

Summarised inspection findings

Lathallan School

Independent

11 December 2018

Key contextual information:

Lathallan School is a non-selective, independent, co-educational day and boarding school offering early learning and childcare and primary and secondary education for 250 learners. The headmaster is supported by two depute heads and head of junior school. Brotherton Castle, the home of Lathallan, offers accommodation to pupils who wish to be full, weekly or flexible boarders. Lathallan School's wide catchment area is served by daily coach runs from Aberdeen and Stonehaven to the north, and Brechin, Montrose and Finavon to the South. Average class sizes are around 12 learners. The school has recently benefited from the addition of a new science centre.

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

Overall

- The school's vision is for all children and young people to achieve their full potential through learning at Lathallan. This vision was decided in consultation with all learners, the school's Board of Directors, staff and parents. The vision is supported well through clear values of confidence, opportunity, respect, endeavour and modesty. These values are understood and were demonstrated very well by learners and staff during the inspection visit. School leaders, staff members and young people are rightly proud of the school's very positive ethos. The school community, led by the headmaster, has worked very well together to provide learners with a stimulating and engaging learning environment, including very high quality outdoor learning.
- The headmaster has been in post for almost ten years. In his time leading the school, he has demonstrated a strong ambition to take the school forward. He has been very effective in developing the school from being a small preparatory school, to a successful all through, 3-18 school. He has a clear focus on providing an innovative learning environment that is fun and that maximises each young person's potential. He is supported by two depute heads and a head of junior school with differing complementary skills which, together, support the work of the school well.
- The Board of Directors provide helpful guidance to the school. They place a strong focus on child protection and the assurance of pastoral care. They support the headmaster in an atmosphere of trust. Directors are committed to ensuring that all learners benefit from a well-considered, individualised curriculum. They recognise the need to continue to broaden and develop their remit, to support, for example, the consistency of learning and teaching across the school and the further development of young people's skills linked to life and work.

Junior stages

- The head of the junior school is responsible for leading and managing the day-to-day running of the junior school. He is passionate about the development of outdoor learning and delivers this very well. He is a very strong role model for the school's vision and values and he is well respected by all staff and learners. He is supported by the hardworking assistant head of the junior school. Over their long-standing time in post, they each demonstrate dedication and commitment to the school within their wide-ranging duties and roles in the wider life of the school community. They each take time to ensure they know children very well as individuals. Teachers and support staff in the junior school demonstrate their commitment to children and to the Lathallan School community, by taking on additional responsibilities. They value the opportunities available to them to collaborate and share practice. To build on this, the school should continue with plans to extend the opportunities for junior school staff to share practice with, and to visit other schools. This will help to highlight further improvements, whilst providing valuable opportunities for teachers to explore best practice in similar school settings.
- The head of the junior school evaluates the quality of provision in a number of ways. This can include observations of classroom practice; seeking the views of stakeholders via questionnaires; and by reviewing each child's folder of work on a termly basis. Class teachers each maintain a record of children's progress across their learning. We have asked the school to develop a more streamlined, strategic system for monitoring and tracking the attainment and progress of children. This will allow promoted staff to pinpoint more swiftly and accurately where children require additional support or challenge, in order that all children make the best possible progress in all areas of their learning.

Senior stages

- Senior leaders use an annual cycle of review to identify priorities for improvement. This is further refined by the addition of termly departmental reviews and quality assurance meetings with staff. Whole school improvement actions are agreed in consultation with staff and the Board of Directors, and then shared with parents. In addition, subject departments provide their own action plans which link into the whole school priorities. Opportunities are available for unpromoted staff to participate in senior leadership meetings. This develops their understanding of school strategy and supports their personal development. There is clear impact from the agreed actions in improvement plans over the last three years. However, there is scope for improvement priorities to be more clearly defined as measurable outcomes for young people; to be more evidence-based; and to be better linked to results from attainment data analysis, including from the identification of any negative trends. We have asked school leaders to develop a more robust overview of the systems in place to track and monitor attainment. Learners would benefit from more focussed, personal targets. This will help to maximise success for all learners, including for those participating in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations. There is scope to develop further a more strategic role for middle leaders, in assuring consistency in the overall quality of learning and teaching and in monitoring measurable improvement in attainment over time.
- Teachers comment that senior leaders are approachable. They recognise benefits from all senior leaders taking a teaching role. The headmaster is reviewing and revising all senior leadership remits to enable a clearer, strategic focus on school improvement. Senior leaders should continue to develop further a culture where challenge and support across the school is welcomed and seen as an essential part of school improvement. In addition, senior leaders should continue to develop teacher collegiality with a focus on inquiry skills across the school. There is a well-established programme of in-house professional learning opportunities which should continue to be developed further.

