

# Summarised inspection findings

**Port Glasgow High School**

Inverclyde Council

5 February 2019

**School Name:** Port Glasgow High School  
**Council:** Inverclyde Council  
**SEED number:** 8645531  
**Roll (Sep 2017):** 460

Attendance is generally in line with the national average for the years between 2012 and 2015. Attendance has gradually increased from 88.9% in 2015 to 90.6% in 2018. In February 2017, 28.1 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals. In September 2017, 52.8 per cent of pupils live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland. In September 2017 the school reported that 29 per cent of pupils had additional support needs, which is below the local authority figure of 31% and in line with the national figure of 29%.

## Key contextual information

The senior leadership team (SLT) consists of the headteacher, two permanent depute headteachers and one acting depute headteacher. The headteacher has been in post for just over two years.

The school is associated with two primary schools; Newark Primary School and Kilmacolm Primary School.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

very good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher has been a key influencer of change and has provided highly effective strategic direction to the school community. His strong leadership is highly valued by almost all stakeholders. Parents recognise that he has led change well and that he has a high profile within the community. In the last two years along with his senior leadership team, he has brought about significant improvements, including increased attainment and improved destinations for young people. He has inspired staff, partners and young people to pursue equity for all. The strong SLT offers very good support to the headteacher and provides effective strategic direction. The headteacher, together with his depute heads, has created a culture of increased expectations and empowerment of young people and staff. Principal teachers and staff taking on leadership responsibilities are contributing significantly to school improvement.
- The headteacher has led the school and its community very well in creating a shared mission with a clear vision and agreed values. Inspectors found strong evidence that the mission of 'Success for All' and the 'CLEAR' values of confident, learning, equity, ambition, respect are understood and promoted by teachers, learners and partners. Through consultation with stakeholders, 'equity' was added as a core value and the helpful acronym CLEAR is now used. The school's mission and values are consistently evident in action through the life and work of the school. They are a central focus in shaping improvements and providing the rationale for change. They have resulted in raised ambition and increased expectations which are supporting young people's progress in learning and improving their levels of confidence. As part of the consultative approach to shaping the school's values, young people have discussed what the school values would look like in action and are now able to illustrate well how these are being modelled. The SLT actively encourages staff and young people to achieve the highest possible standards.
- The school's five year strategic plan was developed to meet the needs of the school context and almost all staff demonstrate a very good understanding of this local context. The headteacher has provided clear strategic direction for the school. This includes making key appointments, to lead the work of staff and target resources appropriately which promotes equity and inclusion. Senior and middle leaders take individual and collective responsibility for ensuring all young people are nurtured in a positive learning environment with respectful relationships.
- Pupil voice is a strength within the school. Young people and teachers acknowledge that the headteacher, supported by his depute heads, shows a commitment to listening to them and is open to making suggested changes which will benefit them. An example of this is the replacement of paper-based learning logs with an online application to manage and

communicate homework, which young people and staff report has led to improved quality and return of homework. This change took place as a result of consultation with the young people.

- There is a clear understanding of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) across the school, its purpose and what this means for young people. The plans in place to enhance the young people's readiness for work or further study are well-considered, clear and are the basis for developing the senior phase curriculum offer.
- The school is effective in recognising and planning for the 'I can...' statements from the 3-18 Career Education Standards to be incorporated into personal and social education (PSE) classes from S1 to S6. This is helping to ensure a strong and consistent focus on developing employability skills and awareness in the young people.
- Senior staff have reflected on the need to encourage subject teachers to include discussion about employment and future choices within their subject teaching. An initiative called 'Your Subject... Their Future' promotes the idea of staff having such discussions and identifies useful resources to support this approach. This has been successful in encouraging staff to link discussions and career plans within lessons.
- The headteacher manages change effectively by streamlining priorities in planning for improvement. He allocates time appropriately through collegiate sessions to overtake improvement plans. Staff have shaped the five year school improvement plan which is allowing them to see the way ahead clearly as they pursue better outcomes for all young people. The school's comprehensive plan for targeting the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is resulting in clear improvements for young people, such as progress in reading and aspects of numeracy. Young people benefit from safe spaces and opportunities to build self-esteem from improved wellbeing and nurture provision, as part of the PEF improvement plan.
- Principal teachers are committed to leading improvement and are using a wider range of evidence to plan for improvements, including greater use of data and learner feedback. Teachers are now beginning to use improved tracking and monitoring systems which are allowing them to put in place interventions at an earlier stage to support young people. Tracking and monitoring now extends to second curriculum level across the cluster primary schools. This is helping to plan more focused outcomes for individuals and targeted groups. This also allows staff to filter data more easily and target support more confidently. There is scope to align department improvement plans more fully to the school improvement plans. These should focus on more specific outcomes for learners and show clear targets from analysis of data. While the school improvement plan is shaped from clear self-evaluative evidence, this detail is less evident in most departmental improvement plans. As a result, there is scope for departmental teams to be more aware of the improvements they have secured for young people. A stronger focus on learning and teaching should feature in these plans.
- There are a few strong examples of partnership working. There is further potential for key partners to be more involved in informing leadership of change. Opportunities for partners to network more formally may help to support this and also ensure the needs of learners are being met by the most appropriate provider. Analysis of the range of partnerships across curriculum areas would be beneficial in identifying strengths and any gaps.
- The school has improved opportunities for teachers to work together across departments, the cluster, campus and local authority. Teachers are increasing their professional knowledge and understanding well by working together on assessment, moderation and sharing practice on, for example, effective interventions. Almost all staff engage in the wide range of valuable

