

Summarised inspection findings

Dunfermline High School

Fife Council

4 March 2025

Key contextual information

School Name: Dunfermline High School
Council: Fife Council
SEED number: 5446139

Dunfermline High School is situated in the town of Dunfermline, in the south of the Fife Council area. The school has a roll capacity of 1,750, with a current roll of 1,420. The roll has been declining gradually in recent years. The headteacher has been in post for seven years. He is currently supported by five depute headteachers. Most members of the senior leadership team (SLT) have been appointed in recent years. One post is currently in an interim leadership position. There have been significant changes in SLT over the last few years. As a result of a revised catchment area, the school's Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) profile, has changed significantly in recent years. The majority of young people (around 50%), now reside in the least deprived SIMD quintile.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average.

Exclusions are generally below the national average.

In September 2023, 10.4% of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2023, 8.8% of pupils live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2023, the school reported that 38% of pupils had additional support needs.

1.3 Leadership of change

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

- Senior leaders led the community effectively through an inclusive consultation with stakeholders to create the current school vision and values. The agreed values of ambition, respect and commitment (ARC) are embedded in the language of the whole school community. Almost all members of the school community regularly use the ARC acronym when referring to the values in action. Almost all young people and staff demonstrate the values through their everyday interactions. The school vision of 'Our Learning, Our Opportunities, Our Responsibility' provides a basis for whole school planning for improvement and identification of priorities. Staff recognise and reward young people who demonstrate the values in a variety of ways such as messages to parents, certificates and through social media posts. Young people value this recognition and speak enthusiastically about the ways that staff celebrate their successes.
- There have been recent interim changes to the senior leadership team, and this has resulted in a number of changes to remits. Senior leaders are at the early stages of developing their skills and expertise within a few key areas of their new remits. They should work together to effectively share knowledge and good practice across the senior leadership team. This will help to maximise the effectiveness of new remits and their impact on outcomes for young people.
- Senior leaders consult with staff to identify key priorities for the School Improvement Plan (SIP) through self-evaluation. This ensures clear guidance on the direction of school improvement. Although the pace of change is considered carefully, there is scope for the pace of change to be increased in a few areas of the school's work. Almost all middle leaders work closely and effectively with colleagues to identify areas of faculty improvements that align with the SIP. Faculty Improvement Plans (FIPs) reflect key whole school priorities well whilst also effectively supporting faculty improvement. Middle leaders create detailed and helpful standards and qualities reports that reflect progress with FIPs and help to support the identification of priorities for the following year. There has been clear and measurable progress on a few priorities. Senior leaders should now consider how best to balance development activities to ensure parity across all SIP priorities. Senior leaders need to work more collaboratively to ensure that school improvement priorities progress at an improved pace.
- Young people contribute well to identifying and leading improvement priorities through roles in a variety of effective Pupil Empowerment Teams (PETs). Each PET is linked to a key theme from the SIP and young people work with staff to identify the area of focus for their team. The PET focussed on learning, teaching and assessment identified that the quality of teachers' feedback was inconsistent. Senior leaders prioritised this in SIPs and staff participated in key development activities. As a result, young people are able to identify positive changes in the quality of feedback they receive. The equalities PET worked with staff to identify a designated area that could be to be utilised for prayer and reflection. As a result, more young people feel

their beliefs are being respected and supported. A few young people involved in PETs have led presentations for staff and parents. This is supporting them to develop key communication skills and has helped develop their confidence. Senior leaders should continue to develop the range of approaches used to inform learners and staff better on how their views link with school improvement priorities.

