

# Summarised inspection findings

**Auchenharvie Academy**

North Ayrshire Council

9 May 2023

## Key contextual information

School Name: Auchendarvie Academy  
Council: North Ayrshire Council  
SEED number: 8216134  
Roll: 663 pupils

Auchendarvie Academy is located in the town of Stevenston, North Ayrshire. The school has five associated primary schools. In September 2021, 74.7% of young people lived in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland. In February 2022, 35.6% of young people were registered for free school meals.

The headteacher has been in post for six and a half years. He is supported by three deputy headteachers.

In September 2021, the school reported that 42.4% of young people had additional support needs. Senior leaders shared an updated figure for this session. They have identified that 49.6% of young people have an additional support need. This is an increase on previous years.

In 2021/22, attendance was 91.5%. This is generally in line with the national average. Attendance to date for 2022/23 is 87.7%. This is a decline on the previous year. In 2020/21, exclusions were 16.6 per 1000 young people. This was generally in line with the national average. Exclusions increased in 2021/22 to 42.0 per 1000 young people. To date this session, exclusions are 22.5 per 1000 young people. This is on track to be lower than the previous year.

Senior leaders highlighted challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. These included challenges with staff and young people's absence. There has been a recent increase in the socio-economic challenges faced by families in the school community.

Auchendarvie Academy has a Secondary Support Resource (SSR) which provides targeted support for identified learners in S1 and S2. The provision opened in September 2022. Almost all the young people are included in mainstream classes and have individual or group sessions within the SSR. There are currently 13 young people accessing the provision.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- The headteacher, senior leaders and staff across the school have developed and maintained positive relationships with young people very successfully. Staff are relentless in their drive to create a culture which is welcoming, safe and supports positive engagement in learning. This is a major strength of the school's work. Strong routines and the school values of respect, equality and determination underpin this ethos. This has helped to create a shared culture of expectation and aspiration which is supporting young people to engage very well in learning and teaching experiences.
- The culture and ethos across the SSR provision is warm, supportive and encouraging. Teachers and staff assist young people in their learning skilfully. This works well for most young people. They feel safe at school and enjoy working in small groups and in one-to-one lessons. Almost all young people from the SSR join their mainstream peers in classes across the school. Teachers in the mainstream support most of these young people well. Class teachers within the SSR take full account of the needs of the young people. They work collaboratively with the mainstream teachers, sharing personalised strategies which help young people participate effectively in learning.
- All teaching staff are aware of potential barriers to young people's learning. These include socio-economic challenges and additional support needs. In most lessons, staff meet the needs of young people skilfully and are responsive to these changing needs. Teachers should continue to develop their approach to differentiation to ensure they challenge the most able.
- In most lessons, young people engage well in their learning. Young people are increasingly given greater responsibility for their learning. Young people are taking personal control of their learning and demonstrate a willingness to take on challenges. Senior leaders should now look to highlight and expand approaches that promote young people's independence.
- Almost all lessons in the SSR are calm, nurturing and hold young people's interest. Staff in the SSR have high aspirations for all young people in the provision. Mainstream teachers and SSR teachers work well together to improve the quality of learning and teaching for individual young people. However, at times expectations of what young people can achieve within lessons are not high enough. Staff should now work together to ensure expectations are consistently high across the school and within the SSR.
- In the SSR, young people take part in regular sessions to improve their ability to deal with situations they find difficult. This helps them to manage their emotions, stay calm and participate in learning more easily. These young people are pleased with their progress and can explain how this work has helped them to concentrate in lessons across the school.