collegiate programmes to support professional learning. An increasing number of staff are using research to inform practice. This demonstrates the high levels of commitment by teachers to raise standards of classroom practice continuously.

- Senior leaders and principal teachers recognise that working closely with colleagues across the shared campus is benefitting young people. Existing shared experiences are serving the campus very well and the SLTs have very good plans to build on this in creative ways.
- Senior staff work well with a range of partners to provide useful curriculum offers for those young people most at risk of not achieving a positive destination. Specific programmes with Community Learning and Development (CLD), West College Scotland and an innovative project to enhance employability working with Greenock Morton Football Club are useful examples of the well-developed range of options. The range of programmes on offer has contributed well to a significant increase in the number of young people moving to a positive destination on leaving school.
- The school has created a culture for teachers and pupils to be empowered and take on leadership roles. Staff commitment and enthusiasm to contribute to school improvement priorities are a notable strength of the school. Staff are regularly consulted on a range of matters and encouraged to bring their ideas forward. The majority of teachers and principal teachers have taken on significant leadership roles which drive key targets within the school's improvement plan. The SLT has recognised the need to develop leadership skills and abilities of staff further in order to sustain improvements. For example, an in-house Leadership Academy has recently been established. The school is building teacher capacity in the cluster with a focus on numeracy and sharing assessments. Staff working groups are closely aligned to the school improvement plan. The impact of these is monitored well to show where these have brought about improvement. For example, young people speak positively about the nurture working group's provision of spaces for them to feel safe and confident. The self-evaluation group has supported increased use of data by offering helpful support and training sessions for teachers.
- There are strong examples of pupil leadership through, for example, the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme and Wellbeing Ambassador programme where seniors pupils see themselves as a bridge between older and younger pupils. These programmes are very effective in supporting younger pupils to feel safe and confident. The well-established programme in which twenty 'My world of work' ambassadors are leading learning with young people and parents is a very good example of strengths in pupil leadership. In addition, groups of S6 young people are offering well-judged support in class and in the cluster primary schools. A number of young people have delivered staff training sessions which highlighted strategies and approaches for personal support which they have benefitted from. This contributed to valuable insights for teachers to reflect on their practice. A few music and sports ambassadors are contributing well to the life of the school and within the wider school cluster. As a result, they are putting into practice their leadership skills to support children in primary schools and young people in S1-S3. This includes extra tuition, mentoring, leading sports groups and supporting transition. Through this they are gaining in confidence, knowledge, team working and organisational skills.
- Teachers are very positive about the impact of a self-reflection tool which they have used to evaluate their practice. Most pupils find these strategies helpful and increased collaboration has offered a platform for sharing of practice within and across departments. Senior leaders should continue to increase capacity in staff across the school to ensure that appropriate levels of support and challenge are a key driver to secure further improvements. The commitment of

all staff, led by the SLT to drive continuous improvement is strong. Leaders should now build on self-evaluation processes with increased rigour and challenge.