- Senior leaders and almost all staff are fully aware of the social, economic and cultural context of the school. Senior leaders have developed a clear plan for the spend of their allocated Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). Senior leaders share plans for PEF with parents. There is scope to involve parents in more meaningful consultation for identifying priorities. Teaching staff know young people very well and have clear systems in place to ensure that they identify and address effectively any barriers to participation caused by socio-economic disadvantage.
- Teachers at all levels are proactive in leading projects to improve outcomes for young people. A significant number of staff have created or taken on additional 'project leadership' responsibilities. Projects such as developing a comprehensive programme of professional learning for staff around the language of learning and supporting colleagues undertaking professional enquiry, are leading to improved experiences for young people. Staff run a wide variety of clubs and activities that support young people to develop their skills and interests. Young people speak positively about the willingness of staff to offer activities tailored to their individual interests. Teachers also led on projects that focus on key areas such as the cost of the school day. They work with young people and parents to identify and remove any potential barriers to participation. This information is shared with all staff and has successfully increased staff knowledge and awareness of such issues. As a result, more young people are being supported to fully engage with all aspects of their learning. Staff in the Department of Additional Support (DAS) ensure an organised and progressive approach to meeting young people's needs. They display a commitment to building positive, respectful relationships and the school vision, values and aims are clear within their approach.
- All teaching staff participate in professional review and development linked to the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) professional standards. Staff identify areas that will support improving provision for young people. These identified priorities link well to faculty improvements and mostly reflect SIP priorities. Senior leaders have created a calendar of professional learning activities to support staff by sharing good practice. They also work with external organisations to provide effective and useful whole staff training opportunities. A successful example of this has been on the best ways to provide effective feedback to young people. A few staff are undertaking professional enquiry projects. Young people are benefitting from projects such as developing a reading culture across the school community as more young people are reading a wider range of texts.
- Planning for employability through the curriculum is continuing to develop, partly due to recent changes in remits. As a next step, senior leaders and staff should continue to embed the school's strategic actions for this area at a greater pace.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

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

- In almost all classes, staff and young people demonstrate positive and supportive relationships. Young people appreciate being treated respectfully as individuals by staff. Staff plan and deliver classroom activities that align well with the school's values of ambition, respect and commitment.
- Almost all young people are well behaved and work purposefully on their learning in a calm, positive and supportive environment. In a few classes, a few young people do not focus well on their work. Staff should work together to consider how appropriate pace and engaging activities can help to help improvement young people's engagement with their learning.
- In recent years, senior leaders and teaching staff have strategically prioritised improvements in learning, teaching and assessment. They have been effective in developing greater consistency in the quality of young people's classroom experiences. Senior and middle leaders support teachers very well through professional learning on classroom practice provided by external providers, local authority staff and colleagues within the school.
- All teachers plan classroom activities which follow the school's agreed 'Our Learning Standard'. Senior and middle leaders have put in place a well-designed programme of classroom visits to monitor the effectiveness of changes to practice. Data that senior leaders and teachers gather from classroom observations is then used to inform decision-making about aspects of learning and teaching which will be prioritised for future improvement. All young people are encouraged to contribute to the process of improving learning and teaching and as a result the majority feel that improvements are responsive to their views. Senior and middle leaders should now work with teachers, as planned, to implement the draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment policy. This will further improve consistency in young people's classroom experiences.
- In all classrooms, learning is related to three key questions, 'What are we learning?', 'What will success look like?' and 'What is my progress and next step?' In almost all classes, teachers begin lessons with helpful starter activities, often linked to previous learning activities. In almost all lessons, teachers explain the purpose of the day's learning and how young people can demonstrate success. In a few classes, teachers and young people work together to identify ways in which success can be assessed. Most teachers use plenaries effectively during lessons to review what has been achieved. In most classes, these plenaries helpfully refer back to the lesson's purpose. This clarity about learning activities means that almost all young people participate well in class.
- Almost all teachers use questioning well to check young people's knowledge and understanding. In a minority of lessons teachers use highly effective questioning techniques to

help young people to think deeply about their learning and develop higher order thinking skills. This helps young people to show high levels of independence in their learning and lead aspects of their own learning. As planned, senior leaders should explore ways of using teachers who are most skilled in this area to support other staff to develop further their questioning techniques.

