Summarised inspection findings

Northfield Academy

Aberdeen City Council

28 March 2023

Key contextual information

School name: Northfield Academy
Council: Aberdeen City Council
SEED number: 5244234
Roll: 789

Attendance is well below the national average from 2016/17

Exclusions are well above the national average from 2016/17. The school has made progress in reducing exclusions, however these still remain high.

In February 2022 38.5 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.
In September 2021 32.8 per cent of pupils lived in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.
In September 2021 the school reported that 51.3 per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

Northfield Academy is a non-denominational school in the North of Aberdeen. There are 789 young people, 67 teaching staff and 23 support staff. There has been a high turnover of staff over several years. A few learners have struggled to return to school post pandemic and are on reduced timetables. The headteacher started in Northfield Academy in 2020.

1.3 Leadership of change	unsatisfactory

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 current school values have been in place for several years. However, there are too many different versions and they are failing to impact on the culture, relationships and behaviour across the school. The headteacher is aware of the need to re-affirm, refresh and agree the values and vision. It is essential that this is done through consultation, with approaches that fully engage young people, parents, staff, and school partners. This will support a shared understanding of the expectations, direction and identity of Northfield Academy.

■ The headteacher and senior leaders are aware of the urgent need to develop a more collegiate culture in which all members of the school community are involved in planning and leading improvements. Currently, only a minority of teachers feel they are valued as members of the school community. Middle leaders recognise the very recent improvement in the culture of the school and how their views are considered. This is welcomed but at very early stages, and staff look forward to being more fully involved.

■ There is no agreed approach to how change and improvements are organised, planned and led. It is important to clarify the key steps for all leaders when taking forward planned improvements. The remits of senior leaders have been updated very recently and this is a positive start for planning change. There is now a clearer definition of the strategic focus expected of depute head teachers. Senior leaders currently struggle with the strategic aspects of their roles due to their focus on operational issues. This is having a significant impact on the implementation of change and improvement. The recent appointment of two additional senior leaders by Aberdeen City Council is a positive initial step in addressing this. Further interventions and support by the Council will be needed to ensure required change is implemented effectively.

■ At present, self-evaluation is not carried out to inform the school improvement agenda. Staff professional learning in this area is needed to ensure consistency of understanding and purpose. The engagement of all stakeholders in self-evaluation is an important next step for the school. Currently, only a minority of young people and parents feel that the school takes their views into account when making changes. It is essential that young people, staff and parents are fully engaged in agreeing the priorities that will have the greatest impact on outcomes for young people.

■ The local authority has recently supported the school to ensure there is now a clearer and more focused definition of improvement priorities. At this stage there is limited awareness of revised improvement plans across the school. It is important that senior staff make clear links between targets within the improvement plan and plans for ongoing professional learning. The quality of faculty improvement plans is variable but improving. They are now more in line with the whole-school plan and in the best examples, targets are specific and measurable. Across

the school there are many working groups. Senior leaders should ensure these are now streamlined and aligned to whole-school improvement priorities.

- Planning for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is broadly in line with national expectations. Funding is broadly directed at young people most adversely affected by poverty-related challenges. Funding is used to support a range of staff appointments. For example, the funding of partnership links with Aberdeen Football Club has been very effective in creating motivating and engaging learning contexts for more than a hundred young people. Young people have engaged in an enhanced programme supporting literacy and numeracy when they move from primary school. However, the impacts of PEF are not yet sufficiently analysed. There is a need for clarity in how PEF is accelerating learning for those young people facing significant barriers.

- Currently there is little evidence of improvement in a range of key areas, including learning and teaching, wellbeing and raising attainment. This is partly due to staff absence and gaps in staffing. Senior leaders are aware of the urgent need to secure improvement in everyday expectations across the school. Most significantly, senior leaders need to establish respectful relationships across the school community.

- There is currently no strategic plan for leadership development at all levels. Middle leaders are keen for their leadership capacity to be developed. They would benefit from the opportunity to share and discuss effective practice. At all levels, teachers are not yet fully aware of how relevant professional standards can support their practice and professional development. Senior leaders need to ensure a planned approach to the application and monitoring of standards. This would help to ensure more consistent staff understanding of roles and responsibilities in leading change and wider professional expectations.