- Each staff member has a recognised leadership role. This includes taking responsibility for a wide variety of sports activities, The Duke of Edinburgh and John Muir awards and for the strong success in participation in outdoor learning. Staff engage regularly in professional dialogue at regular departmental meetings which is supporting their professional development, for example, in engaging with the new National Benchmarks to develop confidence in understanding standards. Further work is needed within and beyond the school to ensure moderation standards are accurate consistently. Teachers have very busy timetables. This is limiting the amount of collegiate development work. They would benefit, when budgets allow, from more time to share the best practice in innovative learning and teaching strategies.
- Pupil leadership is developing well. For example, young people develop responsible attitudes through acting as pupil mentors, mountain leaders, house captains and school senate representatives. Young people comment they would like their views to be heard more, including being given more opportunity to influence the direction of their learning. All S6 learners are benefiting from useful careers advice and participate in a supportive annual careers leadership retreat. This is enabling better individualised pathways during their final year of learning, to prepare them well for their post-school destinations. Senior leaders are at the early stages in the implementation of both the Work Placement Standards and 3-18 Career Education Standards. Strategies now need to be put in place to make best use of this national advice, including the development of impactful work experience.
- Senior leaders and staff liaise well with parents. School surveys are used positively to ascertain parents views and opinions. Parents appreciate the variety of forums provided where they share ideas and influence school improvement. The parents' council supports the school well through fundraising activities. There is considerable scope to involve young people and parents more in shaping school improvement. Parents welcome the increased use of digital media to share Lathallan's successes. The headmaster understands the need to develop further methods of communication with parents. The school has recently commenced operating a helpful text message service and is making more use of digital media to enhance parental communication. Staff should consider strategies to encourage parents to be more involved in family learning including the use of digital learning. In the pre-inspection questionnaire. Thirty-nine percent of parents did not feel the school organises activities where they can learn together with their child and 26% of parents did not feel the school gives them advice on how to support their child's learning at home.
- In the boarding house, all staff are committed to ensuring that young people in their care are well looked after, well supported and happy. Led capably by the head of boarding, staff work well together as a team. They share information with each other timeously and collaborate effectively to make well-informed decisions about aspects of provision. They seek out good practice locally and nationally, to help to meet the needs of young people in their care. Close links and effective communication between the house staff, pastoral care staff and teachers ensure appropriate links between young people's school and boarding experiences. Boarding staff actively seek out the views of young people and value their opinions. As a result, young people feel they have a voice in the life of the house. They spoke very positively about the improved food choices at breakfast time; in securing a new TV/film entertainment system for leisure time; and different excursions they would like to participate in.
- The school has established very strong relationships with a number of partner organisations. These partners offer a wide range of activities and work closely with school staff and learners. Improving approaches to joint self-evaluation will assist the school and its partners

to better understand the impact of the broad range of work completed and thus provide a clearer understanding of developing priorities. There is also scope for partners to plan collaboratively with school staff in order to link their work to Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. From there, staff can and partners can consider if there are additional learner qualifications to be gained from the skills young people acquire through their experiences at Lathallan.

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

Overall

- The relationships between staff, children and young people are a great strength of the school. One of the school's core values is respect, and this is reflected very well in the quality of the interactions between adults and pupils. Children and young people are keen to achieve and almost all speak with enthusiasm about their school. Staff pride themselves on knowing every pupil well and this was clearly evident in all discussions with inspectors.
- The quality of teaching across the school is good overall. The school should continue to build greater consistency in teaching approaches across departments, subjects and stages. This consistency will help to ensure appropriate levels of challenge and pace for every child and young person. Learners have constructive ideas to contribute to the development of the curriculum. They are ready and able to help to lead the direction of teaching and learning in the school.

Junior stages

- At all stages of the junior school, Children are motivated and engaged in their learning. Teachers routinely share the purpose of lessons with children. In the best examples, learning intentions are focused on the skills that are required to achieve the success criteria. Teachers should develop a shared understanding of the use of learning intentions and effective success criteria to ensure greater consistency across the junior school classes.
- Children have a good awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Most were able to discuss with inspectors the support they receive from staff to ensure they make positive progress. In the most effective practice, individualised long-term targets have been set by children themselves and they are aware of what is required of them to achieve these targets. Junior school staff should continue to strive towards consistent practice in this area of their work. Children feel that they are given a voice in most areas of the curriculum, for example in social studies, to shape the learning opportunities within the class topic. Teachers should continue to build upon this practice.
- The overall quality of teaching in the junior school is good with some very good examples. Increased opportunities for staff to share practice will allow some of the very positive teaching that was observed by inspectors, to be shared more widely. Promoted staff endeavour to carry out formal teacher observations at various points in the year, with shared dialogue between the senior leadership team and class teachers. This process should be extended to allow for greater depth of professional dialogue. Continued moderation of teaching and learning

approaches combined with regular opportunities for peer observation, will help provide greater consistency in teaching.