- The majority of staff use digital technology well to support learning in the classroom. Young people who need support with their learning benefit from a range of individualised digital supports. Senior leaders and teachers should share the most effective examples of the use of digital technology more widely so that all young people benefit from the best practice already in place.
- All teachers have access to information about young people's learning needs. In the majority of lessons, teachers adjust activities effectively to allow all learners to access their learning. Senior leaders and teachers should work together with young people to explore ways in which learning can be planned more effectively to ensure all learning needs are met consistently.
- In the majority of lessons teachers make brief reference to the school's skills framework. In a few lessons, teachers very skilfully help young people make connections between their class work and skills for learning, life and work. Teachers should, as planned, continue to develop ways in which a focus on skills development can be built into their planning of learning.
- In all faculties, teachers provide purposeful verbal and written feedback that supports young people to understand their learning and how to improve. This includes formalised feedback at set times in the year and ongoing feedback within lessons with reference to success criteria. Young people feel that the feedback on their learning supports their understanding of their progress, strengths and next steps. As a result, young people are increasingly confident in discussing their progress and how they can further improve in their learning.
- Almost all young people in the senior phase have a clear understanding of their attainment and progress. Senior leaders have developed a reporting system for the broad general education (BGE) that supports young people's understanding of their progress within a level. As a result, most young people in the BGE understand the level they are working within. Young people regularly reflect on their progress and record this on an online platform. Young people engage in one-to-one learning conversations with teachers which help them to identify progress and next steps in learning. In the most effective examples, for example in social subjects, young people complete information in advance of conversations which the teacher considers and uses to coach learners as they form their next steps. Young people value these conversations. Senior leaders should now take steps to ensure high quality conversations take place regularly across all departments.
- Teachers use regular summative assessment to check young people's progress in learning in all departments. Almost all teachers check understanding and progress through formative assessment activities and ongoing dialogue with learners throughout lessons. In the strongest examples, teachers use this information to adapt learning in the moment to ensure that young people understand and are being challenged. Effective examples of formative assessment are shared through the school's Teaching & Learning Toolkit to support professional learning and practice.
- Increasingly, teachers use the information gathered from plenaries to adapt their planning and direct next steps in learning within the lesson or in follow-up lessons. As a result, young people

are being increasingly supported in consolidating their understanding and progressing in their learning.

