Summarised inspection findings

Perth Academy

Perth and Kinross Council

5 March 2024

Key contextual information

School Name: Perth Academy
Council: Perth and Kinross
SEED number: 5350638

The roll in 2023 provided by school is 1,016 young people.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average.

Exclusions are generally in line with the national average. The number of exclusions has reduced significantly over the past four years.

In September 2022, 11.3% per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals, which is significantly below the national average of 17.8%.

In September 2022, 7.7% per cent of pupils live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2022, the school reported that 37.8 per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

Perth Academy learning community covers the geographical area of the west of the city of Perth, including the Viewlands and Letham areas and the rural communities to the northeast of Perth. This includes Scone, Balbeggie, Guildtown, Burrelton and the surrounding area.

7.7% of young people live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2, and 30.7% live in deciles 9 and 10.

Perth Academy – Acadamaidh Pheairt is the designated secondary school for Gàidhlig (Gaelic) Medium Education in Perth city.

The school has experienced considerable challenges in recent years. This includes significant absence at staff and senior leadership team level. In addition, the school building is undergoing an essential rolling programme of refurbishment. This is being well managed, although necessarily resulting in classes being displaced across the school.

1.3 Leadership of change	**satisfactory**

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

- The headteacher, supported by her team, has a clear vision for the future success of the school. This vision is displayed prominently in classrooms and open areas and is increasingly supporting a collective sense of purpose and common goals for all staff and young people across the school. The vision is an important driver of improvement for the whole-school community. The vision is underpinned by a new set of values. These were developed with groups of parents, staff and young people. The majority of young people are aware of these new values. When they demonstrate these values through their positive attitudes and behaviours, young people gain recognition. This is celebrated well through assemblies and within faculties.

- The headteacher has rightly focused on setting high standards for staff and young people across the school. She has clear expectations and targets for staff, young people and stakeholders across the school community. These are key features of her support and challenge to drive improvement. Senior leaders promote these standards and expectations well to build the capacity for improvement across the school.

- Through the school improvement plan (SIP), the school leadership team has identified appropriate key priorities to take forward improvement. The leadership team has focused on empowering middle leaders to drive improvement in their departments and faculties. Most middle leaders are involved collaboratively in the development of the SIP. They feel more empowered in taking forward key priorities for the school. Departmental improvement plans (DIP) are aligned to the SIP. Through these plans, teachers identify ways in which they seek to improve teaching, learning, assessment and attainment. Senior and middle leaders should now work collaboratively to ensure that the pace of change in Perth Academy is increased. This will improve outcomes for young people.

- Senior leaders should continue to increase the involvement of all classroom teachers, partners, parents and young people in agreeing improvement priorities. This would support and enhance the work of the leadership team in school planning for improvement. This will be more meaningful for stakeholders and support them to feel more valued and listened to.

- Senior leaders use the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) plan to identify targeted interventions for young people at Perth Academy who live in the most disadvantaged SIMD areas. Senior leaders and staff are increasingly able to evidence specific improvements for these young people as a result of these support measures. All staff need to focus more clearly on how identified young people can be best supported to close any gaps in their learning.

- All middle leaders are supported effectively by members of the senior leadership team. They meet together fortnightly to discuss faculty and departmental matters using a shared agenda

which identifies areas for discussion. These areas include improvement and leadership as a group, with a recent 'away day' focussed on relationships and middle leader empowerment. However, the capacity of senior and middle leaders to drive improvement and implement change has been severely impacted due to staffing limitations. The strategic aspects of their roles are constrained due to their necessary focus on operational issues. Senior leaders and staff should consider how best to provide sufficient time for key staff to take forward important areas for school practice such as learning and teaching, the curriculum, aspects of wellbeing and improving attainment.

■ The majority of teaching staff are involved in agreeing priorities for the school. Most staff engage in recently re-established school improvement groups. Areas of focus include relationships, rights respecting schools and teaching and learning. In taking this work forward, the school should focus on those priorities that will have the biggest impact for young people. A few staff take on leadership roles, including press officer, STEM lead, staff wellbeing champion and digital lead. Senior leaders should continue to work with staff to develop leadership opportunities which support the school community to develop and improve. All teachers should consider how they can contribute by leading aspects of school improvement.

■ The majority of staff undertake professional review and development on an annual basis. This important opportunity for self-reflection and the identification of priorities is supported well by senior leaders, faculty and departmental heads. It is an important aspect of driving improvement across the school community. This should be linked more robustly to General Teaching Council for Scotland GTCS standards. Senior leaders should track professional learning undertaken as a result of identified priorities and share this across relevant staff as appropriate.

■ Staff have undertaken planned professional learning, including trauma informed practice, restorative practice and relationships to improve their approaches to working with young people. A minority of staff have undertaken roles as markers, verifiers and setters with the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA). This informs their practice and delivery of content in the senior phase. All staff should continue to develop a culture of learning, underpinned by professional reading, enquiry and research.

