

Summarised inspection findings

Our Lady's High School - Cumbernauld

North Lanarkshire Council

23 January 2024

Key contextual information

School Name: Our Lady's High School - Cumbernauld
Council: North Lanarkshire
SEED number: 8357439

Our Lady's High School is a denominational secondary school, with a school roll of 840 pupils. The headteacher has been in post since 2019 and is supported by three depute headteachers in the senior management team. Senior leaders continuously seek to identify and address the challenges presented by the aging school building and facilities.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average.

Exclusions are generally below the national average. The exclusion rates have decreased over the past five years.

In September 2023, 11% per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2023, the school reported that 27% per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

In September 2023, just under half of young people live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2-5.

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

- School leaders and staff create successfully a warm, purposeful, and calm environment which enhances young people's learning experiences. Almost all young people take pride in their work and demonstrate a clear respect for learning. They feel motivated in their learning by staff who encourage them to do the best they can. Young people are responsible, courteous, and considerate. Gospel values strongly influence the school ethos and consequently the very positive learning experiences of almost all young people.
- Most young people can articulate positively and clearly what they are learning, why they are learning it and how they can be successful. Almost all teachers plan learning thoroughly linking their planned programmes of learning well with the school's learning and teaching framework. Most teachers provide very good opportunities for young people to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, in a variety of experiences across all curricular areas. Senior leaders should enhance young people's say in what and how they learn.
- Most teachers stimulate young people's interest in learning through skilled questioning. In most lessons, teachers encourage and develop young people's higher-order thinking skills. Senior leaders should continue to provide opportunities to share good practice on questioning and higher order thinking skills across the school. Senior leaders are working with middle leaders and teachers to ensure that all young people are challenged. In all departments, teachers have successfully embraced very good opportunities that support young people's literacy skills.
- In almost all lessons, young people are highly motivated to learn. Most teachers have a strong understanding of young people's needs, abilities, and interests. They use this very well to set meaningful, and at times challenging, learning activities. Almost all teachers support individual learners sensitively and creatively, providing appropriate scaffolding and support. Staff emphasise to young people the importance of persistence and effort in their learning. As a result, most young people can grasp complex concepts, remember what they have to learn, and apply it to different situations. Young people's learning and engagement is enhanced well through enthusiastic and encouraging peer support in class, and well-planned opportunities for young people from the senior phase to mentor and support younger learners.
- In almost all departments, young people benefit from effective feedback on their learning. Staff and young people discuss their learning regularly. Young people offer their teachers ideas of what they would like to do differently in their learning through formal learning conversations. Teachers write helpful formative comments on young people's written work, encouraging them to think about their strengths and next steps in learning. High-quality discussion in lessons between young people and their teachers, and between young people working in groups, helps almost all young people to question and improve their knowledge and understanding. Most

young people feel that the feedback they receive improves their learning and can articulate why clearly.

- In a minority of departments, digital contexts are used to support dialogue between teachers and young people. Almost all teachers use online platforms to share programmes of learning. Almost all young people use this to submit homework or other pieces of work, appreciating the opportunity to use these platforms to support their independent study. Parental reports provide a clear outline of young people's progress and in most cases, reports include detail of future steps learners should take to accelerate their learning. Senior leaders have identified the need to develop further the use of digital technology to support and enhance learning and teaching across the school.
- Teachers build effectively on young people's prior knowledge in lessons, with relevant data from primary school being shared well with teachers in almost all departments. As young people progress through the school, information on their strengths and their progress is shared well with staff. Teachers use this information very well to inform their planning for learning.
- Almost all staff use the National Benchmarks well. Assessment is a well-planned part of young people's learning. In the broad general education (BGE), almost all teachers work together to ensure that the standard expected from young people is consistent across their department, and in line with national expectations.
- In all departments, almost all teachers use a range of appropriate methods to assess progress made by young people. This includes use of summative tests, skilful questioning, scrutiny of jotters and teacher-led conversations. In most departments, young people also engage in supportive peer and self-assessment. This approach ensures almost all teachers have a wide and appropriate range of evidence of young people's learning. In both the BGE and the senior phase, assessments are successfully linked to published success criteria.
- Most teachers make reliable professional judgement on learners' achievement within their Curriculum for Excellence level, working well collaboratively with staff from other schools, in moderation activities. A high number of teachers engage in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) assessment activities, which has enhanced their understanding of expectations within national qualification courses.
- At departmental level, teachers work well together to plan courses of learning, considering progression through the BGE and into the senior phase. A whole-school assessment calendar is used well by almost all departments and supports teachers planning. This promotes consistency in the timing of gathering appropriate assessment evidence to review how well young people are learning. Almost all teachers use assessment information efficiently to monitor young people's progress against expectations, and to create learning and interventions that are well-matched to the needs of young people.