- Staff have worked together to form a shared understanding of what makes an effective lesson. In the majority of lessons observed by inspectors, the pace of learning was appropriate and some extension work was offered to more able pupils. For example, in mathematics a few children were given more complex calculations. Achieving greater consistency with their approaches for pace and challenge should now become a focus for the junior school. There is also capacity to extend the element of children's choice of challenge across most classes.
- Overall, lessons are planned well in the junior school. Children are provided with regular opportunities to work in pairs, groups or as individuals. In a few classes, there was evidence of differentiated learning activities and/or outcomes. Teachers should continue to consider a more consistent approach towards the use of differentiation in order to better meet the needs of all children, including those who are more able. Children spoke positively to inspectors regarding the support and help they receive from their teachers. Teachers are very approachable which is appreciated by children.
- Across the junior school classes, assessment approaches are appropriate. They inform teachers' understanding of children's progress, and evaluative comments are given to children in their work on a daily basis. Standardised assessments for literacy and numeracy are used well to track children's progress annually as part of assessment procedures. The results of assessments are shared between staff and leaders for discussion and planning. Additional support for learning is provided for children who have been identified as needing extra help. Appropriate Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) are in place and these are monitored regularly by teachers. Moderation of teachers' assessments is required at a more robust level, and, as time allows, the school should create more opportunities for staff to share standards.
- Parents receive regular feedback on their child's progress. Class teachers discuss the class tracking folders with the children on a regular basis. Children enjoy taking these folders home each term. This allows parents to engage with the progress being made. Children speak very positively about their folders and enjoy monitoring their own progress (in consultation with their teacher) within the levels for literacy and numeracy. The head of junior school monitors the levels that each child is working at, by reviewing all children's folders each term. In order to tackle unnecessary bureaucracy, the school should introduce a streamlined approach with a systematic overview of the children's attainment. This overview should lead to informed conversations to target support ensuring that all children, including the more able, are challenged well in their learning.
- The school makes very good use of its surroundings and outdoor learning is a key strength. There is evidence of well-planned, interdisciplinary learning, where core learning is enriched by fun, meaningful and relevant outdoor experiences. There is a progressive and cohesive plan of co-curricular outdoor learning excursions offered, which promotes confidence and independence in children.
- Within the junior school, the use of digital technologies was limited to internet research, online activities and the use of interactive whiteboards during the lessons observed by inspectors. When developing an over-arching teaching and learning policy, the school should consider plans for the further expansion of their digital curriculum.

Senior stages

- In almost all lessons we observed, relationships between learners and their teachers were very positive. Staff know their pupils well as individuals. This is a strength of the school. Classrooms provide a warm and nurturing environment with attractive displays of pupils' work. Learners are motivated, engaged and on task in most lessons. When given the opportunity, they work effectively in groups and in pairs to find solutions to problems or develop their thinking independently. Young people interact confidently with staff showing them respect. They see their teachers as approachable and supportive. Learners would value the opportunity to contribute more to improving learning experiences in the school.
- Overall the quality of the teaching at the senior stages is good. Teachers give clear explanations and instructions. Most of the lessons we observed were well structured with shared learning intentions, active learning approaches and a plenary. Where practice was most effective, teachers had high expectations of learners. They used probing questions to develop higher-order thinking skills and made effective use of praise to motivate learners. In most lessons we observed there was a lack of such rigour, and more work needs to be done to share best practice to improve pace and challenge across the senior school. Effective differentiation was evident in a few of the lessons we observed. In these lessons inspectors observed teachers providing scaffolding to support written tasks, or making extension tasks available to add challenge for some learners. In a few lessons there was too much focus on traditional, teacher-led learning, with little opportunity for pupils to work at their own pace and level. Small class sizes allow teachers to provide regular, personalised support for learners and all staff should take full advantage of this benefit.
- Staffs' use of the local environment and community as a stimulus for learning is a strength of the school. For example, in environmental studies and biology, learners enjoy exploring the school grounds to support their learning. In business studies, two local businesses are the focus of investigative work. Learners in S3 have identified local charities to learn about and support through the Youth Philanthropy Initiative.
- The use of digital technologies to support learning is limited, however plans are in place to improve this. Teachers and learners are beginning to enjoy the benefits of an on-line digital platform. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively by almost all teachers to support their teaching.
- The school is using a variety of summative and formative assessment strategies. These include class tests, self and peer assessment and detailed feedback in pupils' jotters. All teachers should continue to build on these strategies to ensure that assessment is consistently informative and appropriate in all classes. This would help to inform useful learning conversations with young people and support any appropriate interventions.
- The school is in the early stages of developing tracking and monitoring systems across all departments. Young people are also encouraged to evaluate their own progress. This is helping departments to reflect regularly on young people's progress. However there is scope for this approach to be more robust. Greater detail is needed to ensure all young people are challenged and supported fully and consistently. Learners would benefit from discussion with all of their subject teachers to help them plan and identify the next steps in their learning.