- Teachers participate in specialist training to enhance their skills in working with young people who are distressed. Their nurturing approach is helping young people to stay in school and enjoy their experience there. Teachers with valuable skills should now share their expertise and learning with other staff. This will maximise the benefits across the school and encourage a consistent nurturing approach for young people who attend the SSR. A few young people have been excluded from the SSR. Senior leaders and staff should continue to employ strategies to reduce these numbers.
- In almost all lessons, young people understand the purpose of their learning. Most staff aim to make learning experiences relevant to real-life contexts so that young people can link their learning to the world of work. Staff identify explicitly the skills for life and work as part of their teaching. School leaders should continue to identify where this practice is integrated most successfully into learning, to develop this practice across subjects.
- Young people feel that their views are sought and acted upon to influence learning, teaching and assessment. School staff use surveys, focus groups and the headteacher's '24/7 programme' to discuss important matters with them. Learners value these opportunities and are able to demonstrate improvements to their experiences.
- In the SSR, teachers use questionnaires to assess young people's wellbeing and to identify areas where they need support. Staff help young people to understand their own barriers to learning. They work well with young people to improve their confidence and participation in learning. Teachers share access to planning and assessment resources with subject teachers in the mainstream classes. This is supporting teachers in the SSR to plan effective one-to-one support for young people across the curriculum. Teachers within the SSR use assessments set by class teachers to help determine young people's next steps in learning.
- Staff, young people and their families have been involved in the creation of the SLIPP model (Starter, Learning Intention and success criteria, Pace, Plenary) for learning and teaching. This provides a consistent structure for all learning experiences and has also been the basis of further school policies such as the 'Circle of Teaching'. Young people are responding positively to the consistency of the SLIPP approach across the school. Senior leaders should continue to work with staff to maximise the quality, pace and challenge of each element of SLIPP across the school.
- In all lessons, teachers use starter activities that allow young people to demonstrate recall of what they have learnt previously. In all lessons, teachers set out the aims and objectives for young people's learning. They also provide descriptions of what learners need to do to show that they have completed the learning successfully. In a few classes, young people have helped to create these criteria. School staff should now, as planned, work together with young people to explore how learners could contribute more to the writing of success criteria.
- Teachers make good use of laptops for assisting learning for young people in the SSR. Young people in the SSR would benefit from easier access to assistive technology throughout the school to improve their engagement in learning.
- Teachers assess the work of learners using a range of approaches. These include more formal assessments carried out at the end of each phase of work, and formative assessment strategies, such as the use of show-me boards and quick surveys to check young people's understanding. These are used effectively by teachers to help inform subsequent planning. In almost all lessons, teachers use one-to-one and group questioning to explore young people's learning. In most lessons, teachers connect the learning to higher-order thinking skills. Staff use assessment outcomes well to plan future learning and assessment, and to support decisions about what additional support young people may need.

- Teachers provide effective feedback to young people about their learning in a variety of ways. For example, they give written feedback on individual assessments and support young people verbally as they work through tasks in class time. All young people in both the BGE and senior phase have formal and informal learning conversations with their teachers about what next steps they should take as learners. In the senior phase, all young people have agreed aspirational targets and receive regular feedback about how they are progressing towards achieving these targets. Young people find this process very helpful. All young people are confident in asking staff for advice about their learning and appreciate their teachers' support. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to learning conversations. They should work with young people to ensure they can effectively use advice provide to support them in new tasks.
- Senior leaders and teachers have very well developed and embedded approaches to moderation. There is a very clear calendar for moderation activities, which includes collegiate working with colleagues from the cluster primary schools and from other secondary schools in and beyond the local authority. In all departments, teachers are clear about how learners in the broad general education (BGE) are making progress through the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. They record this information appropriately in departmental tracking spreadsheets. School staff who have trained as Quality Assurance Moderation Support Officers (QAMSOs) work with other teachers to improve the quality of assessment judgements. Principal teachers in all faculties then use this information to identify and support individuals or groups of young people who may be at risk of under-performing. They also use the tracking spreadsheets to help them consider the impact of the support that has been put in place to raise young people's attainment. Information about how young people are progressing through the CfE levels is outlined in school reports, which most parents and carers find helpful. Most parents and carers say that they understand how their children's progress is assessed. Teachers are taking an increasingly holistic approach to learners' work when making judgements about achievement of CfE levels.
- In the senior phase, teachers, supported by the school's Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) appointees, have a strong understanding of the assessment standards in national qualifications. All departments take part in moderation activity with other schools, and they also engage with SQA professional learning opportunities. As a result, teacher plan well for National Qualifications courses where tasks and activities are set at the right level of difficulty.
- Personalised planning is in place for all young people in the SSR which includes regularly updated targets and input from young people. Young people can explain clearly the targets which they are working towards, such as increasing their attendance in classes across the school.
- School tracking information includes data about young people within the SSR. Staff plan to develop tracking approaches to make it easier to track the progress of young people attending SSR. Teachers in the SSR rightly place a high priority on young people's regular attendance in mainstream classes. Senior leaders have identified correctly that improved tracking of young people's engagement and attendance in all classes would provide valuable data on young people's progress. They should continue to develop ways to monitor how attending the SSR improves young people's learning across the school.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

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

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

- Senior leaders, in conjunction with staff, have developed highly effective approaches to mitigate the impact of poverty on young people's attainment and achievement. They demonstrate a very clear understanding of the complexities of young people and their families' lives outwith school. They are relentless in their approach to overcoming barriers to learning and supporting high aspirations for all young people. Their approaches to both equity and learners' achievements are major strengths of the school's approach to improving the life chances of young people.