- Young people are seizing opportunities to lead change well. However, there is scope to extend their engagement in the change process through, for example, increased responsibility for aspects of self-evaluation.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

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

- learning and engagement
  - quality of teaching
  - effective use of assessment
  - planning, tracking and monitoring
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- Positive relationships throughout the school community are founded on respect so that almost all young people feel valued. Strong, friendly relationships are evident in a nurturing learning environment where young people describe their teachers as caring and committed. They are engaged in their learning, interacting well and supporting confidently the learning of their peers in group and partner activities. While young people's views are sought at both school and department level, there is scope to improve follow-up feedback so that they are more aware of how their views influence change and improvement.
  - In the majority of classes, sharp, focused starter activities ensure a focused lead-in to learning. Active learning strategies continue to be embedded across the school which are helping to increase the engagement and enthusiasm of learners. Pace and challenge are appropriate in most classes where young people benefit from a motivating experience which meets their needs and interests.
  - Young people have a wide range of opportunities at all stages to contribute actively to the life of the school. This supports the strong ethos of community and a sense of 'family'. The range of clubs, activities and trips that are on offer helps young people to grow in confidence and develop skills such as public speaking and team work. Young people and parents speak very highly of out-of-class learning, including additional after school and weekend supported study and leadership opportunities. They enjoy participation in competitions and performances at local, regional and national level. For example, young people who have taken part in the Poetry Slam club experience national success. Staff are correctly working to build on the strength of wider learning experiences to include leadership roles and links to life, learning and work.
  - Strong partnership working between the school library service and the English department leads to a range of creative approaches to literacy skills development. While the use of digital technology across the school to enhance learning is not yet widely developed, this particular partnership has led to learners developing digital literacy and programming skills by using small robots and construction games. This creates an engaging, inclusive environment where listening and talking skills are assessed in a relevant context, effectively supporting learners with a wide range of needs. Learners identify that they learn both collaborative and communication skills in this engaging environment. They similarly enjoy developing a range of literacy skills through games-based learning. Overall, there is scope to develop the use of digital technology across the school to enhance and deepen learning.
  - The overall quality of teaching is good. The school's vision and values help to underpin its developing approaches to improving pedagogy. There are important strengths on which to build so that young people experience a greater consistency of approaches across all



departments. As a result of self-evaluation, new whole school approaches are being taken forward this session, working with external providers. These approaches are helping to provide a basis for developing improved consistency and quality in learning and teaching whilst supporting the culture and ethos of increased expectations. This is also improving practitioners' confidence to begin to use evidence-based approaches to improvements outcomes for learners. As reflective practitioners, all staff have committed to this professional learning programme which includes individual feedback after being filmed, supported by an ethos of trust. As a result, the school is now well placed to continue to build on this career long professional learning (CLPL), and evaluate impact on learners' experiences, encouraging a culture of support and increased challenge for improvement.

- In most lessons observed, young people have an understanding of the purpose of the lesson through the sharing of learning intentions, supported by clear explanations and instructions. Most teachers demonstrate skilful questioning which encourages engagement in learning. Learners would benefit from a clearer, more consistent focus on skills development including skills for life, learning and work. They value learning conversations where they receive individualised feedback support for next steps in their learning. Learner conversations take place more regularly in the senior phase. This practice now needs to be replicated across the broad general education (BGE).
- Staff are showing increasing confidence in using a range of active learning approaches which encourage learner independence and the development of higher order thinking skills. Where these are used, they lead to increased motivation and deeper learning. The school has identified the need to review its learning and teaching policy to ensure it reflects accurately the new vision and values and the developing approaches to learning and teaching.
- Staff identified the need for a more robust approach to processes in monitoring and tracking learner progress across the BGE. Across departments, they are now beginning to share best practice in this area. Within the senior phase, an improved approach to tracking and monitoring is in place. Closer scrutiny of learner progress across subjects in the senior phase is helping to create an ethos of increased expectations. All staff should continue to develop their skills in data analysis which are focussed on improvement.
- Staff are continuing to develop a range of approaches to assessment. In the Senior Phase, teachers show a clear understanding of assessment requirements. Most teachers use assessment information to inform feedback, supporting young people to make progress towards National Qualifications. When offered the opportunity, young people engage well with peer assessment activities. As part of the school's improvement strategy, staff have identified the focus of the next phase of the school's professional learning community programme: improving feedback. This should include improving young people's understanding of progress, target-setting and next steps.
- Staff continue to work together and with campus partners, to increase confidence in professional judgements in the BGE. This work is helping to build a shared understanding of national standards and expectation for the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels. Staff confidence in the reliability of their judgments is increasing. They recognise that this continues to be an area requiring further development. Staff are also continuing to work on embedding the National Benchmarks. For example in English they use them as assessment criteria to make required improvements clearer for young people. Recent collaborative work on the moderation cycle is supporting improvements in planning for learning, teaching and assessment. Staff are beginning to ensure that assessment is an integral element at the stage of planning for learning and teaching.