■ A majority of young people think that the school considers their views, while a minority think that the school takes their views into account. Young people are not yet fully engaged in advising the school of areas that need improvement. Senior leaders need to establish a more coherent approach to listening to and including the opinions of all young people in school decision making, self-evaluation and aspects of school budgeting. This will ensure that all young people feel that their opinions are sought, listened to and acted upon and feel more valued as members of the school community.

■ The school has established an effective School Partnership Agreement (SPA) with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to provide young people with appropriate Career Information Advice and Guidance services. The SPA is helping to equip young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their future careers. The school contributes to several productive strategic and operational partnerships with the local college and other school colleagues. This supports planning to meet the needs of young people and improve transitions to positive destinations on leaving school.

■ School leaders are working closely with the local authority Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) leads to develop an increased range of learning opportunities and pathways for young people. Staff have a growing awareness of DYW and the types of skills employers require. The

school has established links with a few community partners who actively contribute to the life and work of the school. This includes Community Link Workers, Police Scotland, local church representatives and youth work services. However, most community partners are not yet involved in informing the development of the school vision, values or aims or joint self-evaluation to inform continuous improvement. As a result, a few partners do not feel fully valued. The school would benefit from developing a strategic overview of the partners' achievement offer. Partners would also benefit from coming together with school staff to regularly share and review their collective achievement offer. This will help to avoid duplication of effort, provide opportunities for collaboration across partners and improve progression pathways.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
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 lessons, there are positive working relationships between young people and teachers. However, in the majority of lessons, young people are passive and the majority of learning is overly teacher led. The majority of young people's learning, especially in the broad general education (BGE) lacks sufficient pace and challenge. In a minority of lessons, young people are motivated to learn when they can see the relevance in what they are learning and the progress they are making in their learning. Teachers need to plan more motivating and relevant tasks to help keep learners focused and reduce the few occasions when there are disruptions to learning.

■ In the majority of lessons, teachers are beginning to share the purpose of learning and how young people can identify when they will be successful. However, teachers do not yet deploy these strategies across the school consistently well. Where this approach is used well, young people are involved in the discussion about their learning and how they can measure their success. All staff should consider the most effective ways to involve young people with planning their learning and ensure that young people are clear about their next steps in learning. This will help young people to feel included in their learning and that their views on learning and teaching are valued.

■ In a few classes, teachers make effective use of digital learning. A few young people with additional support needs use laptops to support their learning well. Teachers should consider how young people can make the best use of technology in their subject area. Senior leaders should develop a clear strategy to embed digital learning across the curriculum. This will help to make learning more interactive and better meet the needs of all learners.

■ In the majority of lessons, teachers make good use of questioning to check for understanding of previous learning. Teachers should now consider how they can use questioning to develop higher-order thinking skills.

■ The newly created learning and teaching group should continue with the planned development of a guide to effective learning and teaching. This group should consider the views of young people in identifying the best examples of learning and teaching across the school. This will support staff to learn from each other as they develop their whole-school approach to learning and teaching.

■ All teachers access pupil support overviews (PSO) to provide them with a helpful range of learning strategies to support young people with additional support needs. However, teachers apply these strategies inconsistently. As a result, the needs of all young people with an additional support need are not always being met fully. Senior leaders and members of staff with responsibility for pupil support should consider how best to share effective strategies with class teachers and ensure consistency in application. Senior leaders must also consider the

information contained in PSOs and the appropriateness of what information is shared with all staff. An important next step would be to consult with young people about the strategies that best support their learning. The advice included should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is relevant to the developing needs of each learner.

- A few staff are beginning to use a wider variety of assessment strategies. Across the BGE and senior phase, most teachers use summative assessments to measure progress and attainment. Young people enjoy and benefit from discussions with their teachers following on from such assessments. They have a clearer understanding of their next steps in learning as a result. In a few examples, teachers share clear written next steps to embed the messages shared during learning conversations with young people. However, staff are not yet providing assessment feedback consistently. Teachers should make wider use of formative assessment strategies, such as plenaries and exit passes to identify learners' progress in lessons. Teachers are not yet using assessment evidence to inform subsequent planning of learning and teaching. Although they monitor and track young people's progress, they are not using this well to inform how they plan tasks and activities that meet the needs of young people.

- Middle leaders are at an early stage of planning moderation activities with colleagues in cluster and other schools across the local authority. This is an important next step to ensure that tasks and activities are set at the right level of difficulty. Teachers have benefitted from participation in local authority moderation activities. Continued participation in subject networks will support staff in developing confidence in their judgement of attainment levels. In time, this should also support teachers to make more thorough judgements about attainment, especially in relation to BGE levels.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ The school has recently launched its revised curriculum rationale. Senior leaders should continue to review this with the school community to ensure appropriate progression pathways are available for all young people.