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Staff leading on numeracy have clear strategies for improving numeracy across the curriculum to raise attainment. These are supported by a numeracy action plan, support booklet and professional learning. Staff's promotion of an effective and consistent approach is supporting young people to improve their numeracy skills.
- A few young people are supported in their literacy development through the boosted reading programme and the school's focus on helping young people to express themselves well in speech. Staff leading on literacy should now work to develop young people's confidence across the curriculum in literacy. A greater focus on literacy skills, particularly in the senior phase, will support learners to achieve greater success.

#### BGE

- Most young people achieved 3<sup>rd</sup> CfE level or better in all literacy measures by the end of S3 in 2021/22. The majority of young people achieved 4<sup>th</sup> level in all literacy measures. Most young people achieved 3<sup>rd</sup> level or better in numeracy by the end of S3 in 2021/22. The majority of young people achieved 4<sup>th</sup> level in numeracy during this year.
- Most young people in the SSR are making appropriate progress with their literacy and numeracy. The majority of young people are building successfully on their prior learning and overcoming gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The majority of young people attending the SSR are meeting their literacy and numeracy targets. However, attainment data does not show the impact that attending the SSR has on young people's literacy and numeracy attainment.
- Teachers within the SSR prioritise health and wellbeing, while mainstream teachers maintain responsibility for planning teaching in all other curricular areas. Teachers in the SSR should now begin to have a clearer focus on building all young people's literacy and numeracy skills.

## Senior phase

### Leavers

- Most young people leaving school between 2016/17 and 2020/21 achieved Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better in literacy. This was significantly much higher than the virtual comparator (VC) in 2016/17 and 2018/19, and significantly higher than the VC in 2020/21. The majority of young people leaving school in 2020/21 achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy. This is an improvement on 2018/19 and 2019/20. Attainment at this level has been in line with the VC for 2016/17 to 2020/21.
- Most young people leaving school in 2020/21 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This is an improvement on previous years. Attainment at this level was significantly much higher than the VC in 2018/19 and 2020/21. A minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy between 2017/18 and 2020/21. This is in line with the VC.

### Cohorts

- In S4, the majority of young people achieved literacy at SCQF level 5 or better in 2021/22, having been most young people from 2017/18 to 2020/21. For these four years, attainment was significantly higher or much higher than the VC. In 2021/22 it was in line. Senior leaders are aware of the need to improve the number of young people gaining the course award for English at SCQF level 5. By S5, based on the S4 roll, most young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. This is significantly much higher than the VC in 2021/22. From 2017/18 to 2021/22, a minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6. This is in line with the VC. There is a similar pattern of attainment at S6, based on the S4 roll.
- At S4, for numeracy, almost all measures are significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC at SCQF level 3 or better, SCQF 4 or better and SCQF level 5 or better. The majority of young people attain SCQF level 5 or better. By S5, based on the S4 roll, there is a similar pattern at SCQF level 3 or better, SCQF level 4 or better and SCQF level 5 or better. The exception to this is in 2020/21 where attainment was in line with the VC. At SCQF level 6, attainment has fallen to below the VC with only a few young people attaining at this level. This pattern is repeated by S6, based on the S4 roll. Senior leaders and teachers have identified correctly the need to develop more effective curricular pathways for numeracy. This should include a focus on ensuring young people have greater success at SCQF level 5 and can progress to suitable courses at SCQF level 6.

## Attainment over time

### BGE

- Teachers track carefully young people's attainment over time in all curricular areas. They show that almost all young people are making good progress from previous levels of attainment. In 2021/22, most young people across all curricular areas, including English and mathematics, achieved at least 3<sup>rd</sup> CfE level or better by the end of S3.
- Staff decisions about interventions are informed by their analysis of attainment data. The whole school tracking system is used effectively to explore the attainment over time of particular groups of young people, such as those who are care experienced. Senior leaders support and challenge faculty staff well as they evaluate the impact of these interventions in helping learners to progress over time.



## Senior phase

### Improving attainment for all

- Senior leaders are at the early stages of reviewing the curriculum. They are clear that they need to make better use of the full SCQF framework to build on the National Qualification (NQ) and Skills for Work courses offered. They should consider introducing other relevant courses, such as National Progression Awards.

