. The school's self-evaluation activities do not provide an accurate picture of the issues and scale of young people's concerns. Senior leaders acknowledge the need to identify the reasons for these concerns and take action to address them. The majority of young people believe that bullying is fairly limited and that incidents are dealt with well. However too many young people and parents express concerns about bullying. A few young people do not feel included in the school community as a result.
- Pupil support staff, working well with partners, take steps to encourage a sense of 'belonging' for young people. Young people play a part in planning primary to secondary transition activities that promote positive relationships amongst peers and between staff and young people. These activities help support an ethos of school community and foster 'house group' identity. Most young people are positive about the targeted support offered by the range of support partners. This contributes to them feeling nurtured and respected.
- Staff receive regular updated information about the needs of young people facing challenges, including those who are care experienced. They need to use this information to provide effective universal support. Teachers share any causes for concern with pupil support staff. This is leading to interventions which remove barriers to learning for a few young people. A few staff monitor the experiences and achievements of individual young people to ensure that potential socio-economic barriers do not prevent access to a range of sports, clubs and

activities. They should extend this to an overview of all young people's participation in wider achievement activities.

- Senior leaders emphasise the importance of young people's rights and the need for respectful relationships across the school community. The school has achieved a gold award in a national programme to promote young people's rights and the school's vision is based on 'three respects': for people, learning and community. However all staff do not have consistently high expectations of young people's conduct. This has a negative impact on learning in a minority of classrooms. A few young people make poor choices in how they behave in the wider community. A few express the view that not all staff consistently show them appropriate respect. Staff should review how they promote and sustain a culture of respect across the school community.
- Aspects of the curriculum support young people's learning and development in health and wellbeing. All young people S1 to S5 experience two periods of high quality PE each week. Programmes in home economics and PSE make some important contributions to young people's learning about health. Many young people take part in sporting activities and a variety of cultural activities, both at lunchtime and outwith the school day. They take pride in playing an active part in the life in the school.
- The personal and social education curriculum does not consistently meet young people's needs. Staff should undertake a review of this curriculum to ensure it contributes fully to young people's diverse and changing needs. Staff have undertaken professional learning related to mental wellbeing. This is helping them to provide effective support for young people who face particular challenges in their lives. Commendably, young people gain important accreditation for aspects of health and wellbeing and personal development.
- School policies and procedures help staff to engage actively with most current national guidance and codes of practice relating to wellbeing, inclusion and equality. A few of these policies, such as the anti-bullying policy, need to be reviewed to ensure that they provide effective support for staff and young people. Senior leaders and staff recognise the need to give priority to streamlining the referral and planning processes for young people with barriers to their learning. They should ensure plans meet young people's needs more effectively.
- Exclusion rates continue to be too high. In a few cases, young people are excluded frequently. Senior leaders should continue to consider how best to meet the needs of young people facing particular challenges so that they feel included and engaged.
- Senior leaders and pupil support staff support well most young people who require additional support with their learning. They work closely with a wide range of partners to identify and review young people's needs regularly and plan appropriate interventions. These include young people who receive targeted specialist support from within the school and from the local community and those following bespoke timetables. Young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) benefit from valuable enhanced support in their learning. These lessons are calm and purposeful and staff adopt very nurturing approaches. A helpful next stage will be to develop a comprehensive overview of the targeted support provided for individual young people. This should ensure that interventions and review dates are recorded systematically. This will help to demonstrate more effectively how this group of young people are supported and to ensure that interventions are always appropriate.
- Whilst almost all teachers are aware of young people's needs, they do not always adapt their learning, teaching and assessment effectively to ensure these needs are met. This is leading to young people receiving inconsistent support in the classroom. Most teachers need to develop

how they deliver universal support to ensure that all young people experience learning which is appropriately challenging and well-paced. This would help young people to be more focused and motivated in their learning. Teachers would benefit from receiving additional whole school professional learning to help them become more confident in meeting the wide range of young people's needs more effectively. Specialist support staff should have a clearer role in supporting the professional development of colleagues.

- The school seeks young people's views in a few ways. Young people are involved in initiatives such as Young Leaders of Learning. They are also involved in work linked to 'HGIOURS?' A significant minority of young people would like to have more opportunities to speak to staff about their learning and pastoral needs. They would also like to share their views about aspects of school life more regularly with senior and middle leaders. Not all young people feel included in the school. A few young people experience challenges relating to their curriculum choices and learning and teaching. Others are challenged by peer relationships and the attitudes of a few people towards their protected characteristics. As a result of not feeling included, a few young people exclude themselves from areas of the school. A positive next step will be for staff to listen to and act on young people's views more consistently so that all young people feel included in the school community.
- Senior leaders and staff have been working well with young people and their parents to improve attendance. They work closely with partners, such as the home school liaison officer, to develop and implement strategies to encourage young people to attend more regularly. This is helping a few young people to attain and achieve. Based on information provided by the school, young people's attendance has improved at all stages over the five-year period from 2013-14 to 2018-19. In particular, attendance has improved at S6.
- The school is meeting specific duties of the Health Promotion and Nutrition Act. Staff protect the identity of young people entitled to free school meals, provide free access to water and promote the uptake of school lunches. Several factors are affecting the accuracy of the nutritional analysis therefore it is not possible at this time to conclude that the meals provided fully meet the required nutrient standards.