■ Young people in S1-3 receive their entitlement to religious and moral education (RME), personal and social education (PSE) and physical education (PE) each week in line with national expectations. They also receive their entitlement to modern language learning as part of the Language Learning in Scotland 1+2 approach. Young people make choices towards the end of S2 to enable some specialisation in S3. Young people study nine subjects in S3. In S4-6, young people receive their entitlement to PSE and two hours of PE. Young people in S5 and S6 currently do not receive their entitlement to a meaningful continuing element of RME. Senior leaders should review this.

■ In the senior phase, almost all young people choose seven courses in S4. They can progress to studying five courses in S5. In S6, almost all young people choose four courses, including the additional option of development periods that include volunteering or work experience opportunities. Young people also have opportunities to participate in vocational programmes at the local college. These have high retention and success rates. In 2022-23, 109 pupils enrolled in college programmes, with most completed the programmes successfully. A few young people engage in Higher and Advanced Higher courses as part of consortia arrangements with other local secondary schools.

■ Senior leaders should ensure young people have opportunities to build on prior learning as they move through the senior phase. The school should review its approaches to course choice so that young people prioritise subjects and courses that provide them with the best opportunity to achieve success. Flexible approaches to timetabling and effective use of tracking data would support this process. Senior leaders should ensure timetabling in the senior phase maximises opportunities for vocational learning. At present, only a few young people participate in Foundation Apprenticeships.

■ Senior leaders recognise the importance of continuing to review their curriculum offer. They have started to incorporate a range of courses across the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels. This will help continue to broaden choice in the senior phase and provide opportunities for young people to personalise their learner journey, further supporting their transition to a positive destination.

■ The school SDS careers advisor delivers sessions with school pupils in BGE and in the senior phase. During these sessions, young people are introduced to a range of career options and the skills required to support them towards positive destinations. The entitlements of the career education Standard (CES) are embedded within the PSE programme and implemented by DYW staff and the SDS careers adviser. However, explicit delivery of these CES entitlements within lessons is not yet evident across the school.

■ A limited number of young people access work experience opportunities. Links with employers, third sector organisations and DYW are used to good effect to source suitable placements and engagements for young people. Senior leaders have identified the need to broaden the range of opportunities available to young people in S4 to support progression within vocational subjects in S5-6.

■ The Perth Academy Remembers Partnership has positively impacted on the life of the school. It is improving young people's leadership skills. A few young people each year work in partnership with members of the local community researching former pupils who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars. This information has then been incorporated into lessons by staff. Young people's contributions have been included in a recently published book.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ The Parent Council is increasing membership to be more fully representative of the whole school community. Their membership should include a representative from Gàidhlig Medium Education. They support parents to have a voice in evaluating the work of the school and agreeing priorities for improvement. However, they are aware of the need to continue to develop this role to better effect. This will support parents to have a clearer role in agreeing key areas for improvement.

■ While the majority of parents feel that they receive regular information about how their child is progressing at school, a significant minority identify specific areas where they would welcome greater information and support. These include how to interpret report formats so that they have a better understanding of the progress their child is making in their learning. Parents would appreciate receiving key information that is better timed to align with significant events such as subject choices. This will help parents to provide more informed support to their child as they progress through school, particularly at key transitions.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	weak

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

■ wellbeing
■ fulfilment of statutory duties
■ inclusion and equality

■ The new relationships policy is supporting a shared understanding of the school values for all members of the school community. However, approaches which are promoted within the policy are not yet fully evident in engagements within classes or around the school building. Young people are aware of the values but are not always clear about how the vision might apply to positive relationships and behaviour. Senior leaders take action to address the behaviour of a few young people in corridors and classrooms which can cause concern to others. Senior leaders should continue to embed the vision and values in school life to inform approaches to develop mutual respect across the school community. This would support all young people to experience a positive and calm environment to maximise their learning. Young people speak positively about the school's new praise system which celebrates their achievements and makes them feel valued.

■ Changes in senior leadership team (SLT) personnel have contributed to a lack of sustained strategic oversight of pupil support at senior level. This is having a detrimental impact on positive outcomes for young people. Middle leaders are working hard to take forward aspects of support for young people. This needs to be coordinated more effectively at a senior level as an urgent priority for the school. Senior leaders should ensure that the wellbeing of staff and young people is a clear focus for improvement. This should include agreeing what successful outcomes for young people look like and how success in achieving these outcomes will be evaluated regularly.

■ Young people value nurturing environments in classrooms provided by a few staff. Staff offer these areas in response to young people reporting that the lack of social spaces during breaks and lunches increases their feelings of anxiety. Young people and staff should work together to plan possible solutions to ensure young people feel safe in all areas of the school, both indoors and in the school grounds. A minority of young people report that they do not feel safe in school, which is having a negative impact on their wellbeing. A minority of parents do not feel that the school supports their child's emotional wellbeing sufficiently. A few young people say that staff do not treat them fairly or with respect. A significant minority of young people say that the school is not helping them to be confident or feel valued. Staff, in conjunction with young people, need to plan clear and consistent processes to support young people in relation to inappropriate or unsafe behaviour. These should be well understood and shared across the school community. The needs of all young people should be central to discussions about supporting and building a safe and inclusive school environment.