### Leavers

- The attainment of young people leaving school, using average complementary tariff points, is broadly in line with the VC. This includes the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people.

### Cohorts

- In S4, by S5 and by S6, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people, middle attaining 60% of young people and highest attaining 20% of young people is broadly in line with the VC.

### Breadth and depth

- Senior leaders have developed effective approaches to monitoring and tracking attainment at a whole school level in the senior phase. They monitor closely the attainment of young people who are at risk of not achieving. Importantly, they take effective action to ensure young people gain a range of qualifications. This includes supported study, master classes, individual support and mentoring. As a result, in S4, almost all young people attain three or more awards at SCQF level 3 or better. This is significantly much higher than the VC.
- In S4, most young people achieve four or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better. This is in line with the VC from 2019/20 to 2021/22. The majority of young people achieve two or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better. A minority achieved five or more awards. This is in line with the VC for 2021/22. A minority of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 5A or better. This is in line with the VC from 2017/18 to 2021/22. A few young people achieve three or more, four or more, or five or more awards at SCQF 5A or better. This is significantly lower than the VC. Senior leaders should work with staff to ensure the quality and breadth of passes in NQs at SCQF level 5C or better and 5A or better improves. This includes in English, mathematics, sciences and social studies. This will also support improvements at SCQF level 6 in S5 and S6.
- By S5, based on the S4 roll, most young people achieve one or more award at SCQF level 5C or better. This is significantly higher than the VC in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and significantly much higher in 2021/22. This is a clear improvement on previous years. A minority of young people achieved five or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better in 2021/22. This is a decline on the previous year where it was significantly higher than the VC. It is now in line with the VC. Attainment at SCQF level 5A or better is broadly in line with the VC. In 2021/22, a minority of young people achieved one or more award at SCQF level 6C or better. This is in line with the VC. Most young people had achieved this level in 2019/20 and 2020/21. A few young people achieve two or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better. This is significantly lower than the VC.
- By S6, the majority of young people achieved five or more awards at SCQF level 5C in 2020/21 and 2021/22. This is significantly higher than the VC for 2021/22. The majority of young people attained one or more awards at SCQF level 6C in 2020/21 and 2021/22. This was significantly higher than the VC in 2020/21 and in line with the VC for 2021/22. A minority of young people attained one or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better in 2021/22,

significantly higher than the VC. A minority of young people achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 7C or better in 2021/22. This is in line with the VC.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- Senior leaders, staff and young people have built successfully an ethos of achievement. Almost all young people feel that they are encouraged to do their best. Learners speak positively of how they develop their skills and interests within curriculum settings and in activities beyond the classroom. The school's house system captures young people's contribution through recording house points.
- Young people in the SSR experience a wide range of personal achievements. Through participating in John Muir Awards and Saltire Awards, young people are building their skills for learning, life and work. A few young people enjoy participating in the Auchendarvie Academy Achievers' Awards programme scheme. The majority of young people have participated in a cycle maintenance course. Almost all young people are proud of their accomplishments and are developing their confidence and resilience through them.
- Young people in the SSR are learning important emotional regulation skills and are beginning to contribute effectively to teamwork. The majority of young people can make connections between achievements in the SSR and the skills they will need for the future. In particular, they discuss enthusiastically the skills they will require for the world of work. This is enhancing their ability to become responsible citizens. Staff in the SSR should now track young people's achievements more carefully, with an emphasis on skills development. This will help staff to plan learning that is progressive and builds on young people's existing skills.
- Young people across the BGE and senior phase develop skills such as leadership and teamwork through their participation in activities within and outwith class. Staff and partners work very well to provide young people with access to a range of stimulating accredited and non-accredited programmes that build young people's self-esteem, confidence and skills of social interaction. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme is well embedded in the life of the school and supports participants effectively, including individuals facing challenges. A minority of learners in the senior phase secure SQA Leadership and Personal Development Awards relating to wellbeing and employability. This is further evidenced in the work of the Skills Academy for identified individuals. North Ayrshire Sports Academy provides participants with a range of qualifications as young people engage with their wider community. Saltire awards for a few young people acknowledge their voluntary contribution to the school and wider community. Young people's achievements and engagement in activities within and beyond school are tracked effectively with the information gathered informing conversations to encourage further participation. There is scope to develop further young people's ability to reflect on the skills and insights they are developing through participation.
- The initiative "Harvie's Heroes" links effectively the school values with key articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Teachers highlight those learners who model these values well. Awards celebrating young people's contributions are displayed prominently across the school, reinforcing an ethos of achievement.
- Young people respond well to designated roles and responsibilities. Young people in the BGE and in the senior phase develop their leadership skills as subject as well as school ambassadors. These roles build their confidence levels, a sense of responsibility and the skills of working with others. Senior students collaborate well with staff to deliver a range of clubs and wider learning for younger students. Examples of wider achievement include a group of S4 learners who act as Mentors in Violence Prevention and groups of young people who support younger learners in musical theatre and enterprise activities. Young people's confidence builds