- A few young people welcome the chance to engage in roles such as School Captains, prefects, and members of the recently formed Pupil Leadership Group. Currently, however, young people have limited leadership roles and they are not 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 decisions.

- Staff are aware of the priorities of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). However, there is no strategic planning or communication to support its promotion and understanding. As a result, there is an inconsistent approach to ensuring young people are supported to make informed choices about their career aspirations. Similarly, senior leaders and staff have not addressed the skills agenda. This means that staff do not have a clear understanding of the importance of embedding skills for work.

- Only a few staff are using national guidance such as the Career Education Standard (CES), Work Placements Standard, or the support materials on Career Management Skills. As a result, there are limited career discussions within classes. Along with a lack of work placement opportunities, this is limiting how young people can relate their learning to labour market and employment opportunities.

- A wide range of partners contribute to the school curriculum and to supporting young people through the Partnership Forum. However, partnership working is not well developed. It relies too often on partners approaching the school and on individual staff. Staff need support to better understand potential partners and the expertise that they could bring. Communication with existing partners is inconsistent and there is very limited collaborative planning, monitoring and evaluation. There is now a need to establish a clearer and more systematic approach to partnership work, based on shared priorities.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	unsatisfactory

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

■ There are major weaknesses in strategic and operational approaches to learning, teaching and assessment across the school. All staff now need to develop a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities in providing high-quality learning experiences for all young people. Senior leaders and staff should work together to build relationships and effective approaches to communication.

■ A minority of relationships between staff, young people and their peers in classrooms are built on mutual respect or trust. Where these relationships are apparent, young people engage more readily in their learning. Staff need to address the rights and entitlements of young people to an education in a safe and respectful environment.

■ Most young people are keen to learn and achieve in school. Currently, across the school, teachers do not have a consistent approach to seeking, and acting on, the views of young people in relation to their learning. Staff need to work with young people to develop approaches where learners can take responsibly for their learning and contribute effectively to the life of the school and wider community.

■ In most lessons, leaners' experiences are not well matched to their needs. As a result, young people are not active participants in learning. They are often off task, disengaged, or refuse to join in with lessons. Teacher expectations of learning and achievement in classes are too low and this is impacting negatively on young people's progress and on young people feeling valued. Teachers need to ensure that their lessons have sufficient pace and challenge for all young people. In almost all lessons, learning is not differentiated and strategies for young people who require additional support are not used. Too often, including in the senior phase, teachers deliver whole-class lessons with no consideration of the current working levels or prior learning of young people.

■ In the majority of lessons, learning is disrupted by young people who are off task and not engaged in class activities. These young people are not having their specific needs met and are not sufficiently engaged in learning. In a few classes, this results in little meaningful learning taking place. In addition, an unacceptable number of young people remove themselves from lessons and spend extended time in corridors and toilets. This, coupled with high levels of absence, means that classes are often not well attended and young people are missing from education.

■ Too often, young people exhibit distressed and unsafe behaviours within the classroom and around the school building. This is having a significant impact on learning and engagement. Current whole school approaches are not providing staff with effective mechanisms to address this behaviour. Staff should now develop an understanding of nurture principles so that they can better understand and support the behaviour of young people. A minority of staff have

developed positive learning environments in their classrooms. These are supported by consistent routines such as welcoming learners, using starters and plenaries, and reinforcing clear expectations. In these lessons, learners are more engaged in the learning, interact with their peers well, and are better motivated.

■ Almost all teachers use direct teaching to provide whole-class lessons. There are few opportunities for young people to work productively in pairs or groups. This is leading to young people having insufficient opportunities to lead their learning. Teachers should develop their range of teaching approaches to include different contexts, skills, digital technology, outdoor learning, and interdisciplinary approaches across the school. In addition, they must include the requirements of the CES. This will help to ensure young people are supported in developing high-level skills that lead to informed choices about career opportunities.