- Teachers in almost all faculties take part in planned moderation and verification activities with colleagues. They have a particular focus on the application of national standards, especially in National Qualifications in the senior phase. There are examples of staff engaging in effective moderation activities within faculties and across schools to support the improvement of learning, teaching and assessment in the BGE, including with primary colleagues. As planned, senior leaders should ensure a more coordinated approach to developing the understanding and use of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle across the school.
- Teachers track and monitor the progress of young people across all stages. In the senior phase, senior leaders, pastoral staff and curriculum leaders use this information well to plan interventions to support young people not on track to achieve. Teachers and curriculum leaders track and monitor the progress of learners in the BGE and use this information to report to parents. Further development is required to ensure consistency in the way the information gathered is used to plan effective interventions for learners within the class.
- Teachers working with young people attending the DAS have a clear understanding of each young person's learning requirements. They develop and implement strategies which effectively meet young people's needs. They use these strategies in their lesson planning and ensure that teaching approaches are highly personalised. This includes, for example, the use of assistive digital technologies.
- Senior leaders and staff within the DAS should continue to build links beyond Dunfermline High School. They should consider how to increase partnership working with similar schools or departments. This might include joint training or working with other schools to moderate academic assessment. They should also consider how to increase opportunities for young people's families to engage with their child's learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The curriculum rationale for the BGE and the senior phase have recently been reviewed and updated by senior and middle leaders and teachers. The rationale focusses on ambition and is explicitly linked to the school's context, vision and values. The rationale does not currently promote parity of esteem between existing Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) courses and emerging vocational pathways. Senior leaders should ensure that the curriculum rationale and the language used to describe vocational and personalised pathways both values and serves the ambitions of all learners.
- Staff offer an effective transition programme to support young people as they move from primary to secondary education. A few faculties offer highly effective transition projects. There is inconsistent practice in the approaches to sharing and analysing data with primary colleagues in their cluster learning community. In a few curriculum areas, subject staff and primary colleagues engage in collaborative planning of learning, teaching and assessment. This is helping to develop a shared understanding of standards and to ensure continuity in challenge in the early stages of S1. Senior leaders should improve curriculum transition to ensure that the existing effective practice is extended to all curriculum areas.
- Young people receive their national entitlement to experience the full range of experience and outcomes across all curriculum areas at Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level by the end of S3. There are inconsistencies in learner experience in S3. In a few faculties, an appropriately challenging S3, using experiences and outcomes and National benchmarks to plan learning, teaching and assessment at the fourth level prepares learners to attain well in the senior phase. Senior leaders should support all faculties to ensure where appropriate, young people in the final year of the BGE have opportunities to experience learning at fourth CfE level, preparing them appropriately for the senior phase.
- The school's curriculum meets the minimum national recommendation in relation to physical education (PE) but does not ensure all young people receive their entitlement to a second additional language during the BGE in line with national recommendations. Senior leaders should ensure all young people across the senior phase receive their entitlement to progressive and meaningful learning in religious and moral education (RME).
- Young people are supported well to make subject choices at key milestones. Careers education is supported in partnership with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) careers advisors. Young people access valuable information through learner pathway information packs, the school website or through individual conversation with their teachers and pupil support teachers. The Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme is underpinned by the Career Education Standard 3-18 and young people are having their entitlements delivered.
- Staff, in partnership with the local college and local authority, offer a range of Foundation Apprenticeships. Some faculties have broadened their curriculum to include a limited number of vocational programmes. These programmes do not yet reflect the career intentions of learners or emerging labour market intelligence. Senior leaders should work with stakeholders and produce a revised senior phase curriculum framework offering with a range of well-considered pathways designed to meet the needs of all learners.
- Staff have engaged in some early work around the development of a school Skills Framework, identifying the priority skills that they will develop in the young people. Since identifying and highlighting these priorities, staff have engaged in limited work on how these skills should be

promoted or developed. A few staff are using these within their planning for learning, teaching and assessment. Senior leaders should review the skills framework with SDS. School leaders should strengthen plans to ensure that all staff embed these revised skills consistently within their learning intentions and their teaching and assessment approaches.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Most parents appreciate the regular feedback they receive about their child's learning. A few parents of young people in S1-S3 feel that the school's reports do not make clear what progress their children are making in their learning. They would appreciate further clarity and consistency on the language used across the school so they can support their child's learning at home. Most families welcome the return to in person parents' evenings.
- Most parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions and suggestions or to address any issues. A few families recognise staff respond positively to parental communication when required. Most parents feel that teachers know their child well and are supportive of their wellbeing.
- Senior leaders share and discuss the improvement plan with the Parent Council and seek parental views on the use of PEF.
- Parents appreciate the way that school staff and partners support a range of sporting, musical, debating and other events in the school.