■ There is currently no shared understanding of the language of wellbeing. Young people explore aspects of wellbeing through learning programmes consisting of topics and programmes. Senior leaders and pastoral care staff have correctly identified the need to review and

significantly update the Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme. They have begun this process with young people in S1. This will help to ensure that the PSE offer is relevant, motivating and engaging for young people. Senior leaders and staff should provide young people with opportunities to evaluate their personal sense of wellbeing. This will help young people identify their personal strengths more clearly. This will also provide valuable information which will support effective planning of both universal and targeted support. Additionally, all staff should fully embed wellbeing within the curriculum to secure a shared understanding across the whole school and take full account of the rights of all young people.

- A minority of young people say that they have experienced bullying, and a significant minority of young people feel that bullying is not always dealt with effectively. A few parents have also expressed concerns. Senior leaders should continue with plans to review and streamline the positive relationships policy and the school's recording and monitoring procedures in line with local authority guidance. This will help to ensure that all young people feel safe and well supported. It is important that senior leaders address this to gain a better understanding of perceived bullying issues. This should also help them to analyse any patterns or trends in bullying to support young people more effectively and inclusively.

- Young people who require additional support for their learning receive targeted support from key staff and their needs are monitored by the support management team. However, child's plans are overly descriptive and contain personal information. Support plans do not record targets and they lack measurable outcomes. The young people who are engaged in the Inclusion project are well supported. The wellbeing of young people who are entitled to be considered for a coordinated support plan is regularly reviewed. The Principal Teacher of Support for Learning has collated additional support needs information. This is now available to help increase staff's awareness and understanding of the additional support needs of individual young people. It is too early to evidence any impact from its use. Teaching staff should use this information to plan and review strategies to support these young people. This will help ensure that young people experience learning activities well-matched to their needs in all curriculum areas. Pupil support assistants provide valuable in-class support. A few young people engage with partners in effective intensive support programmes. There are early signs of improving engagement with the school for these individual young people.

- Overall, attendance and exclusions are in line with the national average. Attendance remains slightly lower than prior to the pandemic period, while there has been a significant reduction in the number of exclusions. Staff use clear procedures to track and monitor young people's attendance at school. Senior leaders and guidance staff need to take more effective steps to analyse attendance data. This will help them identify patterns and trends and explore reasons for young people coming late or leaving classes and not returning. Senior leaders monitor young people out of class but acknowledge that they have reduced capacity to do this. More staff need take responsibility for monitoring and challenging young people out of class. All staff need to understand more clearly the causes for young people being out of class and how they can address these more effectively.

- Senior leaders should review the use of part-time timetables to ensure they have clear targets for young people to access their full entitlements. The 'Resolve' inclusion project provides a meaningful alternative to exclusion which supports a minority of pupils. Success in this approach is evident in the reduction in exclusion and the number of times a few young people are referred a second time.

- Staff and parents report that, prior to this session, it was unclear what arrangements were in place to support young people who require alternative examination arrangements. There are now more effective arrangements in place. Staff have designed these to meet the entitlements

of those young people with additional requirements so that they access SQA Awards appropriately from session 2023/24 onwards.

■ Young people's understanding of diversity, prejudice and discrimination is not well developed. The school should ensure that all young people have a sound awareness and understanding of equality. Senior leaders need to consider and review this to enable young people to develop skills and understanding of issues relating to discrimination. There needs to be new, strong and immediate focus on the protected characteristics which support the school community's understanding of the protected characteristics. In addition, senior leaders should maintain an overview of complaints and instances relating to discriminatory incidents such as gender. This will help staff analyse patterns, take appropriate action and evaluate the impact of actions taken.

■ The school submitted self-evaluation information related to compliance with the Nutritional Regulations and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007(the Act). Health and Nutrition Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and young people. In addition, inspectors explored the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of young people through food in school. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and catering service.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	**satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

■ attainment in literacy and numeracy
■ attainment over time
■ overall quality of learners' achievement
■ equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

BGE

■ In 2021/22, according to the school's figures, most young people achieved Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level in reading and writing. Almost all young people achieved CfE third level in listening and talking. Most young people achieved CfE third level in numeracy. Performance is consistent in literacy over the past five years. It is inconsistent in numeracy. Senior leaders acknowledge that most teachers are confident in their judgements around third level but only a few teachers are confident in their judgements around fourth level. Teachers' judgements around CfE levels are inconsistent across all subject areas. They continue to engage in moderation activities through subject networks to build their confidence in using national Benchmarks to ensure more reliable judgement on achievement of a level.

Senior Phase

Literacy (leavers)

■ Most young people left school with literacy at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better between 2017/18 and 2020/21. This is generally in line with the virtual comparator (VC) with the exception of 2021/22, where performance was significantly lower than the VC. Almost half of young people left with literacy at SCQF level 6 or better in 2021/22. This is in line with the VC.