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

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

The headteacher and senior leaders work very well with staff, to ensure all have high expectations and aspirations for all young people. Staff continually review the curriculum to ensure the courses offered are appropriate and meet the needs of all learners. This is contributing to improvements in attainment in several curricular areas.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

BGE

- In 2022-23, almost all young people achieve third CfE level and most achieve fourth CfE level in literacy by the end of S3. This is above than the national average for fourth CfE level. Over the last five years there has been positive improvements in the percentage of young people achieving third and fourth CfE literacy levels. An additional period of literacy in S1 and S2 focuses on skills development throughout the year. Through effective planning for literacy, staff ensure young people progressively develop their literacy skills and build their confidence with language. The literacy across learning framework is supporting the development of literacy across curricular areas. This is helping all staff to create a positive literacy culture across the school.
- In numeracy, most young people achieve third CfE level, and the majority achieve fourth CfE level by the end of S3. This is in line with the national average. Following COVID-19 school closures, there was a decline in numeracy attainment which is being addressed by senior leaders and staff through their use of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). There are early signs of this making a positive impact for targeted young people.
- There is a strong transition programme in place between Our Lady's High School and the associated primary schools. Some secondary teachers across the school visit the P7 classes in the year leading to transition, this helps continuity of learning in S1. Moderation of literacy across the cluster is a strong feature of the transition programme. Teachers demonstrate how they are using data from primary effectively to inform planning for learning and teaching. This is accelerating the progress of young people well in S1 building on their prior learning.

Literacy (leavers)

- Almost all young people left school with literacy at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better between 2017/18 and 2021/22 with the exception of one year. This is significantly higher than the virtual comparator (VC) in 2017/18 and 2021/22. Most young people left with literacy at SCQF level 6 or better between 2020/21 and 2021/22. Performance in literacy has been significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC over five years.

Numeracy (leavers)

- Over the past five years, almost all young people left school with numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better, most achieved SCQF level 5 or better and a minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 by the time they left school. This is generally in line with the VC. As part of their raising attainment strategy, teachers are now providing opportunities for young people studying at SCQF level 4 maths to also achieve the SCQF level 5 numeracy unit. This is showing early signs of improvement on numeracy outcomes.

Cohorts

- At S4, almost all young people achieve SCQF level 4 or better and most young people achieve SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. By S5, based on the S4 roll, the majority of young people go on to achieve SCQF level 6 literacy. This was significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC from 2018/19 to 2021/22. By S6, based on the S4 roll, the majority of young people attain SCQF level 6, with most attaining at this level in the most recent year. Attainment is significantly higher than the VC over five years. At S4 and by S5 there has been a decline in attainment at SCQF level 5 or better in the latest year 2022/23.
- At S4, there are improvements in attainment at SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy over the past five years. In 2022/23, most young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better, which is significantly higher than the VC. By S5 and by S6, based on the S4 roll, a minority of young people go on to achieve SCQF level 6 numeracy.
- Senior leaders work successfully with middle leaders to ensure that individual young people do not leave school without a literacy or numeracy qualification. Staff deliver literacy and numeracy sessions after school for a target group of young people.