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

BGE

- The school reported that in 2018, almost all young people achieved third level in literacy. The majority of young people achieved fourth level literacy. Almost all young people achieved third level in numeracy. Most young people achieved fourth level numeracy. As staff continue to develop their approaches to moderation, reported figures of achievement of a CfE level in 2019, declined across all measures. Staff report that most young people in S3 achieved third level in literacy and less than half achieved fourth level. They report that, in numeracy, almost all young people achieved third level and most achieved fourth level. The decline in achievement levels is a result of improved reliability. Staff acknowledge that building further confidence and accuracy in professional judgments in literacy is an area of specific focus. More robust moderation activity, in particular working with colleagues outwith school, will support this focus.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

Senior phase

- In the three-year period since 2016/17, for those young people who remain in school until S6, there is an improving picture in the percentage who gain SCQF level 6 in both literacy and numeracy.
- In 2018/19, all young people who stayed on until S6 gained a literacy qualification at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better. In the past two years, across most measures, there is an improvement in the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 4 or better to level 6 in numeracy. This is significantly higher and much higher than the VC. Staff at all levels should work collegiately to identify the interventions and areas of stronger practice that support these emerging improvements.

Attainment of leavers in literacy and numeracy

- During the five-year period 2013/14 to 2017/18, there is no consistent picture of improvement in the percentage of young people leaving with qualifications in literacy and numeracy. In 2017/18, the percentage of leavers attaining at SCQF level 4 or better and level 5 or better in numeracy, improved to in line with the VC. The school recognises that it has a relatively high number of leavers at the end of S4 and S5.
- A few young people leave from S4 without having attained SCQF level 3 or better in literacy. The school has interventions in place to address this as a priority for improvement. Almost all leavers attain at SCQF level 4 or better, similarly significantly higher than the VC. In 2018, there is improvement in the percentage of leavers from S5 with SCQF level 5 or better to in line with the VC.

Attainment over time

- Links with associated primary schools are not yet leading to clear progression in young people's learning. The high number of schools from which young people transfer makes this a particular challenge. Senior leaders have begun to put in place procedures for tracking and monitoring young people's progress and attainment. These procedures are beginning to have a positive impact on monitoring progress and more effective planning of interventions to raise attainment in a few departments. Early warning alerts 'red lists' involve colleagues from the support for learning department who help design interventions for young people who require additional support in their learning. Staff across all subject areas are not yet using these alerts fully in either BGE or senior phase. Staff are at the early stages of tracking and monitoring all young people's progress across all year groups in all subject areas. These developing systems, which will support a strategic overview of progress, should include the monitoring of young people's participation in wider activities and associated skills development.
- In the period 2013/14 to 2016/17, average complementary tariff scores for all leavers fell from significantly lower than the VC to much lower than the VC. In 2017/18, this improves to being in line with the VC. In 2018/19, the average complementary tariff score for young people in S4 improved to its highest level in the five year period, bringing it in line with the VC.
- For young people who stay on to S6, complementary tariff scores improve to in line with the VC in 2017/18 and 2018/19. In particular, in 2018/19, there has been an improvement in the average tariff scores for those young people who stay on to S6. The tariff scores of the highest attaining 20% of S6 young people in 2017/18 and 2018/19 are significantly much higher than the VC.
- Over the past three years, the majority of young people were presented for six qualifications in S4. In 2019, the percentage of young people attaining one or more to six or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better improved to the highest percentage in the past five years. This brings the school to in line with the VC. As a percentage of the S5 roll, the percentage of young people in S5 attaining at SCQF level 5C or better remains consistent.
- In 2018/19, there are important improvements in the percentage of young people in S6, as a percentage of the S6 roll, who are attaining at both SCQF level 5C or better and level 5A or better. The percentage of young people attaining at five or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better is significantly much higher than the VC. The percentage of young people who take two or more qualifications at this level is also significantly much higher than the VC. Since 2016/17, the percentage of young people attaining at this level has improved to bring attainment increasingly closer to being in line with the VC across all numbers of qualifications. In S6, there were improvements in 2018/19 in the percentages of young people attaining one to six qualifications at both SCQF levels 6C or better and 6A or better.
- Since 2017-18, the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 7C or better is improving. Senior leaders and staff should work together to identify and share the strategies that are leading to improved attainment and achievement.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Staff and partners provide a wide range of opportunities for young people to achieve. Young people perform well in the challenges these opportunities offer. Through youth award programmes, young people are gaining leadership skills, improving confidence and learning to work as part of a team. The school has consistently high levels of participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Completion rates are improving year on year with a majority moving on to silver and gold awards. At S1, all young people participate in The Princes' Trust Achieve Award. Almost all young people completed this in 2018/19. Similarly, the school's strong

commitment to volunteering is helping many young people to gain Saltire Awards. The school achieved its target of 10,000 hours of volunteering this year. Young people attending the Leo Club are becoming global citizens through fundraising and gaining an awareness of social issues such as food poverty. They understand and value the skills and experience they are gaining. Participation in the Anne Frank Award helps raise awareness of social issues and inequality. As a result, Harlaw Academy is gaining recognition at the Children and Young People's Services Awards. Young people identify solutions to issues such as bullying and prejudice through the Defenders and Alliance groups. Staff should measure the impact of these interventions. A more effective system of tracking and monitoring would help staff to assess progression in young people's skills. It would also support them in meeting the needs of those at risk of missing out and building on each individual's achievements.