Numeracy (leavers)

■ Over the past five years, a majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better by the time they left school. This is in line with the VC. A minority of young people left with SCQF level 6 or better which has generally been significantly lower and much lower than the VC, but has improved to be in line with the VC in 2021/22.

Attainment for those with additional support needs (leavers)

■ Over the past five years, the performance for those leavers with additional support needs is generally lower than the VC for both literacy and numeracy across SCQF levels 5 and 6.

Cohorts

■ At S4, almost all young people achieved SCQF level 4 or better in literacy in 2022/23. The majority achieve SCQF level 5 or better in literacy, which is significantly lower than the VC in 2022/23. By S5, based on the S5 roll, most achieve SCQF level 5 and the majority achieve SCQF level 6 in literacy in 2022/23 which is in line with the VC. By S6, based on the S6 roll, almost all achieve SCQF level 4 and level 5 and most achieve SCQF level 6 in literacy.

- At S4, most young people achieved SCQF level 4 or better in numeracy in 2022/23. The majority achieve SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy, which is significantly lower than the VC from 2019/20 to 2022/23. By S5, based on the S5 roll, most achieve SCQF level 5 or better and a minority achieve SCQF level 6 in numeracy. By S6, based on the S6 roll, almost all achieve SCQF level 5 and a minority achieve SCQF level 6 in numeracy from 2018/19 to 2022/23.

- At S4, young people perform well at National 5 English with performance being significantly much better than the VC in the latest two years. At S5 and by S6, performance at Higher English is also strong although entries are significantly lower than the national average. Young people's performance is in line with the VC for National 5 and Higher Maths. Entries for National 4 Maths are significantly higher than the national average.

- The school should continue to explore how additional literacy and numeracy qualifications in the senior phase can support young people's progress as they move from S4 to S6.

Attainment over time

BGE
- The school provided data across all curriculum areas for 2022/23 which showed a significant level of inconsistency across subjects. Senior leaders need to develop a systematic and thorough approach to monitoring and checking young people's progress in S1-3 as part of their strategy for raising attainment.

Senior Phase
- The complementary tariff scores for the lowest-attaining 20%, middle-attaining 60% and highest-attaining 20% of leavers is generally in line with the VC from 2017/18 to 2021/22.

- At S4, by S5 based on the S5 roll, and by S6 based on the S6 roll, the attainment of the lowest-attaining 20% of young people, the middle-attaining 60% of young people and the highest-attaining 20% of young people, when compared using average complementary tariff points, has been broadly in line with the VC between 2017/18 and 2021/22.

Breadth and depth
- At S4, a minority of young people achieve seven or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better, which is in line with the VC. The school has maintained performance at this level over the last five years. By S5, performance at SCQF level 5C or better for one or more to six or more courses shows no consistent improvement and is significantly lower than the VC in the latest year, 2022/23. There has been some improvement in the percentage of young people attaining top quality passes in a few of the measures. A minority of young people attain three or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better. There has been an improvement in the percentage of young people attaining A grade passes over the last five years. By S6, a minority of young people achieved three or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better over the five-year period. This is generally in line with the VC, with a few exceptions. The percentage of young people attaining top quality passes over the last five years requires improvement. Performance is generally significantly lower than the VC. By S6, performance at SCQF level 7C is generally in line with the VC.

Overall quality of learners' achievement
- Young people benefit from a wide range of achievements as they move through the school. For example, sport, music, youth voice, John Muir and Duke of Edinburgh's Award and ambassador programmes, such as in mental health. All young people in S1 take part in the Hospitality Take Over Day, where they work with business partners to develop skills in this

industry. All young people in S2 participate in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative and the school's winning team attended they national award event. They gave a presentation at the school's annual prizegiving about their experience and the skills they developed through taking part. Young people in the Gaelic community are supported to engage in local and national Mòd competitions.

■ Young people in the senior phase benefit from a range of school ambassador or champion roles. For example, Mental Health and Language Ambassadors, Anthony Nolan Foundation and Fit for Girls. These leadership positions are equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to support others across the school. Young people feel confident in their roles and are increasingly engaging with other young people in the school. An increasing number of young people use these volunteering roles to contribute to the SCQF Level 6 Leadership or other awards. There are also strong examples across subject departments, and the school's Lady Mackenzie Library, of a very wide range of activities that build the skills and attributes of young people. For example, young people are developing important skills in literacy, community engagement, science, engineering and language.

■ As a result of all of these activities, young people across the school are gaining in confidence and improving their leadership, team working and resilience skills. A few young people use these skills in other contexts such as leadership teams, prefect duties, supporting parents' evenings or other events in the school. Those involved in sports coaching are delivering netball coaching to primary seven children at associated primary schools, which is helping to support transition. A few of those with football coaching qualifications are coaching school teams and competing with other schools.