2.1 Safeguarding

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

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

- Overall, across the junior and senior schools, the values of the school are well understood and embraced by staff, children and young people. The ethos of the school is wholly welcoming, friendly and happy. Almost all children and young people feel safe in school, are well behaved and show respect for each other. Children and young people feel they are recognised as individuals and believe they are well cared for by the staff at school. Almost all feel they have someone to talk to if they require to do so. School leaders believe the positive relationships and nurturing ethos are central to developing a whole school approach to wellbeing. As a result almost all pupils feel valued and included in the life of the school.
- The school keeps under review approaches to health and wellbeing and keeping children and young people safe. As a result of recent self-evaluation by the school staff and Board of Directors, new systems have been put in place to formalise the reporting and recording of wellbeing concerns. In recent months the anti-bullying policy has been reviewed and further developed. A new format has been introduced to log any reported incidents of bullying. The membership of the pastoral team has recently been revised. This new team has the potential to lead a more joined-up, streamlined approach to ensuring the wellbeing of all children and young people. We have asked the school to ensure that the school community are fully aware of these recent changes and that staff and learners are clear on how to report any concerns to the appropriate person.
- The wellbeing indicators are used successfully by pastoral staff to identify concerns and to decide actions required to support children and young people. The school should continue to embed the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child and ensure there is a consistent approach to the use of the wellbeing indicators with all staff. The children and young people understand and use their values on a daily basis. A next step for the school is to work with children and young people to help them understand the wellbeing indicators in relation to the school values. This will allow for a common language to be used by children, staff, parents and where necessary outside agencies.
- Staff are aware of the difficulties, challenges and barriers to learning that children and young people may experience. In the junior school class teachers work closely with additional support and specialised subject teachers to enhance the provision for children with identified specific needs. IEPs and pupil profiles are updated following team discussions. In the senior school there is a clear referral system. The responsive strategies used by the school to support learners allow young people to feel supported to overcome any barriers to learning

that they face. The interventions and plans are electronically tracked and reviewed by the head of support for learning. Class teachers have ready access to this information and should continue to use this to help differentiate learning. Support plans, where required, are composed in consultation with children, young people and parents. Moving forward, the school should look at centralising all information on learners in order to have a clear profile of individuals, knowing their learning and pastoral needs. There is a strong culture of teamwork and collegiality across the school to ensure the best wellbeing outcomes for children and young people. The school is meeting the statutory duties related to wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

- There is a planned personal, social and health education programme across the school. This covers a range of topics including mental health, physical health and the rights of the child. Through this programme children and young people are able to explore diversity, wellbeing and equality. Young people who met with inspectors expressed a desire to have more opportunities to learn more about equality and diversity themes. This is something that the school should continue to develop as this will allow children and young people to explore and discuss issues that are important to them.
- Children and young people's wellbeing achievements are celebrated each week at school assemblies. Recognition is given to achievements inside and outside of school. Children and young people greatly value the many opportunities they have to develop and apply their leadership skills, linked to improve their health and wellbeing. For example, by acting as peer mentors, pupil council leaders, sports leaders and from participating in eco groups. All pupils receive at least two hours high quality physical activity and sport in school. The outdoor education programme is firmly embedded across the school. This provides high quality opportunities for learners of all ages to develop skills for learning and leadership, whilst nurturing a lifelong appreciation of the outdoors. Over the last few years there has been an increase in the range of sports activities to support healthy lifestyles. Children and young people feel that their school experiences are helping them to make healthy choices and to develop an awareness of their own health and wellbeing. In the junior school, children feel listened to and that their views are taken into account. In the senior school, 41% of young people feel that the school does not always listen to them and 50% feel their views are not sufficiently taken into account. Moving forward the school should continue to develop ways for children and young people to have a genuine voice in the school, and to lead and direct their own learning.