Attainment over time

- By the end of S3, most young people achieve third CfE level in almost all curricular areas outwith literacy and numeracy. The majority of young people achieve fourth CfE level in a majority of their curricular areas outwith literacy and numeracy. The percentage of young people achieving third and fourth CfE levels is improving over time. Staff in departments work effectively together to moderate in the BGE. This provides teacher confidence in assessment judgements and reliability of CfE levels.
- Teachers in all curricular areas use effective department tracking and monitoring systems to record the attainment of young people. Tracking periods are used to collate this data at whole-school level. Teachers put appropriate interventions in place which are leading to positive outcomes for these young people. Senior leaders should continue to develop their strategic overview of data in order to better demonstrate progress over time and how specific interventions are supporting improvements for young people.

Senior phase

Improving attainment for all

Leavers

- The attainment of young people leaving school, using average complementary tariff points is in line with the VC for the middle attaining 60%. The lowest attaining 20% is significantly higher than the VC for three of the last five years. The average complementary tariff points for the highest attaining 20% is significantly lower than the VC for three out of the last five years. Senior leaders have correctly identified that presentation levels for the highest attaining 20% is an area in need of improvement.

Cohorts

- At S4, using complementary tariff points, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest 20% of young people is generally in line with the VC over the last five years. By S5, based on the S4 roll, the lowest attaining 20% and the highest attaining 20% is in line with the VC. The middle attaining 60% is significantly higher than the VC three out of the five years. In S6, based on the S4 roll, the lowest attaining 20% and the middle attaining 60% is generally in line with the VC. The highest attaining 20% was significantly lower than the VC for four of the last five years. Senior leaders identify the need to ensure young people in S6 maximise their learning in their final year of school. These young people are capable of adding more value to their attainment.
- Senior leaders recognise the need to improve the attainment of the highest attaining 20% of young people. They have identified the highest attaining 20% of young people from each year group. Senior leaders and staff closely monitor progress of these young people over time and department interventions are put in place if they are off track.

Breadth and depth

- At S4, almost all young people achieve eight or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better. This is significantly higher or much higher than the VC for five years. At SCQF level 5C or better, just under half of the young people achieved five or more awards and most achieved one or more. This is broadly in line with the VC over five years. A minority achieve three or more awards at SCQF level 5A or better, this is significantly higher than the VC for four out of the five years. A few young people achieved SCQF level 5 Maths as well as an SCQF level 5 Applications of Maths.
- By S5, most young people achieve three or more and the majority achieve five or more at SCQF level 5C or better. This is broadly in line with the VC over five years. A majority of young people achieve three or more awards at SCQF level 5A or better. This is significantly higher than the VC in 2020/21 and 2021/22. A minority of young people achieve three or more awards at SCQF level 6C, which is significantly higher than the VC for four out of the five years. A minority of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better. A few achieve three or more awards, which is significantly higher than the VC. In 2022/23, performance has dropped and is the lowest across almost all measures.
- By S6, a majority of young people achieve three or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better. This is higher than the VC for three of the last five years. A minority of young people achieve one or more award at level 7C or better and a few achieve one or more awards at level 7A. This is in line with the VC.
- Senior leaders and staff have recently introduced a variety of different pathways to support achievement and attainment of young people. Skills for work, national progression awards and open university courses are providing a breadth of learning opportunities to meet the needs of young people.
- Senior leaders and staff have a shared raising attainment strategy which supports young people to attain and achieve in the senior phase. This includes mindset workshops, regular supported study sessions, Easter school, Saturday school and an S5 weekend study residential. In addition, senior leaders have rightly focused on improving young people's wellbeing and attendance. Attendance has improved over the last two years. An attendance framework clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of all staff. Senior leaders work closely with partners to provide targeted support for identified young people and families.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- There is a culture of celebration in Our Lady's High School. Staff regularly celebrate young people's achievements in a range of ways, such as through social media, school newsletters, noticeboards, and awards ceremonies. This helps young people feel respected and that their achievements are valued.
- Young people develop skills such as teamwork and confidence through their participation in a wide variety of activities within and outwith class. In addition, young people across the school develop their leadership skills and contribute to the life of the school through the sports council, pupil parliament and the work towards the Rights Respecting Schools. Young people can describe how their contributions in these groups support school improvement. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is well-established with a few young people progressing through bronze and silver awards.
- All young people in S6 develop their leadership, communication, organisational and citizenship skills through the Caritas Award and the meaningful ambassador programme. This includes house, subject, kindness, hospice, sport and STEM ambassadors. Young people also act as Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) and support younger learners through buddying. This is supporting young people to demonstrate their civic duty and actively support the school and wider community including the transition of pupils from primary schools. Young people receive certification through this with some linking to the SCQF framework.
- The S6 Sport Ambassadors commendably organise and lead weekly sports session in all associated primary school. This is developing the confidence and responsibility of these young people and is building relationships between learners in the primary schools and Our Lady's High School.
- The Future Friday's initiative benefits from the input of school staff, local clubs, colleges and the wider school community to provide a programme of activities for young people after school on a Friday. Staff track young people's participation in the initiative, which allows opportunities to target pupils who may benefit from more involvement.
- There are examples of staff tracking young people's participation in the wide range of achievements in a few areas of the school. Senior leaders should now develop a strategic overview of young people's achievement. This will help them to target young people, or cohorts of young people, who would benefit the most in developing important skills for learning, life and work. Senior leaders should also develop a skills framework so that young people can be supported to discuss the skills they are developing through their participation in out of class activities.