■ The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is well embedded in the school. The offer is supported by 18 teaching staff and community members. Barriers to participation are addressed through access to equipment and funds from the school and Perth and Kinross Council educational trust. These funds have helped increase uptake of the bronze cohort significantly and enabled free participation for those entitled to free school meals. There is an improving trend in uptake across all award levels. Young people are gaining valuable confidence, team building and organisational skills. Senior leaders need to use data more effectively to identify areas where support is required to improve completion rates.

■ The school should continue to work to develop a systematic approach to monitoring and checking young people's involvement in achievements and the skills they develop through engagement. Young people's successes and achievements are recognised and celebrated using a range of methods. This includes the use of formal accreditation, newsletters, use of social media, school assembly and annual award ceremonies.

■ Although there are a few examples of formal accreditation to recognise and record achievement, the school and its partners recognise that there is more to do. The school and its partners now need to work together to develop a strategic overview of the collective achievement offer. They should identify the programmes and activities that best meet learner need and increase opportunities for accreditation where relevant. For example, increase the number of youth awards for those young people who are leading and coaching sports activities and those volunteering and leading in other areas.

Equity for all learners
■ Young people who live in SIMD deciles 1 and 2 as they leave school, achieve significantly much lower or lower than other young people living in the same deciles across Scotland. In

2020/21, young people who live in SIMD deciles 3, 4 and 5 attain significantly lower or much lower than the national average.

- There are a few examples of departments being aspirational regarding what they would like young people to achieve. This is particularly true for learners in the senior phase. While these approaches are at the early stage of development, there have been improved attainment outcomes for learners in these subject areas. Additionally, young people in S4 were identified to participate in the Targeted Attainment List project (TAL). This project involved pupils off track being identified, monitored, and supported closely. One group who could not attend school were educated through outreach teaching at a local church. This approach was a success and attainment for these young people was raised last session.

- Between 2017/18 and 2021/22, almost all young people have entered a positive destination on leaving school. This is in line with both the national and local authority averages for the last three years. The majority of young people go to further and higher education on leaving school.

Quality of provision of Special Unit

Context

Perth Academy Intensive Support Provision (ISP) supports young people who require intensive levels of targeted support to access their learning. There are 39 young people with a placement in the ISP for 2023-2024. Placements are made by a multi-disciplinary authority group. Young people benefit from the support of experienced staff within the ISP. They access mainstream classes as appropriate. The ISP offers a broad curriculum for young people in S1-S3 and an appropriate curriculum pathway in the senior phase, tailored to individual needs. The ISP also offers wider achievement programmes which provide practical skills for learning, life and work, while recognising the individual's strengths and challenges.

Leadership of change

- The ISP has had a significant recent change in its leadership due to redeployment in the SLT during a significant period of staff absence. This has led to the need for supply teachers and appears to have caused unrest within at least one group of young people in ISP. As a result, the redeployment is being reversed. The main forum for considering approaches to support across the school is the support management team. This includes all guidance staff, principal teachers of support and ISP, along with the relevant depute headteacher. Staff have developed a very good understanding of the background of all the young people in ISP.

- ISP staff are clearly committed to shared standards and positive educational outcomes for young people who attend ISP. They form an effective team and are well trained for their roles. They realise that more could be done to work with wider school support systems. The school should consider how best to rationalise the range of support initiatives and clarify their relationship to each other. As planned, ISP staff should increase and improve the involvement of their young people in the wider work of the school. This includes identifying ways in which they can take greater responsibility and develop their leadership skills. For example, in the last two years, the Senior Pupil Leadership Team has included a representative from the ISP senior class.

- ISP staff have been involved in drawing up the ISP departmental improvement plan. This references the whole school quality improvement plan and identifies appropriate ISP improvement priorities. However, there is no reference to the work of the ISP in the school quality improvement plan for either of the last two years and there is only a descriptive section in the standards and quality report. To ensure that the ISP is "an integral part of the school", senior leaders will want to make it much more prominent in school documents and communications.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- Young people who attend the ISP are enthusiastic and very well motivated to learn. They react well to the learning activities which teachers and support assistants organise for them. ISP staff know the young people and their needs extremely well.

- Technology is being used increasingly well by staff to engage learners, including the use of videos. More could now be done to use electronic whiteboards more interactively with young people. Older young people are effectively using laptop computers independently.

- ISP teachers use questioning very effectively to check on young people's understanding. Teachers and support assistants also use feedback to help young people to make appropriate progress in their learning.

- The majority of young people spend most of their time in the ISP. As planned, staff should continue to engage other subject area teachers and make links so that more ISP young people can access education in their classes. Subject teachers feel that they get appropriate information about young people's needs when they join their class but would appreciate further opportunities to discuss this with ISP staff.

- ISP staff are aware that more needs to be done to improve moderation of standards across the curriculum. Commendably, time is built into staff timetables for moderation activity, but this is mostly carried out within the provision. ISP teachers would benefit from engaging in moderation activities with staff from other schools and similar provisions.