2.1 Safeguarding

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

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

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

- Positive relationships between staff and young people supports a respectful, calm ethos across the school. This is underpinned by the refreshed positive relationships policy and the schools' values of ambition, respect and commitment. All staff have undertaken professional learning in de-escalation and rights-based practice. Staff training on nurture, trauma and wellbeing will continue to support the positive culture in the school.
- Staff are developing their understanding of wellbeing indicators and what this means for young people in their departments. This is beginning to provide a shared language and responsibility of wellbeing in a few departments across the school. The wellbeing pupil empowerment team is effectively supporting this ongoing work. At a universal level young people are familiar with the language of wellbeing but they cannot make the connections between wellbeing indicators, their learning or development. Young people who receive targeted support use this language more regularly to assess their wellbeing. Guidance staff are at the early stage of using a formal system of monitoring wellbeing of pupils from S1 to S4. It is too early to evidence the impact of this process. As identified, a next step for the guidance team is to expand tracking of wellbeing in the senior school. This will ensure that guidance staff are monitoring the wellbeing of all young people.
- Young people in S1 to S4 benefit from a progressive PSE programme which covers wellbeing. There is a need for learners to have more of a say in what and how they learn to ensure that learning is relevant to them. Young people and staff recognise the need for more regular PSE inputs in S5 and S6 and the need to review continuously the PSE curriculum.
- Enhanced transitions for children moving from primary to secondary is carefully considered for those who may require additional support. Young people speak positively about the reduction in anxiety this extra support provides. The 'See Me See Change' Ambassadors deliver mental health awareness sessions to primary seven learners. This includes exploring stigma and discrimination associated with mental health. The trained ambassadors can talk confidently about the skills they developed through this programme, for example, communication, leadership and empathy.
- Staff in the support bases meet the wellbeing needs of young people very well. As a result, young people feel nurtured, safe and included in these safe spaces. Nurture and academic support are provided through well planned individual programmes of work. This is supporting improvement in personal development, achievement and attainment. Targeted support groups run regularly in the nurture base, such as enterprise, employability and wider achievement. These interventions are showing early signs of improved attendance and engagement.

- Young people within the Department of Additional Support (DAS) enjoy attending school and feel safe and confident in their learning environment. They participate in health and wellbeing lessons to ensure they have an appropriate understanding of personal and social issues.
- Almost all young people within the DAS feel supported as individuals. They access support from a variety of partners such as Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language therapists and other services offering therapeutic interventions. A few young people access time in a specialist school with a pool. This supports posture and movement through physiotherapy techniques. Senior leaders should continue to seek opportunities for young people to access specialised provision. This includes support from community partners, such as further access to inclusive sporting opportunities.
- All young people working within the DAS have plans which detail strategies to assist them in their learning and care. These include summary of support plans, Co-ordinated Support Plans, (CSPs) where appropriate, and multi-agency plans. These are reviewed when necessary and at least annually with young people, their families, partners and staff. As a result, young people are cared for well. They feel safe and happy within the learning environment and support for their health and personal care needs.
- Young people who require targeted interventions are well supported through individual work, small group provisions and alternative curricular activities. House teams and multi-agency partners meet regularly to plan, review and monitor the supports put in place for these learners. Young people and parents are included in these plans, enabling them to take ownership of their progress. This is resulting in positive outcomes for specific young people and is helping them to feel included and respected. Senior leaders and the guidance team have worked together to create the 'One Stop Shop'. This extensive online document is designed to provide an overview of information and strategies to help staff better meet the needs of all young people. Information contained in this document is not always accurate nor updated, and staff are unclear about the purpose of some of the information available to them. Senior leaders should review their approaches to sharing information to ensure teachers have what they need to effectively support the wellbeing of young people. This will also help teachers to more effectively plan tasks and activities set at the right level of challenge for all learners in their classes.
- Staff recognise the importance of improving young people's attendance and late coming. Senior leaders have put in place a range of supports to encourage attendance and punctuality, including a breakfast club and 'ARC' awards. Additional staff offer creative and engaging interventions, supported well by partners, for young people who struggle to maintain regular attendance at school. This is resulting in a few young people improving their attendance at school. Whilst overall school attendance is in line with the national average, there is a need for a strategic approach to attendance which includes strengthened procedures, such as clear roles and responsibilities. This will enhance the identification and support for the few young people who attend school but not class, with a view to improving their engagement in learning.
- The recently reviewed Positive Relationships and Behaviour (PRB) policy is providing staff with a clear framework to support the consistent management of behaviour across the school. Staff are continuing to embed this new framework. A few young people do not demonstrate positive behaviour in class or in areas within the school building. The rate of exclusions is generally in line with the national average. It does not however show consistent trends of improvement. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop nurturing, relational based approaches to make sure all young people feel included and respected within their school community.