■ In a few lessons, digital technology is used to enhance learning and teaching, for example, through use of visualisers to demonstrate practical techniques. Staff should support young people better to develop their digital skills and knowledge across the curriculum. Teachers need to develop a whole-school strategy to drive forward digital skills to capitalise on progress made during periods of remote learning.

■ Teachers' written and oral feedback is often insufficient to support young people to progress in their learning effectively. As a result, most young people do not fully understand where they are in their learning or the steps they need to take to improve. When learning conversations do occur, they follow periods of significant assessment or at tracking points and are more evident across the senior phase. Senior leaders and teachers should develop approaches to provide more consistent, regular, and high-quality feedback to support and inform progress in learning.

■ Teachers have recently engaged in professional learning on learning intentions, success criteria and feedback. While elements of these areas are evident in teaching approaches, they are not of sufficiently high quality to impact positively on learning in most lessons. Teachers' approaches to check young people's understanding are limited. Teachers should develop approaches to questioning, including the use of open-ended questions. This will help to ensure all young people are engaged and active during lessons, and successful in their learning. Senior leaders need to apply greater strategic direction to the improvement of learning and teaching through professional learning. All staff would benefit from engaging more fully with current reading and research to improve their practice.

■ There is no coherent and agreed approach to assessment across the school. A minority of staff do not have a sound understanding of assessment standards. They should develop robust approaches to moderation at both the broad general education (BGE) and the senior phase. It will be important to develop an assessment policy created in conjunction with all stakeholders.

■ Teachers are using the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes to plan learning and assessments in S1 and S2. This should be embedded practice across all curriculum areas. Senior leaders need to work with all teachers to ensure an agreed language to monitor the progress of young people through the CfE levels. In the senior phase, teachers plan learning based on National Qualifications. However, most teachers do not plan effectively for the range of learners in their classes. Staff need to develop better approaches to planning learning over both the short term and long term for all young people.

■ Teachers' approaches to tracking and monitoring young people's progress requires improvement across almost all subject areas. Across the school, teachers do not collate data into departmental tracking or whole school tracking. Senior and middle leaders should develop robust systems to monitor and track young people's assessment and progress. Current

processes do not support staff adequately to understand young people's progress, particularly in the BGE.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ The school does not have a curriculum rationale. The principles and context behind current curriculum pathways are unclear and lack structure. Senior leaders should make sure that all staff and young people participate in designing any planned curriculum changes.

■ The curriculum offered from S1 to S6 is not suitably challenging nor appropriate for young people. Less than half of young people find learning enjoyable. Young people have very little opportunity to participate in deciding what and how they learn. A minority of learners feel that their work is hard enough. Teachers need to develop a shared understanding of standards and support young people to understand their progress.

■ Learning pathways in S1 and S2 are built around the BGE. Transition information from associated primaries in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing is shared appropriately. Whilst this is included in the school BGE tracking tool, it is not used by most teachers to support learning. Progression and learning pathways are based around a 'fresh start' approach in S1. Learning needs to be more clearly built around progress from earlier stages.

■ Young people specialise within curriculum areas in S2. Senior leaders should ensure all young people receive their entitlement to breadth across all curriculum areas and subjects. Young people's learning should reflect the principles and entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence. Young people receive their entitlement to physical education, personal and social education (PSE) and religious and moral education (RME). They do not receive their entitlement to 1 plus 2 modern languages.

■ Learners are not well supported in making choices at transition stages. There is limited support organised with the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) coach. Young people have little knowledge of the types of choices and pathways that are open to them. A few young people are allocated courses that they have not selected and, therefore, they do not complete these. Too many young people do not see the value or purpose of their learning and they opt out of learning.

■ The school engages well with North-East Scotland college (NESCOL) to plan choices which support young people's needs. This is broadening the offer to young people. Communication between the school and the college has improved, which supports better sharing of information on learners' needs and progress.

■ A group of young people progressed on to full-time programmes at NESCOL in academic year 2022-2023. The college, in consultation with the school, is offering two pilot projects. These are a fast-track Foundation Apprenticeship, specifically aimed at winter leavers, and HNCs in Business, Technologies in Business or Mechanical Engineering.