- ISP staff are also aware that tracking and monitoring of progress within the BGE remains an area for improvement. The planned implementation of an online tracker has not yet taken place. This needs to be taken forward as a matter of urgency.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- Young people demonstrate that they feel safe and cared for within the ISP. However, they rarely take opportunities to mix with their peers between classes. For example, the majority of young people do not attend a 'home room' outside the ISP for registration at the beginning of the school day. Similarly, they stay in ISP during morning break and have their lunch collected from the dinner hall so that they can eat it in one of the ISP classrooms. Few young people from ISP attend any of the school clubs or activities. When they attend subject classes, a minority attend as part of a group from ISP rather than with their peers. However, the development of social skills is an important aspect of the planned areas for development for many young people. ISP staff should focus on inclusion and equality to improve outcomes for all learners.

- As planned, ISP staff should look for opportunities to increase and improve the involvement of their young people in the wider work of the school. This includes identifying ways in which they can take greater responsibility and develop their leadership skills.

Raising attainment and achievement

- Overall, young people are making satisfactory progress in both literacy and numeracy.

- Younger people in the ISP are involved in individual reading with support assistants using a programme of graded readers. They are responding well to this and to the linked activities. These are designed to improve and build young people's knowledge of initial letter sounds and basic 'consonant-vowel-consonant' (CVC) words. Staff have made a library of books available for young people to borrow. Older young people are using laptop computers effectively for research purposes. For example, they are studying renewable energy and finding out the advantages and disadvantages of wind power and biofuels using the internet.

- Younger ISP pupils are following courses in mathematics textbooks. Older young people are developing their skills in directional work. They understand basic compass points and are using these to undertake basic programming to make a small robot move from one place to another.

They are also following a progressive computer programme which helps them to develop mathematical skills. Staff track their progress and use this information diagnostically.

- Young people's attainment has been raised over the past two years. According to data provided by the provision, in 2022, young people attained 25 awards at National 2, 13 awards at National 3, 4 awards at National 4 and 4 awards at National 5. In 2023, young people attained 50 awards at National 2, 30 awards at National 3, 35 awards at National 4 and 11 awards at National 5. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has also been recently introduced. Nevertheless, ISP staff should continue with their plans to further improve attainment, ensuring that each young person gains as much accreditation for their work as possible.

- Young people's progress can be tracked against their targets by looking at each of their individualised educational programmes (IEPs) and other planning formats. However, there is not yet a formal system for tracking achievement of targets across the provision.

- Throughout the year most young people in the ISP take part in organised disability sports events. Over the past two years most senior pupils in the ISP have taken part in supported work placements or voluntary opportunities. This has also involved partnership work with Perth Autism Support. The school should work increase their range of partners to develop a greater range of opportunities. Staff in the ISP should consider how best to track young people's achievements and the skills they are developing.

- Attendance statistics show that the majority of young people have higher than 80% attendance at ISP. However, 41% have attendance of less than 85%. Staff should therefore continue, as planned, to improve the attendance of young people and to target those whose attendance is particularly low.

- Over the past three years, according to data shared by the school, all young people leaving the ISP have moved on to a positive destination at college.

Other information

- Young people react well to the range of curricular activities organised for them by ISP staff. These include exercises and games designed to promote and develop gross and fine motor skills. They are also developing social skills through involvement in organised outdoor learning. An ISP curriculum pathway has been developed, which is designed to allow progression for all young people.

- The ISP should ensure that all young people are getting their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education.

- Parents are positive about their child's placement in the ISP. They feel that staff know their child well and structure the learning around things which motivate them. They can see progress over time, particularly with respect to improving social skills. College courses have been helpful for senior pupils in this area. Parents appreciate communication from ISP staff and feel that issues and queries are responded to quickly by email and phone. They are involved in an annual discussion about the targets in the IEP. Whilst they appreciate this, they feel they would benefit from having an ISP parents' evening to meet with teachers. The whole school parents' evening is too busy and noisy to be helpful for ISP young people and their parents. Those with younger children would appreciate more explanation about qualifications.

Quality of provision of Gaelic Medium Education

Context

Acadamaidh Pheairt - Perth Academy is the designated secondary school for Gàidhlig (Gaelic) Medium Education in the city. Some year groups are also offered Gaelic (Learners).

Leadership of change

■ Senior leaders and teachers are starting to drive much needed positive change for Gàidhlig. Staff have a clear vision for how they improve and build Gàidhlig Medium Education. The department and school improvement plan articulate well to ensure a focus on learning and teaching and curriculum. Senior leaders require a strategic plan to take forward longer-term implementation of Gàidhlig Medium and Learner Education. This should be in line with national policy and incorporate the clear, strategic vision that staff leading Gàidhlig have identified. Senior leaders should ensure that Gàidhlig is included in important drivers of school strategy, such as curriculum rationale, values and aims. Departmental improvement plans are beginning to use the statutory Guidance for Gaelic Education, 2017.