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

Junior stages

Literacy

- In the junior school, most children are making very good progress in literacy from their previous levels of attainment, and are working at expected levels in all areas of literacy. Children are supported well by teachers to self-assess and measure their own progress against the benchmarks of Curriculum for Excellence. Teacher feedback is clear and children can identify their next steps.

Listening and talking

- Most children display very good skills in listening and talking. They listen very well to each other in class and group or paired activities. Children are articulate and are able to talk very confidently. They show confidence in talking to adults around the school. In lessons, children are willing to share their work readily with other children. Children are comfortable in asking questions and responding to questions from others. Approaches in some classrooms support children to develop higher order thinking skills. There is scope to share this practice across all classes.

Reading

- Overall, children are making good progress in reading. In Junior 1 and 2, almost all children are making strong progress in developing knowledge and application of phonics in their reading. In the upper stages of the junior school, reading is given a meaningful context and is often the root of interdisciplinary activities.
- The children feel that reading is actively encouraged by staff and they enjoy talking about texts they have read. Most children are achieving the expected national levels of reading with teachers' assessment demonstrating good progress in most children's decoding skills and comprehension ability. Staff should continue to review texts to ensure they are challenging and meet the needs of high-achieving children.

Writing

- Across the junior school, children have regular opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and most children are making very good progress. In the early years, children are making a very positive start to their early writing skills. By Junior 3 and 4, most children are able to produce writing of an appropriate level. As children progress through the junior school, most children produce well-thought-out pieces and they demonstrate an understanding of writer's

craft. For example, in Junior 6 and 7, children talk confidently about using figures of speech to enhance and up-level their writing. Children benefit from regular opportunities to apply their writing skills in different contexts and in different genres. Self, peer and class teacher assessment strategies are used to promote and encourage further success for children in writing. Children spoke very positively about the opportunity to share their work openly with others.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children are making good progress from their previous levels of attainment. From the school's own documentation, the junior school has maintained good levels of attainment in numeracy over time. At all stages, children engaged enthusiastically in active learning approaches in mathematics and numeracy lessons. Almost all written work is neat and almost all children are accurate in their written calculations, most of the time.
- Most children in the junior school are achieving the national expectations for core number, money and measurement skills. Children who spoke to inspectors said they enjoyed mathematics. Children in Junior 1 and 2 were exploring number bonds to 20 through active learning approaches, which engaged and motivated them. Tasks and activities were planned to ensure high-achieving children were challenged. Teachers should share this effective practice to explore different ways to challenge children in their learning in numeracy and mathematics. In Junior 6, children are developing strategies for mental calculations. They can explain personal methods for completing multiplication calculations of four-digit numbers by a one-digit number. Active learning in number, money and measurement is embedded practice within the junior school and children benefit from a largely multi-sensory approach. Children in the junior school enjoy the opportunity to work individually, in pairs or in groups. They respond well to working collaboratively to share their thinking. By Junior 7, children can discuss different kinds of symmetry confidently. They can explore rotational symmetry using regular and irregular shapes, including those found in nature within the school grounds.

Attainment over time

- The current attainment data available, on a class-by-class basis, indicates that attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is improving over time. Analysis of this data suggests that, overall, children are making good progress with their learning. Staff appreciate that using the current methods to track progress, the small numbers of children in individual year groups may make it difficult to evidence continuous improvements over time. Staff should explore further their approaches to tracking and measuring the effectiveness of interventions to ensure best possible progress for all children. There is scope for high-achieving children to attain more.

Overall quality of achievement

- Children's skills for learning, life and work are developing well. Inspectors were able to validate the wide range of children's achievements within the life of the school. Older children enjoy the responsibilities they are given and support younger children very well. As a result, children are developing a range of important skills through the many rich and worthwhile experiences in which they are engaging. Assemblies celebrate children's individual and collective successes. The Lathallan Junior Award provides opportunities for all children to participate in worthwhile activities and to develop skills for life.

Equity for all learners

- In the junior school, teachers are aware of a range of barriers to learning that children may encounter. Regular staff discussions between leaders and staff ensure that the academic, social and pastoral needs of children are identified.