■ A career-ready programme is delivered to S5 and S6 year groups. This includes elements of career management skills, such as CV writing and mock interviews and paid internships. Partners support a small number of young people through mentoring which helps them develop their career aspirations.

■ Guidance staff and SDS staff meet routinely to identify appropriate supports. The young people identified as requiring intervention are supported by the appropriate person or agency. However, young people feel the limited time given over to this engagement means it is not fully effective.

■ The current practice of guidance staff nominating pupils for college programmes is being revised. Northeast Scotland college is keen to introduce an application process which will ensures young people take ownership of their application for their chosen course. The young people need clearer support and guidance in this area to ensure their needs are met.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents felt well supported by the school in relation to the health and wellbeing of young people. The majority of parents agree or strongly agree their child likes being at school and is treated fairly and with respect by staff.

■ Northfield Academy has a small and supportive Parent Council. It is working with the headteacher to improve communication between the school and parents. It is not yet involved actively in school improvement. The majority of parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem but less than half feel that their views are considered when making changes.

■ Parents highlighted concerns with the high turnover of staff and the impact this was having on their children's experiences within the school. Only a minority of parents feel staff know their child well enough as an individual. They also feel they do not receive information about their child's progress which helps them understand how their child is doing at school or how to help them improve. Senior leaders and staff should work with parents to improve the quality of parental information received through regular reporting.

■ A few parents agree that the school organises activities for children and parents to learn together. Parents welcome the return to in-person parents' evenings and planned school events to celebrate young people's achievements.

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 of urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	unsatisfactory

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

- A majority of young people feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Many staff demonstrate care for young people. A majority of young people feel other learners treat them well and feel the school helps them to lead a healthy lifestyle.

- A minority of young people report that they do not feel safe in school, which is having a negative impact on their wellbeing. A majority of parents do not feel their child is safe at school. Senior leaders should take immediate action to address this issue. Staff and pupils need to plan clear procedures for staff to support young people who display inappropriate or unsafe behaviour. Staff should explore the differences between psychological, online and physical safety with young people. The needs of all young people should be central to discussions about supporting and building a safe and inclusive school environment.

- Staff should prioritise the development of a strategic approach to supporting, improving and measuring wellbeing outcomes for young people. Staff and young people need to be involved in discussions about building a respectful and positive culture in Northfield Academy. All staff and young people should prioritise relationships based on dignity and respect. This will help to support a nurturing approach enabling young people to feel respected and valued.

- A majority of young people feel that staff support them to be responsible for their own behaviour. A majority also feel they can approach staff with questions or suggestions. A minority of young people feel that the school listens to their views. Senior leaders should make plans to gather learner's views systematically. This information should be used to inform plans for improvements to wellbeing.

- Pastoral care staff and senior leaders have correctly identified the need to urgently review and significantly update the Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme. This will ensure that the PSE offer is relevant, motivating and engaging for young people. This should help support young people to understand their choices and have a clearer understanding of their physical, emotional, social and mental wellbeing. Additionally, all staff should fully embed aspects of wellbeing within the curriculum to secure a shared understanding across the whole school. Wellbeing of staff and young people is the responsibility of all.

- A majority of young people feel the school helps them to understand and respect other people. Senior staff have recently devised a relationships policy. Approaches suggested within the policy are not yet evident or visible in engagements within classes or around the school building. Senior leaders should undertake a review in collaboration with all staff, young people, parents and partners. This will help to foster a shared understanding of expectations and support young people and staff to develop mutual respect.

- All staff have undertaken professional learning in trauma informed and restorative practice. This is not currently leading to improvements in staff understanding the behaviours of young people who experience challenges managing their own behaviour. Staff should agree expectations and boundaries in relation to young people's behaviour. These expectations then need to be consistently applied and supported by senior leaders. A few staff have undertaken the 'Let's introduce anxiety management' (LIAM) programme and mental health first aid training. There is significant scope to develop this work further to ensure the mental wellbeing of young people is well supported.