- Whole-school approaches to designing support for learners identify when early intervention supports are required to ensure continued learner progress. This is leading to a more systematic approach to ensuring that young people are now both challenged and supported to achieve the best they can. The impact of these interventions is evaluated on an ongoing basis. The recently introduced tracking system supports analysis of outcomes for targeted groups, including those facing barriers to learning, to allow more individualised targeted interventions.
- Current reporting arrangements provide a helpful framework for identifying progress, strengths and advice for future learning. Work is currently underway to develop a more meaningful format to profiling using Glow blogs, which will help support regular reflection and improvement discussion, and also record learners' successes and targets.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The school's five year strategic improvement plan for 2017 to 2022 identifies five main strategic intentions for the improvement agenda. One of these includes the intention to enhance the curriculum. This outlines the aim to ensure maximum enrichment from campus and community partners in the senior phase and to develop more engaging and challenging learning in the BGE.

### **Broad general education (BGE):**

- Evidence from consultation and self-evaluation identified the need to provide better opportunities for young people to specialise and learn at fourth curriculum level in S3. The design of the BGE in other schools was researched and the views of young people and staff were sought. Proposals for different designs were developed and presented to staff in December 2017. The aim for the BGE is to provide young people with breadth of learning whilst preparing them well for the senior phase and qualifications.
- Parents are kept well-informed about the curriculum. At parents' evenings and events the school provides leaflets and booklets with information on aspects of the curriculum. Booklets on how to help their children with literacy and numeracy are available along with information on wider aspects of the curriculum. Approaches such as the 'Festive Family Fun' learning activity and the 'Help with Homework' session organised with CLD successfully involve parents in their children's learning.
- Courses in S1 and S2 provide learning at third level for most young people. Differentiation aims to meet the needs of those learning at second level or needing aspects of the challenge of fourth level learning. Staff are continuing to review the curriculum at S1 and S2 to ensure better articulation with the revised courses in S3. They are using feedback from young people to inform these changes.
- The new approach to S3 is now in place and young people are benefitting by studying their choice of subjects within each curricular area. These courses are providing learning with more depth and challenge at fourth curriculum level. Young people are supported to make informed choices through conversations with subject teachers and guidance teachers. Options are available for young people who would benefit from more time progressing their literacy and numeracy skills. The school needs to continue to ensure that all young people experience breadth of learning in S3. The choices within each column need to provide pathways to meet the needs of all young people, including those continuing to study at third curriculum level. Staff should continue to keep the S3 curriculum under review, ensuring the focus is on learning at third or fourth curriculum level and not prioritising the requirements of qualifications. Going forward, departments need to plan learning to provide a smooth transition from the BGE courses in S3 into courses in the senior phase.
- There are currently no interdisciplinary learning (IDL) opportunities to support young people to make connections in their learning in new and challenging contexts. Going forward, staff are planning to introduce these approaches to the BGE, for example integrating aspects of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning.

## Senior phase:

- The school offers an appropriate range of curriculum options in the senior phase. The curriculum provides the opportunity for young people in S4 to select six courses which lead to qualifications. Across S5 and S6, most young people select five courses leading to qualifications. From S4 to S6, the school provides, along with partners, a variety of learning pathways for young people. There is a wide range of courses leading to National Qualifications and other accreditation. This includes courses leading to qualifications at SCQF levels 2 to 7, Foundation Apprenticeships, Awards and Skills for Work Courses. A working group is currently considering further ways to enrich the curriculum including enhancing alignment across the campus and treating S4 to S6 as one cohort.
- Staff are working well with partners to improve further the range of courses in the senior phase. Staff in Port Glasgow High School work well with their campus partners in St Stephen's High School to the benefit of young people across the campus. This allows both schools to widen the curriculum offer. Staff also work with other schools, the local authority, CLD, West College Scotland and other partners to further extend the range of options for those young people at risk of not achieving a positive destination. This has been successful in keeping young people focussed and supporting them to find positive destinations. The school has a number of creative and unusual partnerships. For example, they have worked for five years with a community enterprise software company to provide short courses, primarily related to music, to motivate and engage learners. In addition, an innovative pilot programme on employability, run in conjunction with Greenock Morton Football Club, is engaging and motivating a small group of learners who would otherwise be at high risk of leaving with no clear positive destination.
- Senior staff have developed a useful 'destination tracker' which records potential career intentions for each young person. This is helpful in ensuring that young people are supported to make well-informed choices for courses, in addition to being guided towards appropriate events and activities related to their career ambitions. The information from the tracker is available to all staff with plans to extend its use. Going forward, the tracker should be used to inform the development of learning pathways which best suit young people in Port Glasgow High School.
- The school's PSE provision from S1 to S6 has recently been revised with support from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to be built around the 'I can' statements from the 3-18 Career Education Standard. This was a helpful and effective change, ensuring a uniform and focussed level of discussion with young people about career-related skills and activities that they need at an appropriate age.
- Work placement arrangements within the school are not fully effective and are mostly a traditional model of one week placements for all S4 learners. Senior staff recognise that this needs to be revised, and have now taken some steps to be more creative through allowing some S4 and S5 learners some increased flexibility about the timing and regularity of their work experience. Currently, Work Placement Standards are not well known across the school and work experience is having a limited impact.
- School-college partnerships are strong. The college confirms the right young people attend college, behave well, stay and succeed. The pupils who move on to college full time are well prepared and have made well informed choices.
- Career Education Standards are a current focus for staff awareness and development. The revised PSE curriculum content ensures a good level of understanding for staff and learners.