Senior school

Attainment in literacy

- In 2017, the school reports that by the end of S2, all young people achieved third curriculum level in listening and talking, reading and writing. In 2018, the school reports that by the end of S2, most young people achieved third curriculum level in listening and talking, reading and writing.

Attainment in literacy as young people move through the school

- The school is beginning to develop a system for tracking and monitoring young people's attainment in literacy at S1 and S2. Experiences and outcomes are allocated to different subject departments to deliver and assess.
- The school should provide opportunities for teachers to engage in additional moderation activities, to ensure they become more confident and accomplished at making professional judgements on young people's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels. Additionally, the school should continue to track and monitor young people's skills in literacy through S3 and S4 to ensure all young people are supported fully to be successful in their learning.
- The school has introduced an additional period of literacy for all children at S1. Teachers report this is making a positive impact on young people's attainment. Moving forward there is scope for the school to plan carefully how this time is used well and consistently.
- In 2018, almost all young people leaving school attained literacy at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better.
- In 2018, most young people attained Higher English at S5.
- In 2018, most young people who were presented for Higher English at S6 passed.

Attainment in numeracy

- In 2017, the school reports that by the end of S2 the majority of young people achieved third curriculum level in numeracy. In 2018, the school reports that by the end of S2 most young people achieved third curriculum level in numeracy.

Attainment in numeracy as young people move through the school

- Teachers track and monitor young people's attainment in numeracy over the course of S1 and S2. There is scope for the school to extend and develop its tracking and monitoring system now so it can determine young people's progress and attainment in numeracy more easily through S3 and S4. There is also scope for teachers to consider how the experiences and outcomes for numeracy could be delivered and assessed across a variety of curricular areas.
- The school has introduced an additional period of numeracy for all children at S2. Teachers report this is making a positive impact on young people's attainment.

- In 2018, most young people leaving school attained numeracy at National 5 level or better. (20% of young people leaving school attained numeracy at National 4, and 77% attained numeracy at National 5 level or better).
- In 2018, 22% of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better. Less than half of young people at S5 did not take a qualification for Maths.

Attainment over time

S1 to S3

- Teachers are using data from standardised tests well to help them develop their understanding of young people's potential. They are also using the data to help them reflect more effectively on, and to support young people's ongoing progress. Targets are set accordingly for young people.
- The school is developing a tracking and monitoring system to support the learning of all young people. Currently, teachers are recording the progress of young people across all curricular areas on a termly basis. Teachers are basing much of this evaluation on their professional judgements, as well as other assessment evidence. Form tutors use this information with young people to discuss their next steps in learning. Moving forward, it will be important for the school to continue to develop this system to provide a more comprehensive overview of young people's attainment and progress over time. Data linked to the senior phase (S4-6) should be incorporated into the system. This will help all staff to develop a better and more consistent understanding of how the school is continuing to meet the needs of all young people at all levels.

S4 to S6

- Lathallan is a small, non-selective school with a total of 250 learners. As a result, care must be taken when interpreting the school's data in percentages over a three-year period, especially where presentations are small. Fluctuating result patterns could in part be as a result of changing size of year group or class size.
- At S4, there has been a decline in A-C grades at National 5 level over the last three years.
- At S5, there has been a decline in A grades at National 5 level over the last two years. This is based on a small number of presentations. At S5, there has been a steady decline in A grades at Higher level over the last three years. This shows a drop from 40% of presentations receiving A grades in 2015, to 20% of presentations in 2018.
- At S6, there has been a steady improvement in A-B grades at Higher level over the last three years. This is based on a small number of presentations. At S6, a few young people sitting National 5 exams did not attain A-C passes in 2018. At S6, there has been a decline in A-B grades at Advanced Higher level over the last three years. This shows a drop from 75% of presentations receiving A-B grades in 2015, to 36% in 2018. There has also been a drop in A grades at Advanced High level over the last three years. This shows a drop from 69% of presentations receiving A grades in 2015, to 29% in 2018. It must be noted that these comments are based on a small number of presentations.

- In 2018, strong attainment at National 5 is demonstrated in a number of subject areas. These include biology, drama, English, music and Spanish. In 2018, strong attainment at Higher level is demonstrated in a number of subject areas. These include geography and music.
- All young people show evidence of gaining a range of accreditation. This includes John Muir awards and The Duke of Edinburgh awards, at silver, bronze and gold levels.