Equity for all learners

- The school's approaches to providing equity for all learners are becoming more effective. Those young people for whom potential socio-economic barriers exist are benefitting from participating in experiences which support health and wellbeing and programmes. These aim to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. Baselines have been established in order to measure impact in the further development of literacy skills. Importantly, target areas for development are those which young people themselves identify. Bespoke outdoor residential experiences help to develop resilience and self-confidence. Staff extended arrangements for mentoring when feedback from young people confirmed positive impact. Staff remain aware of the 'cost of the school day', evidenced in the eco-recycling of school uniform.
- In 2017/18, young people residing in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles one and two, left Harlaw Academy with average complementary tariff scores in line with national scores. In deciles three and four, where 33% of the school roll reside, tariff scores for leavers are significantly lower than national scores. These are improving from the previous session 2016-17 when they were significantly much lower than national scores. There is no consistent reduction of the attainment gap between those young people from the most and least deprived areas.
- Staff skills and confidence in analysing data are growing. This capacity building is at the early stages of leading to improved outcomes. SIMD and Free School Meals (FSM) entitlement data are incorporated into developing whole school and faculty tracking systems. The attainment of particular cohorts of young people including those who are care experienced, is monitored and tracked and appropriate interventions identified through the pupil support department.
- The percentage of young people leaving at the end of S4 for a positive destination has been significantly much lower than the VC since 2014/15. By S5 and S6 in 2017/18, this is improving to in line with the VC. In 2017/18, 99% of S6 school leavers entered a positive destination. According to data provided by the school, there is an improvement in the numbers of young people who have stayed on after S4 in 2018/19. The school is developing learning pathways and a clearer understanding of what good learning and teaching look like for a young person at Harlaw Academy. This should encourage more young people to remain at school to add to their qualifications.

Choice of QI : 2.7 Partnerships

- The development and promotion of partnerships
- Collaborative learning and improvement
- Impact on learners

- The school has a range of established partnerships. A few of these, for example collaboration with former pupils and employers, are enhancing learning for young people. Senior staff do not yet have a strategic overview of partnership working nor a shared vision of what partnerships are designed to achieve. Partnerships with local community groups such as Garthdee Liaison Committee are beginning to lead to joint working. Whilst a few partners understand the context of the school, there is now a need to ensure that they are more involved in strategic planning and in particular how they contribute to the development of the school improvement plan. A few partners have a clear purpose and rationale for joint working, for example transitions from primary to secondary school. There is scope to build on this and embed joint evaluation across schools in the cluster.
- The ASG provides good opportunities for collaboration. Its improvement plan clearly sets out its priorities and Harlaw Academy staff contribute to this. Further investment in evaluation across partners would now strengthen their ability to assess the impact on young people. Aberdeen City Council now provides a clearer Community Learning and Development (CLD) offer to schools. As a result, there are positive working relationships with youth workers based at Harlaw Academy and joint working to support the Defenders, a pupil support group, and S1 drop-in groups. There are a few examples of shared professional learning across partners such as approaches to child protection and internet safety. There is scope to build on this.
- The school has a productive partnership with Skills Development Scotland which results in useful support for young people. The School Partnership Agreement is jointly negotiated, approved and monitored routinely to review progress towards delivery. This also ensures that it meets the needs of young people. Careers staff provide helpful advice to young people including group work, individual consultations and input at parents' evenings and career events.
- Across the curriculum, there are a number of productive employer links supporting the school's partnership working with local industry in the public and private sectors. A few departments across the school can demonstrate where partnerships are adding value to the learning offer for young people. These partnerships provide useful vocational experience for some young people and enhance their learning journeys. The school is continuing to review and extend these important partnerships. Staff have not yet developed links with employers sufficiently to support fully DYW priorities. A few young people secure apprenticeships as a result of partnerships with local businesses and the school's knowledge of the local labour market. The school gathers feedback informally from most industry partners. This is a missed opportunity to include wider views to support improvement planning.
- Opportunities for young people to undertake qualifications outwith the school at North East Scotland College are available as part of Aberdeen City Council's senior phase partnership. These currently include vocational programmes, Highers and Foundation Apprenticeships.
- Parents express positive views, overall, about their partnership with the school. They feel that the school consults them on key decisions and that staff communicate well with them, including through social media. Primary-secondary transition arrangements are effective, having improved in recent years and pastoral support is strong. Parents find that the senior leadership team are approachable.

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.