However, there is a need to encourage more reflection on career aspirations and the world of work within the classroom. The initiative called 'Your Subject...Their Future' asks staff to take time to discuss career options in their vocational area, and is a helpful recent development.

- The school has an appropriate number of programmes and activities which can help develop skills for learning, life and work within and out with the classroom. However, in these activities and in subject teaching, there is limited reflection on these skills and many young people are not fully aware of the skills they are developing or how to profile these skills for employers.
- The school has a useful range of activities to encourage well-informed applications to university. Work with Focus West has been helpful in ensuring learners who may not traditionally have considered university, can make good quality applications. In some instances, entry requirements may be adapted to encourage non-traditional entrants. University applications are increasing, and young people feel well supported.
- Senior phase PSE provision usefully places young people into groups based on planned next destination for university, college or other destinations. Although there is a risk of limiting options, young people enjoy this focus and benefit from more time on targeted advice on things such as personal statements. Young people are also informed about options which are more specialised such as Modern Apprenticeships, or volunteering. The curriculum is not currently driven by labour market information, although there is recognition that service industries and care will be useful routes for a growing number of young people.

#### **Literacy and numeracy across learning:**

- Staff have reviewed their strategy to develop literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across learning. This session, staff have created a range of cluster groups of lead practitioners from those departments most naturally aligned to each area. Each group is now working to produce practical guidance for their peers.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The school provides regular events for parents to celebrate their children's achievements. This includes open nights, and workshops which parents find very helpful. Recently, the 'Help your child to pass' evenings provided useful ways in which parents can become more actively engaged in supporting their child to learn.
- Most parents report that their child enjoys being at Port Glasgow High School and that they feel treated fairly and with respect. Parents commented that the school is led well and most feel comfortable when approaching the school with ideas or suggestions. As a result of various music performances in the community, parents report that there a strong impact on how the school is perceived in the local community.
- Parents and learners are benefiting from the use of a range of social media applications and an online homework application which supports young people's learning at home. Parents appreciate the way this tool is improving communication from the school and providing young people with support as they complete home learning tasks.
- The Parent Council (PC) takes an active role in school consultations and supports a wide variety of events throughout the session. They are consulted fully on school strategic developments, for example playing a strong part in deciding the school's agreed values. Parents are very positive about the very effective leadership role of the headteacher in moving the school forward. The PC is pro-active in seeking opportunities to raise funds for the school and the shared campus. Senior leaders and staff are currently working with the PC to increase the numbers and the profile of the council further.
- Staff are continuing to plan learning and further specialist inputs with a number of partners. This is helping to support families to be more involved in young people's learning and continue to build positive relationships between home and school. Senior leaders should continue to evaluate the approaches being used to involve parents in their children's learning. This should provide useful evidence to inform future work to increase further partnership working with parents.