- There are clear systems for identifying, responding to and recording incidences of bullying. Senior leaders and guidance staff currently record incidents of bullying appropriately and are reactive to trends and patterns in bullying behaviour. This results in planned curricular inserts on topics such as misogyny and anti-racism. Staff have worked in partnership with a national anti-bullying organisation and has recently been recognised for its fully collaborative, stakeholder approach to anti-bullying. For example, staff have worked closely and effectively with young people in the equalities pupil empowerment team (PET) to revise the anti-bullying policy. Senior pupils are also involved in the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme, and anti-bullying week is a high-profile annual event which helps raise awareness about the importance of kindness and respect. A few young people report bullying to be impacting adversely their wellbeing at school.
- Young people across the school work well with young people in DAS. A few young people support those from DAS to access clubs and activities at lunch times. For example, Sports Leaders work with young people with mobility difficulties. This is leading to a more diverse range of experiences for young people across the school and is widening access to social experiences for young people attending DAS.
- Young people's understanding of equality is improved by the school's approach to promoting rights. This is underpinned by the school's value of respect and the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The 'equalities pupil empowerment team' has led the expansion of the prayer and reflection group. This included a presentation to staff on Ramadan. Young people report that the new space allows more people to have valuable prayer time, it makes them feel included and closer to their faith in school.
- The re-introduction of the LGBTQ+ club for junior learners is appreciated by young people. The school previously achieved an accredited award for their work in this area and they have plans in place to continue this work.
- Young people learn about equalities, diversity and discrimination through some subject areas and PSE. A next step for senior leaders is to have a strategic overview of where this learning takes place, and how learning promotes and celebrates different cultures, religions and neurodiversity. This will strengthen the work the school are doing on rights and will support young people to recognise and challenge discrimination or prejudice behaviour.
- 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. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

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

- In 2022/23, almost all young people achieved literacy at CfE third level, by the end of S3. This was a significant increase from previous years in literacy, where overall most young people achieved CfE third level in literacy. In 2022/23, most young people achieved fourth level in literacy and numeracy, by the end of S3. This is a significant increase from previous years, where overall the majority achieved CfE fourth level in literacy and numeracy. Further work is required to improve the reliability of data in numeracy. Continued development of the numeracy curriculum to ensure that young people experience a full BGE curriculum in mathematics, will help to improve this.
- In a few subject areas, teachers engage in robust moderation activity with colleagues from beyond the school and local authority. This is helping staff in these faculties to apply national standards and expectations to planning for learning, teaching and assessment, with increased confidence. Senior leaders should ensure that teachers in all faculties engage in regular, robust moderation activity with colleagues beyond the school. This will help to ensure more robust plans for BGE courses and for greater consistency of quality in learning, teaching and assessment.

Senior phase

Leavers

Literacy

- Over the last five years, positive levels of achievement in literacy have been maintained for leavers across a range of SCQF levels. The percentage of leavers achieving SCQF level 3 or 4 or better has been consistently in line with, and often significantly much higher than the virtual comparator (VC). The percentage of young people who left school achieving literacy at SCQF level 5 or better or level 6, has been consistently in line with the VC. This improved to being significantly higher than the VC for level five or better in 2022/23.

Numeracy

- For leavers, positive levels of achievement have been maintained in numeracy over the last five years across a range of SCQF levels. The percentage of leavers achieving SCQF level 4 or better in numeracy over the last five years has consistently been significantly higher than the VC. The percentage of leavers achieving SCQF level 5 or better has mostly been significantly higher or much higher than the VC, over the last five years. For those achieving SCQF level 6 numeracy, this has been broadly in line with the VC.

- Over the last five years, very few young people have left school with no literacy or numeracy award at SCQF level 3 or better, as a minimum.

Young people with additional support needs (ASN)

- For young people leaving school who have additional support needs, their attainment in literacy and numeracy has been consistently in line with the VC. At all levels from SCQF level 3 or better to SCQF level 6, young people's performance in both literacy and numeracy has seen a positive pattern of being consistently in line with and often above.