as they showcase their talents through for example school shows and performances. Young people represent the school at local authority and national levels in, for example, music and sport. Particular achievements, include young people's success in the Formula 1 Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths initiative, which has been recognised nationally. Young people's understanding of personal safety and risk assessment is increased through input delivered with partners.

- Young people's achievements within school and in the wider community are recognised and celebrated through prize giving assemblies and social media. Young people's learning and achievements are also recognised through bronze, silver, gold and platinum awards as part of the Auchenharvie Academy Achievers' Awards programme.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Staff across Auchenharvie Academy have a very clear focus on ensuring equity by supporting young people and their families to address the impact of poverty. Staff demonstrate a very strong understanding of the poverty-related attainment gap. They are successful in mitigating poverty-related barriers.
- School staff have secured additional funding from partners and charities to supplement Pupil Equity Funding, Strategic Equity Funding and local authority funding with the aim to use this to support young people and their families. For example, the school librarian sourced funding from the School Library Improvement Fund to purchase laptops which have been helpful in supporting a group of young people who have been identified as requiring additional support with literacy. Staff's strategies are supported by young people who act as ambassadors for themes such as inclusion and the cost of the school day. Senior leaders and staff ensure the school operates a zero-cost day which successfully contributes to their inclusive community. The New and Pre-Loved Uniform Store (NA Plus), provides free jackets, shoes, uniforms, toiletries and other items. Increasing numbers of young people and families are accessing NA Plus. This support has been highlighted nationally as a positive case study by the Child Poverty Action Group.
- Staff use a range of highly effective approaches to track the progress of different cohorts of young people through school. This also contributes to "excellence and equity" data which is effective in helping teachers target specific learners in their classes for interventions. Young people are identified correctly for interventions in literacy and numeracy. This has led to improved reading and comprehension ages and assessment scores for selected S1 learners in 2021/22. Staff are also working proactively within young people within the associated primaries, providing interventions as part of transition. As a result, these young people experience a more supported transition to secondary school.
- There is a clear and successful strategy to improve the attainment of young people impacted by poverty. There has been a notable improvement in the attainment of young people leaving school living in SIMD decile two from 2016/17 to 2020/21. Young people living in SIMD decile two account for approximately half of the school population. The attainment of young people leaving school living in SIMD decile one, using complementary tariff points, is in line with national figures. For those young people living in SIMD deciles two and three attainment was significantly higher than the national figures.
- Strong positive destinations are a central part of the school's vision statement and success. The positive destination figures between 2017/18 and 2020/21 are significantly much higher than the VC. Nearly all young people move on to a positive destination on leaving school. Most young people go on to higher or further education, with a few going on to employment. Staff work very effectively with partners, such as SDS and the local college to support young people

into positive destinations. Identified young people complete 'information about me', which is used to help plan their participation in Developing the Young Workforce initiatives, wider achievement activities, work experience, and a range of other supports to help them secure a successful post-school destination.

## Other relevant evidence

### **Health Promotion and Nutrition (Scotland) Act 2007**

The local authority submitted self-evaluation information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties, as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff. The HNI also examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school health promotion duties as far as they relate to food and nutrition. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

### **Parental engagement**

Staff recognise the school's place in the community and work proactively with identified families on their own learning and qualifications in addition to working with partners such as the North Ayrshire Money Matters team to support families. Staff use a range of data to identify families who might benefit from this additional support from primary transition onwards. This has led to greater support, qualifications and, at times, employment for families, in addition to more effective home support in learning for young people. Examples of success include identified young people previously underachieving in their learning staying at school to gain wider qualifications. In some cases, family members of young people with complex needs have supported the professional learning of all staff. This has equipped school staff more effectively to support and plan for young people's needs.

## 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.