## 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.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

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

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- There is a strong sense of community evident in the school. Staff and partners are sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing of individual children and colleagues. Staff recognise their responsibility with regard to universal support by establishing and maintaining very positive and nurturing relationships and by providing learning experiences which support young people's wellbeing. Staff model behaviour which promotes respect and helps young people to feel valued. Based on the data provided by the school, these approaches have resulted in a reduction in exclusions and detentions.
- The school's recently revised shared values of confidence, learning, equity, ambition and respect are core to the development of a positive culture and ethos creating a learning environment which is calm and safe. Almost all young people state that they are known well by a member of staff who helps to promote their social and emotional wellbeing.
- The school has a clear commitment to developing young people's health and wellbeing. Staff are taking forward a number of effective interventions to improve outcomes for young people. The recent introduction of the nurture and wellbeing hubs, 'Space2B and 'Space4U', provide personalised support for targeted young people and help to deliver universal nurture principles across the school. A significant number of young people use the drop-in facilities at lunch times or attend the breakfast club. This includes an 'LGBTQI' and 'young carers' group who meet regularly. Young people are being supported well by restorative interventions at an early stage to address behaviours. The impact of the base and other interventions, coupled with a renewed attendance policy, have resulted in improved attendance, time keeping and reduced exclusions based on the school's data.
- Wellbeing is promoted well across the curriculum. This includes young people leading assemblies on mental health and on the consequences of bullying. The PSE curriculum includes learning on how to keep yourself safe and has recently been updated, based on feedback from young people, to include an enhanced focus on cyber bullying. Most young people comment positively on the PSE course and on what they have learnt. The development of a health and wellbeing strategy will provide a framework for a coherent and progressive programme delivered across the different contexts of the curriculum. Young people would benefit from a knowledge of the wellbeing indicators and more insight on their own progress.

- The school's PSE provision from S1 to S6 has recently been revised with support from SDS to be built around the 'I can...' statements from the 3-18 Career Education Standards. This is a helpful and effective change ensuring a uniform and meaningful level of discussion with young people about career-related skills and activities required at different ages and stages of their school experience and beyond.
- The school builds confidence and empathy in young people by training them to take on roles in support of others. The majority of senior learners volunteer as 'by-standers' on the MVP programme. The mentors help other young people to challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin bullying and gender-based violence and harassment. The mentors are seen around the school challenging unacceptable behaviours and helping to deliver PSE lessons and wellbeing themed assemblies. They help young people in Port Glasgow High school challenge intolerance and discrimination. The wellbeing ambassadors in S3 provide support to younger learners whilst developing their own skills in citizenship. This results in young people having a more attuned understanding of cultural respect and equality within the school and wider community.
- The effective pupil support team is developing a deeper understanding of Getting it Right for Every Child through the use of the National Practice Model to assess, plan and review for targeted young people within the school or multi-agency context. The wellbeing indicators are being used appropriately to plan next steps for any young person identified as having an unmet need. Pupil support staff are undertaking the duties of Named Person competently. However, more time is required to develop their confidence in the role - especially in complex situations. As the pupil support team continues to expand, clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the team members, especially in regards to legislative duties, would be helpful and should be shared with all staff.
- The school has a range of policies and procedures in place to meet almost all statutory duties and codes of practice. Staff report that they are readily accessing the confidential profiles of learners and as a result are more aware of the needs of individual young people. Commendably, a new policy on looked after young people is ensuring that all care-experienced learner's progress is reviewed monthly by senior staff including the headteacher. Staff now need to make arrangements to identify what additional support is required, if any, for all care-experienced learners.
- Young people requiring additional support attain and achieve well. However, across all areas of pupil support there is a need to ensure planning for young people includes clearer curricular targets which are systematically and comprehensively reviewed. The use of attainment data to track the progress of cohorts of young people with protected characteristics will help evaluate the impact of interventions. Specialist staff should continue to review where they deliver the balance of their support to minimise extraction from the learning environment.
- Most young people feel that bullying is dealt with effectively. They can go to the MVP mentors or wellbeing ambassadors when incidents occur or tell a member of the staff if the issue is not resolved. Young people comment that staff are approachable and listen to their concerns well. The school needs to continue to monitor closely its approaches to anti-bullying, carefully tracking incidents and responding timeously.
- The focus on rights-based learning permeates some aspects of the school. It is beginning to develop young people's acceptance of difference and diversity providing them with an

emerging understanding of their entitlement to be treated with dignity. For example, a few young people highlighted the recent 'odd sock' initiative as a success in raising awareness of difference and diversity. The continuation of this approach is required to embed rights and equality fully across all contexts of the curriculum.

- The school mitigates well the impact of poverty and inequality to create a more inclusive environment. Young people and parents working with the Child Poverty Action Group have supported the introduction of a social inclusion fund. This is used for popular initiatives such as uniform recycling club, free transport for study classes, prom dress hire and providing free study guides.