Breadth and depth measures

- Over the previous three years, the school has presented young people for a range of courses at National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher levels. Overall, there is an increase in the average number of courses which young people are being presented for.
- In 2018 at S4, most young people attained five or more courses at National 5 level. Less than half of young people attained eight courses at National 5 level. Whilst the percentage of young people attaining five courses at National 5 level has increased over the previous two years, the percentage of young people attaining eight courses at National 5 has declined during this time.
- In 2018 at S5, the majority of young people attained three or more courses at Higher level. Less than half of young people attained five courses at Higher level.
- The percentage of young people attaining three courses at Higher level has increased over the previous two years. The percentage of young people attaining five courses at Higher level has also increased during this time.
- In 2018 at S6, less than half of young people attained one or more course/s at Advanced Higher level. There has been a notable decline in the percentage of young people attaining one or more courses, and three or more courses, at this level in the latest year.
- The school has been working hard to provide improved advice to young people about the levels of course which may be most suitable for them. As a result, the school has reduced the number of young people who are receiving 'No Awards'.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people at Lathallan school are developing a very broad range of skills. They are doing this through their participation in a very wide range of activities across the curriculum. Achievement is very strong in the school.
- The school is tracking children achievements through The Lathallan Junior and Senior Awards. Children are encouraged to develop skills, and 'pass' and achieve 'distinction', in a number of areas. These include academic success, successful leadership, outdoor learning, community and cultural involvement, physical activity, and work related to the school values. Through their engagement in these awards, all children and young people are given ownership of aspects of their learning. They are able to develop holistically as learners.
- The school recognises and celebrates the achievements of all its young people across the school regularly, particularly in relation to sports. Senior leaders are proud of the achievements of all young people. These achievements include children and young people

representing the school at many divisional and national events. For example, Scottish Schools Track and Field Championships and National Schools Games. Young people's successes include them being awarded silver and gold awards at national events, and being selected for training with, and participation in, divisional and national squads.

- Children and young people are also achieving very well through their participation in a wide range of outdoor activities. Many of these are related to the school's considerable involvement with the Duke of Edinburgh programme, Eco Schools Scotland programme, and John Muir Trust. Additionally, children and young people are achieving considerable success through music activities, including school shows, charity work, foreign exchange trips and work on the school farm. Through these activities they are able to demonstrate their commitment to the school values and gain important skills for learning, life and work.

Equity for all learners

- The school places much focus on individualised learning and seeks to meet the needs of all young people. It has good systems in place to promote equity of success and achievement for all young people, including those who have additional support needs.
- The school also provides effective interventions to raise the attainment of young people who face barriers to their learning. These include the provision of flexible curriculums, additional learning support for individual and groups of learners, and ongoing study support at lunchtimes and after school.
- From data provided by the school, most young people leaving school in 2017 entered a positive destination. This increased to almost all young people leaving school in 2018.

School choice of QI: 2.2 Curriculum

- Rationale and design
- Development of the curriculum
- Learning pathways
- Skills for learning life and work

Rationale and design

- The curriculum offered at Lathallan School is based principally on Curriculum for Excellence national guidance. Over time, the Board of Directors, the headteacher and all staff have developed a shared vision and unique rationale for the curriculum. The rationale identifies that a holistic approach to developing the skills and attributes of children and young people is at the centre of the work of the school and nursery.
- At all stages, children and young people benefit from a broad and balanced nursery and school experience. The curriculum takes very good account of the four contexts for learning, namely, learning through the life of the school; interdisciplinary learning; personal achievement; and subject-based learning. The school values help to drive children's and young people's planned experiences in a meaningful way.
- The well-embedded, approaches to learning outdoors is a key strength of the school. Commendably, learners at all stages of the nursery and junior and senior schools participate in regular, high-quality opportunities to learn outdoors in the extensive, exciting and well-designed school grounds and beyond. The school's highly-qualified outdoor learning instructor ensures a rich and challenging experience for all. Commendably, a significant number of school staff have also gained qualifications in outdoor pursuits.

Development of the curriculum

- The curriculum offer is reviewed regularly by staff, to support the needs of learners and to cater for individual young people's choices. The school has developed a number of valuable partnerships to support curriculum development and the appropriate application of skills and knowledge. In the senior school, teachers continue to develop their understanding of new curriculum pathways and requirements for SQA courses and examinations. Across the school, nursery practitioners and teachers are becoming familiar with National Benchmarks for literacy numeracy and health and wellbeing. Protected time for professional learning and collaborative moderation of standards and expectations will further enhance the development of the curriculum and support a positive impact on children's and young people's learning and achievement.
- Staff make the most of the attractive school grounds and rich local environment to enhance children's and young people's learning. During the inspection, we observed many lessons and activities that took place outdoors, or where the natural environment provided a motivating stimulus for learning.
- The concept of interdisciplinary learning is well understood by staff across the school. Protected time allows teachers to collaborate in teams to generate ideas for planned, whole-school learning activities. As a result, annual themes provide high-quality opportunities for

children and young people to explore topics of interest and real life issues in depth. For example, the development of the school farm allows for all children and young people to learn about how the food they eat is produced, journeying from 'farm to fork'. All learners have played a part in maintaining the farm, growing fruit and vegetables and caring for chickens and pigs. Through teachers' collaborative planning across departments, children and young people have explored complex ethical issues such as animal welfare and the use of chemicals in farming, in a highly relevant way.