- A few partnerships support the wellbeing of specific young people, such as Active Schools, Aberdeen Football Club, and a School Counsellor. Partners would welcome opportunities to work more closely with school staff to share practice and support planning. This would enable them to understand the challenges faced by young people better. Senior leaders and staff should seek further health and wellbeing partners to enhance the current offer for young people.

- A high level of non-attendance in class is an ongoing concern, which should be addressed urgently. The current system for recording and reviewing absence from school is not rigorous enough to maintain an accurate record of attendance. Staff across the school need to recognise their role in improving young people's attendance. Senior leaders and key members of staff should work together as a matter of urgency to take account of current national guidance on managing attendance. Improving attendance will support improved outcomes and enable young people to feel a sense of belonging and inclusion in the school community.

- The school has a process in place for identifying young people's needs and their barriers to learning, however this is not used well by teachers. The plans do not include high-quality individual planning and learning targets. They are not informed by the views of young people, staff and parents. Over half of learners are registered as having additional support needs. Senior leaders and key staff should now ensure that the identification of the needs of all young people, planning their supports and tracking their progress are robust and comply with the Additional Support for Learning Act. Teachers should agree clear plans with young people on part-time learning to return to full engagement in mainstream classes. Appropriate and engaging learning experiences will support young people to attend class full time. This is vital for young people to feel they belong and feel valued. All teachers need to understand their role in meeting all young people's additional support needs. This includes those young people who struggle to manage and regulate their own behaviour.

- The majority of young people, staff and parents disagree that the school deals well with bullying. Processes to address bullying, including incidents of cyber bullying, should be reviewed with staff and young people in line with the 'Respect for All' guidelines. Staff and young people should develop an anti-bully policy and record incidents of bullying appropriately. Staff would benefit from professional learning on how to identify and act on incidents of bullying. This would support young people to feel safe and feel that they are being listened to and valued.

- Staff operate several facilities to support positive behaviour. A few young people benefit from positive relationships within these supported environments. Senior staff now need to review and evaluate the success of these facilities to ensure they result in improved outcomes for all young people.

- Staff have gaps in their knowledge, understanding and application of current national guidance and statutory duties with regard to wellbeing, inclusion and equality at all levels across the school. Senior leaders should develop systematic, rigorous and robust approaches to meeting

young people's needs. Senior leaders should continue to improve the strategic leadership of wellbeing, equality and inclusion across the school. Pupil support staff need to develop their leadership role further and all staff need to improve the understanding of their role in supporting young people.

■ Young people have limited opportunities to consider and discuss cultural differences and diversity. Senior leaders need to consider and review this to enable young people to develop skills and understanding of issues relating to equality, including protected characteristics. Senior leaders also need to monitor gender balance and gender equality within classrooms to ensure no conscious or unconscious bias. The pupil-led Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transexual and Intersex (LGBTI) group is beginning to support a few young people to support diversity and tolerance throughout the school. This group needs further support within a whole-school context of tolerance and respect.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	unsatisfactory

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

Raising attainment and achievement across all stages of the school is unsatisfactory. The organisation and planning around both the BGE and senior phase lacks rigour and does not align with expected standards. There has been limited support for teachers in ensuring appropriate standards in the BGE and the senior phase. This is resulting in very low attainment outcomes for young people. A few high attaining, self-directed learners achieve well by S6. The very high turnover of teachers has been a significantly negative factor in senior leaders' efforts to raise attainment.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Staff are aware that attainment across all measures is very poor. A dedicated period of learning has been put in place for all young people each week to increase attainment in literacy and numeracy in the BGE. This strategy is beginning to impact on slight improvements for young people. Staff's professional judgement of CfE levels lacks rigour and therefore the school's data is not valid nor reliable. This is an area that has been highlighted by senior leaders for improvement. Attainment in both literacy and numeracy by the end of S3 are well below expected levels.

- Staff are not supported in the use of P7 transition attainment data. Therefore, teachers do not support learners to build on their prior learning from Primary 7 effectively. Learning across the BGE lacks pace and challenge.