## 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

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy:

- Senior leaders have recently put in place a range of strategies to support improvement in attainment and achievement. This is starting to result in a wide range of positive outcomes for young people. For example, attendance rates have begun to increase over the last three years whilst exclusion rates have decreased. The school provided data which shows targeted SIMD 1 and 2 attendance has also increased by over 3% in the last two years. As a result, these developments are helping to drive some of the recent improvements in attainment and achievement.

### Broad general education (BGE):

- The school provided the following BGE data which demonstrates a positive and overall improving picture of attainment in literacy and numeracy by the end of the BGE. In 2018, by the end of S3, almost all young people achieved Curriculum for Excellence third level in reading and listening and talking. Most young people achieved third level in writing and in numeracy.
- The school provided information to show that less than half of young people achieved fourth level in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3 in 2018. However, there has been an overall improvement in the last two years. Senior leaders have correctly identified attainment at third and fourth levels as a priority for improvement. They are providing opportunities for staff across the school to strengthen curriculum planning, moderation activity and teacher judgement of a Curriculum for Excellence level. Senior leaders accept that caution needs to be applied in interpreting the reliability of the data as this is only the third set of achievement data for the BGE to be collected. However, senior leaders and staff are working with colleagues across the cluster to develop their understanding of the National Benchmarks through participating in moderation activities. Staff have a clear vision of how moderation should be developed in order to arrive at the most robust and reliable teacher judgements of achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level.
- Teachers use professional judgment and Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSAs) as part of their approaches to monitor improvement in attainment. They also deploy a range of commercial diagnostic assessment tools, as well as internal class tests using National Benchmarks, as part of their overall judgement of learners' achievement of a level. Staff are also in the process of assimilating tracking and monitoring processes to align with those of cluster primary schools, in order to have a clearer understanding of what children

have achieved by the end of primary school. This in turn allows staff to design learning programmes for young people that are more relevant, motivating and challenging from the outset in S1. Further development of this work is ongoing. The use of PEF to enhance attainment in literacy and numeracy between the secondary and the cluster primary schools is building capacity across both sectors as staff work more collegiately. This is helping staff to plan improved BGE experiences for young people. Dedicated staffing resources are deployed across the cluster to improve teachers' understanding of what children should achieve by the end of P7, and what they are expected to achieve into and through S1. Middle leaders ensure appropriate support and challenge for young people through the use of recently developed tracking and monitoring systems in almost all departments. This is helping to ensure that learners requiring additional support and those from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds are achieving better by the end of the BGE.

- In literacy and numeracy, the school is using PEF funding to deploy extra resources, including targeted staffing, to provide individualised support for those who require it. Increasingly, these interventions and support strategies are already beginning to demonstrate positive impact. Almost all young people achieve a literacy qualification at SCQF level 4 or better and most achieve a numeracy qualification at SCQF level 4 or better.

### **Senior phase:**

#### **Attainment of young people in literacy and numeracy by the time of leaving school:**

- Young people are attaining very well in literacy by the time of leaving school. Almost all young people leaving school in the last three years have attained literacy at level 4 or better. In the last three years, most leavers attained literacy at level 5 or better. At levels 5 or better and 6, there have been positive, sustained improvements and attainment is in line with the virtual comparator (VC) and often above.
- Young people are attaining well in numeracy by the time of leaving school. Most young people leaving school in the past five years have attained numeracy at level 4 or better. The majority of leavers over the last five years achieved level 5 numeracy, which is in line with the VC.
- Over the last five years, less than half of young people leaving school at the end of S5 attained numeracy at level 5 or better. At this level, the school is broadly in line with the VC over a five year period. A minority of S5 leavers attained numeracy at level 6 over the last five years and at this level, the school has performed lower than the VC in the past five years, with the exception of 2015/16, where the school performed significantly higher than the VC. No S5 leavers attained numeracy at level 6 in the most recent year. In the most recent year, attainment in S4 at level four or better was significantly much higher than the VC. There is improvement in the attainment for National 5 maths in the last three years. This is in line with the VC.

### **Attainment over time:**

#### **BGE:**

- Senior and middle leaders have recently developed new approaches to tracking monitoring young people's progress, attainment and achievement through the BGE. This allows staff to track the progress of different cohorts of learners with a varying degree of needs for support and challenge. Staff should now build in the ability track young people's engagement in activities that lead to wider achievement, and associated skills development. Once

embedded, this will also allow staff to work with young people in making connections across their learning to develop skills in a range of contexts.