- The recently introduced on-line digital platform provides scope for digital technology to be embedded more firmly in the life and work of the school, and in classes as part of learning.

Learning pathways

- The nursery curriculum framework is child-centred, based on play, and is designed to meet the needs of babies, toddlers and young children. Staff take very good account of children's wellbeing, nurturing approaches, and the development of skills for life and learning. Outdoor learning is a continuous focus for the setting. Children's experiences are enhanced through the input of specialist teachers of French and music.
- In the junior school, staff follow appropriate programmes of study for all areas of the curriculum, underpinned by the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence. The input of subject specialist staff, for example in French, music, PE and science ensures children's experiences in these areas of learning are planned in a progressive, coherent way.
- The curriculum in the senior school is kept under regular review to meet the needs and ambitions of young people. Young people can choose at the end of S2 to specialise in aspects of their learning. Almost all young people opt to study seven or eight subjects at S3 and S4. Young people then specialise further at S5 and S6. Promoted staff work flexibly to try to accommodate the first choices of all young people. All learners move from school to positive destinations, with almost all gaining places in higher education courses. In recent years, a variety of new and additional courses have been offered or secured for individual learners. Partnerships with a nearby university, local colleges and local businesses have helpfully facilitated this tailored approach.
- Staff in a few departments are developing skills frameworks to ensure that children's prior learning is built upon as they move through the stages of the school, and particularly at key points of transition, i.e. nursery to junior, and junior to senior stages. As planned, the school should continue to work towards achieving such pathways for all areas of the curriculum, to make the most of the all-through school setting.
- The school understands the need for all children and young people to experience a consistent approach to developing and applying their literacy and numeracy skills across their learning. As a result of self-evaluation, extra time within the weekly timetable has been allocated to the development of literacy skills for S1 and numeracy skills for S2. Staff should continue to share practice and seek ways to develop literacy and numeracy skills across the whole school curriculum. Through our inspection activities, we observed almost all staff across the school demonstrating in action the aspects of health and wellbeing that are the responsibility of all. Staff should continue with work to develop health and wellbeing programmes that are relevant to the needs of all learners. This should include opportunities for learners to self-assess their own progress in health and wellbeing. This will allow staff to

more accurately track and monitor progress in this area to improve the wellbeing outcomes for all.

Skills for life, learning and work:

- Through working with partners, enterprise activities, whole school themes and classwork, learners at all stages are gaining a good knowledge of skills for life, learning and work. For example, young people at S3 develop their citizenship and leadership skills, and knowledge of local issues, well through participation in the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative. Learners at S4 take part in work experience opportunities. Children at the upper stages of junior and senior schools take on responsibilities as leaders and mentors. Learners at S5 and S6 benefit from careers advice. A next step is to explore and implement the national Careers Standards (3-18) to enhance the current programme for developing skills for learning, life and work across the nursery and school.
- The enriching, wider out-of-class curriculum at Lathallan is a strength of the school. Very high and sustained participation rates in national initiatives such as The Duke of Edinburgh award and John Muir Award provides validation of the high quality learning and experiences children and young people gain. In addition, children and young people benefit from working to achieve the Lathallan Award. This includes participation in a variety of worthwhile activities, such as first aid, music, poetry, volunteering and sports. We have discussed with school leaders the potential and advantages of exploring external validation or accreditation of young people's personal achievements, to give a greater focus and transferable recognition to skills for life and work within these worthwhile pursuits.
- In the boarding house, young people have well balanced opportunities to study, take part in organized activities in the evenings, such as baking, time to relax and unwind and to study. Many young people attend clubs and sports training in the local area and further afield. Young people feel that boarding staff respect their individual choices, whilst providing the practical support they need to take part in activities off-campus.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The high-quality outdoor learning provision, where teachers and instructors enable every child and young person to benefit from a rich and engaging outdoor learning environment beyond the school classroom.

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.