Cohorts

Literacy

- At S4, by S5 and by S6, young people's attainment in literacy has been relatively stable over the last five years and generally in line with the VC. Overall at S4, by S5 and S6, at SCQF levels 4 or better to SCQF level 6, attainment in literacy has remained broadly in line with the VC. There is no clear pattern of improvement.

Numeracy

- At S4 at SCQF levels 3 and 4 or better, young people's attainment in numeracy has been very strong and significantly higher than the VC. By S5, young people's attainment in numeracy has been broadly in line with the VC over the past five years from SCQF level 3 or better to SCQF level 5 or better. There is a need to improve attainment at SCQF level 6. This shows no consistent pattern of improvement and in recent years is often significantly lower than the VC.
- Most young people's BGE experience in S3 mathematics is overtaken to achieve a National 4 numeracy qualification. Senior and middle leaders need to review this. This will help to address improved entry for National 5 mathematics and applications of mathematics. This will also help to improve outcomes for more young people at National 5 level in S4. Senior leaders need to support subject areas where young people are dual presented for certain National Qualifications. This is especially the case when dual presentation is not adding value to young people's outcomes or is hindering their overall progress due to an over-abundance of assessment, for example.

Attainment over time

BGE

- Approaches to whole school tracking and monitoring of young people's progress, attainment and interventions to help them to be successful, are improving. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to develop this both at whole school and faculty level. Currently, a few faculties have robust approaches to tracking and monitoring. This needs to be rolled out to all faculties to help ensure all groups of young people are sufficiently supported and challenged in their learning.
- In curriculum areas other than literacy and numeracy, the majority of young people achieve third level by the end of S3. A minority of young people achieve fourth level by the end of S3. The robustness of CfE of teacher professional judgement is not yet consistently strong across all subject areas. Strengthening approaches to moderation will help to address and improve this.
- There is currently no whole school approach to developing literacy and numeracy as a responsibility of all teachers across all subject areas. Staff leading literacy have developed robust approaches to ensuring their planning aligns well to national standards and expectations. As a result, all groups of young people attain very well in literacy and English. Ongoing work is required to ensure that approaches to improving attainment in mathematics

and numeracy is stronger. Staff need to ensure that more young people experience greater levels of challenge and aspiration in mathematics and numeracy.

Senior phase

Leavers

- Over the past five years when using average complimentary tariff scores, young people's overall attainment has been consistently in line with the VC. Positive levels of attainment have been maintained overall.
- For the lowest attaining 20% of young people, attainment has been consistently in line with the VC. Performance has increased slightly, over the last five years. For the middle attaining 60% of young people, again, overall attainment has been consistently in line with the VC and has improved slightly. For the highest attaining 20% of young people, overall attainment has been in line with the VC in three out of the last five years. In two out of the last five years, this has been significantly lower than the VC.

Cohorts

- At S4 over the last five years, overall attainment of all groups of young people has been broadly in line with the VC. There is no clear pattern of improvement over the past five years.
- By S5, based on the S4 roll, attainment has been broadly in line with the VC over the last five years. In most measures, there have been slight improvements over the last five years.
- By S6, based on the S4 cohort, attainment of the middle attaining 60% of young people and the highest attaining 20% of young people, has mostly been significantly lower than the VC. The overall attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people by S6, has remained in line with the VC, with no pattern of improvement over the last five years. As a priority, senior leaders need to address the school's S6 offer and experience. This needs to be designed to maximise young people's outcomes, experiences and skills development.