- In the senior phase, there is a large number of school leavers at S4 and S5. Attainment in literacy and numeracy for leavers is much lower and significantly much lower than the virtual comparator (VC) from 2017/18 to 2020/21. In 2021, most young people left school with a literacy and numeracy award at SCQF Level 3 or better. This is significantly much lower than young people's performance in similar schools.

- By S6, all young people achieved Level 3 or better in literacy in 2021/22. By S6, a majority achieved Level 5 or better in numeracy in 2021/22.

Attainment over time

- The new system for tracking and monitoring progress and attainment in the BGE lacks clarity and is not used consistently by all teachers across the school. Teachers use varied criteria to measure attainment which leads to an inconsistent approach to tracking and monitoring. This results in young people being unable to understand their strengths and appropriate next steps in learning.

- Young people are not well supported in their learning. More than half of learners are recorded as having additional needs. It is not clear how these young people are supported in learning. Almost all teachers struggle to articulate pupil progress in the BGE.

- In the senior phase, teachers have target and working grades for learners undertaking SQA qualifications. These are neither shared nor agreed with young people. This leads to a lack of engagement and commitment from learners. For example, learners lack clarity about forthcoming prelim examinations and therefore struggle to prepare appropriately. Senior leaders cannot identify trends over time in the senior phase consistently, for example, with specific cohorts of learners.

Improving Attainment for all

- For all school leavers, the performance of the lowest 20%, the middle 60% and the highest 20% is lower and significantly much lower than the VC from 2019- 2021. Performance for the highest 20% attaining young people has been significantly lower than the VC for 4 years, from 2016/17 to 2020/21.

- For those young people still in school, when compared against the S4 roll, or the S5 and S6 rolls, attainment has been significantly much lower than the VC since 2017, at all levels. Young people are not attaining in line with other young people from similar backgrounds.

Breadth and depth measures

- The high number of school leavers at S4 and by S5 means that a majority of young people are not building on their learning in school to achieve higher outcomes. Only a minority remain in school until S6.

- At S4, and by S5 and S6, young people are presented for variable numbers of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) courses. From 2018/19 until 2021/22, young people's attainment has been significantly lower than the VC regardless of the number of courses taken.

- Positively, in 2021/22 a few S6 learners achieved five or more SCQF level 6A awards. In addition, a few S6 achieved three or more SCQF level 7C awards in 2021/22.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people are gaining skills and building their social networks through sporting and community groups, volunteering and part-time work. A few are gaining national awards. However, the school and its key partners have no system for tracking these achievements. As a result, it is not clear how many young people are participating in opportunities for wider achievement. There is now a need for staff and key partners to work with young people to build a system that tracks their skills and achievements effectively. This will support staff to build on the skills gained by those participating and to ensure all young people have appropriate opportunities to achieve.

- A few young people taking part in the Prince's Trust programme reflect on their next steps and gain awards relevant to their ambitions. Staff in this programme provide well focused and individualised programmes that support young people's learning pathways.

- A few young people are supported well by partners, including youth workers, and through the local 'Fit Like?' Hub and Promise Project. They provide effective support to young people,

individually and in groups, to identify and reflect on their skills. Overall, staff need to improve the consistency of their communication and joint planning with partners to build more effectively on such work.

■ Overall, young people's achievements are not well recognised or celebrated. Young people would feel more valued if better use was made of awards and social and local media to demonstrate their achievements. They believe that this would help to build morale and change the prevailing negative narrative they perceive around Northfield Academy. A few young people value the activities they gain as rewards from the merit system. However, they are concerned about how this can create tension with those who do not achieve such rewards.

Equity for all learners

■ The school does not use the PEF well enough to identify and close attainment gaps. Senior leaders and staffhave a limited strategic understanding of PEF and how it links to attainment. Many young people are living with disadvantage. The staff do not have a clear understanding of the needs of individual learners and families. They have no clear targeted approach to support young people living in poverty. There are significant learning gaps in the school caused by inequalities and the impact of the pandemic has been an important factor in widening the gap.

■ Leaver destinations have been much lower than the VC since 2016/17. The staff are beginning to make more appropriate plans to support young people as they prepare to leave school

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.