■ Overall, the pace of developing Gàidhlig Medium Education has been slow over time. Senior leaders should continue to create the conditions for all staff to lead change. The council's own Gaelic Language Plan refers to implementing a staffing standard for Gaelic Education, incorporating talent identification and retention approaches. This would assist in increasing impact at Acadamaidh Pheairt - Perth Academy.

■ Staff use their professional learning in additional support needs and moderation to inform and develop their teaching practice. Staff across the school would benefit from further professional learning on Gaelic, including their use of the statements for Gaelic in the General Teaching Council of Scotland's (GTCS) professional standards. This should help to ensure that attitudes to Gaelic are positive and inclusive.

Learning Pathways

■ In the last year, there is improved continuation with Gàidhlig Medium Education from primary to secondary. This should remain a focus. Senior leaders should be clear in their transition arrangements that all young people continue with Gàidhlig Medium Education at least to the end of S3 into the senior phase. They should be ensuring that all young people have at least an award or qualification for Gàidhlig by the time they leave Gàidhlig Medium Education. Young people should use Gàidhlig on a daily basis with sufficient, dedicated time allocated to their learning as part of the planned curriculum.

■ Young people learn Gàidhlig as a subject within which "rich" activities are planned. These activities include the use of technology to make short films for the national competition, FilmG. Time is made available for Gàidhlig in the curriculum through extraction from other subjects. This is being agreed with parents.

■ Senior leaders should continue to use Curriculum for Excellence to maximise learning through the medium of Gàidhlig and map progress. This includes with young people's use of technology for learning. Staff's planning should continue to develop the language, but also deliver other aspects of the curriculum through Gàidhlig and immersion to enrich their fluency. Young people should have an immersion environment in which to learn.

- Senior leaders have identified ways that Gaelic (Learners) can be integrated into the curriculum. They should continue to implement these plans. Senior leaders should also continue to identify how learning across the school can support developing knowledge about the language and its culture to build further a supportive ethos for Gàidhlig. All staff should be involved in this. It would be helpful if the school's curriculum rationale included reference to Gàidhlig Medium Education and learning Gaelic as an additional language.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- Young people and staff enjoy positive relationships, which are central to the principles of immersion. Young people demonstrate high levels of motivation and engagement in their learning. Their learning is well planned and structured. Teachers provide a range of activities that take account of learners' needs with some differentiation as appropriate.

- Primary transitions for young people in Gàidhlig Medium Education have been strengthened recently. Staff should review their arrangements for young people in Gaelic Learner Education to increase numbers. Staff have successfully supported young people return to Gàidhlig Medium Education as part of their secondary curriculum following a gap in their learning.

- Staff need to adopt a more thorough approach towards assessment, planning, tracking and monitoring in S1-3. Senior leaders and staff should ensure that they check young people's progress as a group of learners as part of their ongoing strategy to raise attainment. Young people are able to articulate their progress and next steps. Their feedback and interests are sought in how to develop their learning.

- Departmental schemes of work have recently been introduced that link to experiences and outcomes. These should now detail approaches to immersion, skills, grammar and pedagogy. Staff are linking learner pathways to the whole-school curriculum when planning learning. Partnerships for Gàidhlig are utilised effectively to deliver a purposeful and relevant learning experience.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- Staff delivering Gàidhlig Medium Education are aware of specific support needs of the young people. They are beginning to identify ways to support all learners.

- The school has taken important steps in addressing their statutory responsibilities towards Gàidhlig Medium Education. Most staff are aware of Gàidhlig Medium Education but not their statutory duties towards it. They should ensure that their handbook includes Gàidhlig, their designated city status for Gàidhlig and their actual curriculum offer.

- Staff are taking steps toward integrating Gàidhlig into the school environment, for example in the library, the curriculum (Scottish Awards) and through Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) pathway partnerships. This is beginning to promote an early sense of belonging and inclusion for young people in Gàidhlig Medium Education and those learning the language. All staff should develop approaches to recognise that Gàidhlig is part of the diversity of the school, and is treated with equity and equality.

Raising attainment and achievement

- Senior leaders should ensure rigour in submitting data on Curriculum for Excellence. Staff are engaging in moderation and quality assurance groups as they are aware of the need to apply a

more robust framework for assessment which is valid, reliable and in line with national standards. A shared understanding of standards continues to be developed within the learning community. The numbers being presented in awards and qualifications are too low.

Other additional evidence

Young people benefit from the well-stocked library. This is a welcoming, nurturing and safe space at the centre of the school. The resources available support teaching and learning of a variety of topics across curricular areas. There is a well-received programme in place to support young people to develop research skills. This is particularly helpful for young people undertaking course work for National Qualifications. The library is open to young people at break times as a place to study and access resources. Young people are consulted about new texts for the library. This means that texts reflect the interests of young people and leads to young people feeling included.

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.