Breadth and depth

- At S4, the percentage of young people achieving one or more to seven or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better has been broadly in line with the VC. For those young people presented in eight or more qualifications at S4, there are no signs of this adding value to their attainment and progress. In the latest year, 2023/24, 84% of young people were presented for 9 or more courses and yet no-one achieved these at SCQF level 5 or better. At SCQF level 5A or better at S4, young people's attainment has been broadly in line with the VC over the past five years for one or more to seven or more subjects.
- By S5, the percentage of young people attaining one or more to five or more awards at SCQF 6C or better, shows improvement in recent years. In the latest year, 2023/24, performance is at its highest level, including top quality passes.
- By S6, young people's attainment overall for one or more award to four or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better, has been variable. Young people's attainment at level 6A in S6 has been broadly in line with the VC in three out of the last five years for two or more to five or more awards, although shows a decline. Attainment at SCQF levels 7C or better and 7A has been broadly significantly lower and much lower than the VC, over the last five years and shows a decline.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- The school's Recognising and Celebrating Achievements strategy is well developed. Young people understand and value the recognition they gain through participating in a wide range of lunchtime and after school clubs. Young people are recognised routinely for their achievements via award ceremonies and achievement ties. These are leading to a sense of pride across the school community. Many young people are developing a range of skills and attributes both in and out of the school. Senior leaders recognise that there is need to continue to develop and embed the skills framework to fully capture young people's achievements.
- Based on the school's values of Ambition, Respect and Commitment (ARC) the majority of young people are recognised for and value their achievements. ARC awards reward young people for adopting positive attitudes to learning when achieving in sporting and cultural activities.
- A group of young people involved in Columba 1400 are becoming more successful learners whilst contributing to the life of the school. Following a successful trip to Skye, they are applying the skills they gained to plan an input for staff at an in-service day.
- Many young people across the school describe being able to speak more confidently in public. They describe how this is leading to them taking on challenging and enjoyable leadership roles. Through a wide range of programmes including Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP), debating, 'RevivR' and the Duke of Edinburgh's award, young people are taking increasing responsibility for themselves whilst contributing to their community.
- Volunteering is recognised and valued across the school. A group of young people, mostly in the senior school, delivers coaching to primary school children in partnership with Active Schools. This helps them gain important skills and experience. The Young Ambassadors Programme helps a few young people to develop skills they will use in later life. Around 50 young people achieve Saltire awards for volunteering each year.
- Senior leaders and staff work well with a range of community partners to support achievement. These include Active Schools, the Pars Foundation, NHS and counselling services. The impact of this collaborative work could be more effectively captured if partners were more involved in self-evaluation linked to the school improvement plan.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders consult with the Parent Council and the wider Parent Forum, on the deployment of PEF. In 2023/24 the consultation process involved stakeholders, including parents and carers, being invited to an event so that ideas could be discussed and feedback given by senior leaders.
- Pupil Equity Funding has been used well so that more pupils benefit from taking part in events such as breakfast club, school trips and the prom for S6 pupils. Staff work sensitively with families to discuss any financial barriers to young people's participation in such activities and partnership working.
- Effective partnership working with local businesses has reduced costs associated with the breakfast club and has now expanded provision to a wider group of pupils. A group of young people now attends breakfast club and makes use of the gym facilities prior to school to enhance their health and wellbeing. Local partnerships have also enabled the school to provide 'take what you need' boxes of toiletries with the pupil charities committee leading on this work. A next step for senior leaders is to track and monitor the participation of young people and families in these

activities. This will help to measure the impact of these interventions on individuals and groups of learners.

- Effective literacy and numeracy interventions are in place for young people residing in SIMD 1 and 2, those in receipt of free school meals, disengaged from education and care experienced pupils. In S1 to S5, young people engage in online learning with a primary specialist employed to support work in numeracy through PEF and additionality within the literacy team. Lessons run in a number of curricular areas on a weekly basis that allow young people to have regular contact with their learning and to achieve success. In 2023/24 all young people involved in this programme in the senior phase secured SQA qualifications and for those in SIMD 1 and 2, overall attainment improved. In the BGE, senior leaders monitor learners' progress to support them. This helps to ensure that interventions are timely and meaningful to keep learners on track with agreed targets.
- Almost all young people consistently leave school to a positive destination.

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.