Equity for all learners

- A cluster equity plan is in place to close the poverty related attainment gap, with a focus on literacy, numeracy, and attendance. The data driven plan provides clear strategies for early intervention with measurable outcomes. This joint cluster approach is improving the tracking and monitoring of young people disadvantaged by poverty and is resulting in improved attainment for these learners. In attainment versus deprivation, using complimentary tariff points, attainment of young people in deciles 5-7 is significantly higher or significantly much higher than the national average.
- Almost all young people leaving Our Lady's High School in the last five years moved on to a positive and sustained destination after school. Most young people go on to Further or Higher Education, with a minority of young people entering employment. Young people are very well supported through the work of support staff, partner agencies, and business partners. This work

is ensuring young people access appropriate advice and develop skills for learning, life and work. This is leading to almost all young people feeling confident and able to plan for their future and career aspirations.

Other relevant evidence

The school submitted information relating to compliance with the Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of young people through food in school. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the local authority school meals provider that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

All staff are very aware of the social, cultural and economic context of the school community. Staff use their knowledge of individual learners very well to offer them high levels of support. They adapt classroom practice and use targeted interventions to support all young people to achieve high levels of attainment and achievement. This includes young people with an additional support need and who are care experienced. This is contributing to almost all young people feeling supported to do the best they can.

All staff have a strong understanding and are committed to addressing the costs of the school day. They proactively provide young people with access to equipment and resources to support their learning, as well as items of uniform. Senior leaders ensure financial barriers are removed and all young people can access the full range of activities offered through the curriculum and beyond the school day. This approach is resulting in almost all young people feeling valued and included in the school community.

A range of partners work effectively with young people to seek to improve outcomes for those facing barriers to achievement. Senior leaders, The Home School Partnership Officer and Pupil Support work closely with families to offer well-considered support to individuals and small groups. For example, the Get involved Group, NLC Pathways programme and Right Track programme is improving attendance and engagement for these young people. Senior leaders recognise ways that they can improve their approaches to monitoring and measuring fully the interventions used to close the poverty-related attainment gap. This will help them to better demonstrate the accelerated progress of young people living in poverty.

Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Fund to support targeted literacy and numeracy interventions for young people where disadvantage is a barrier to achievement. This includes resources to support young people with dyslexia and those where English is an additional language. This is improving outcomes for these learners, particularly in literacy.

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.