- Teachers are improving their approaches to applying their professional judgement, including from the use of their own internal assessments, to demonstrate progress over time. To support and challenge all staff, senior leaders track progress across all departments. Tracking and monitoring data is updated regularly and interrogated by senior and middle leaders. This supports staff to design agreed strategies and actions to support learners and help drive improvement across the school. Senior leaders and middle leaders have a clearer understanding of the curriculum level at which young people are working. Staff at all levels are beginning to interrogate data more confidently to target particular groups of learners, including those most at risk.
- Staff are becoming more skilled at analysing subject data in the BGE, to inform appropriate interventions to support learners. Senior leaders have provided data to evidence impact from interventions for targeted groups of learners. This data demonstrates an improving attainment picture for those learners at risk of not achieving because of socio-economic disadvantage.

#### **Staying on rates:**

- The percentage of young people staying on school at the end of S4 is above the national figure. Only a small number of young people now leave at the end of S4. In the last two years, there have been notable improvements in the number of leavers going on to a positive destination. Almost all leavers now move on to a positive destination. Staff work very well with a range of partners with the aim of achieving 100% positive destinations for all. Staff have designed bespoke packages to engage and instil aspiration in the most disengaged learners. For example, the work to prepare groups of young people for employment through the Greenock Morton partnership, is helping to support them as they move into the world of work.



## Senior phase: Attainment over time

### Leavers:

- Performance in raising attainment for all leavers shows the lowest attaining 20% in line with the VC over the last five years. The average total tariff scores of the middle attaining 60% are significantly lower or much lower than the VC in two out of the past five years. For the highest attaining 20% of leavers, the school is performing significantly much lower than the VC in four out of the last five years. Senior leaders have begun to address this through targeted support to improve the attainment of different groups of learners.

### How well is the school improving young people's attainment as they move through senior phase in school?

- In S4 the lowest attaining 20% complementary tariff scores are in line with the VC and were significantly higher in 2014/15. The complementary tariff scores of the middle attaining 60% and the highest attaining 20% are in line with the VC in four out of the last five years with last year showing attainment improving to significantly higher than the VC.
- By S5 the lowest performing 20% are attaining in line with the VC. The middle attaining 60% are attaining significantly lower than the VC in two out of five years. The highest 20% are in line with the VC over the last five years. Where there have been recent improvements in attainment, it is important for staff to know exactly which aspects of the curricular offer are adding value to young people's overall attainment.
- In S6, the lowest 20% are performing significantly lower than the VC in two out of the last five years. However, there has been improvement in the most recent year where this is now in line with the VC. The middle 60% are performing significantly lower or much lower than the VC in three out of five years and the highest 20% are also performing significantly lower or much lower than the VC in three out of the last five years. However again, there has been improvement in the most recent year for these learners' attainment where this is now in line with the VC.

### Breadth and depth:

#### Qualifications:

- In S4, achievement at Level 3 or better has been consistently in line with the VC over the past five years. The breadth and depth measures for Level 5C or better are in line with the VC and significantly higher in the most recent year for two or more courses. For young people's attainment at Level 5C or better, there have been important improvements in the most recent year where attainment is significantly higher or much higher for one or more to four or more courses. The percentage of young people attaining level 5A or better is in line with and above the VC in the last two years for three or more courses. At this level, there have been strong improvements in the most recent year. These improvements have been spurred by, for example, the school's recent approaches to mentoring and targeted support for groups of young people, who are identified by specialist staff and also through the school's more robust tracking and monitoring approaches. These approaches are helping staff in the early identification of underachievement for cohorts of learners, allowing timely interventions and support.
- By S5, the breadth and depth measures for Levels 5C or better and 5A or better, are generally in line with the VC in the last five years for three, four or five or more courses. For

one or more to five or more courses at Level 6C or better, attainment is broadly in line with the VC over the last five years. For one or two or more courses at Levels 6C and 6A the percentage of young people attaining at these levels has improved over the last five years, where attainment is in line with and sometimes above the VC. In the most recent year, there have been important improvements in the percentage of young people attaining four or more or five or more courses at 6C. The percentage of young people achieving two to five or more courses at level 6C or better has improved in recent years where this is broadly in line with and sometimes above, the VC.

- By S6, the percentage of young people attaining one to five courses at level 5 or better has improved in the latest year. The school performs in line with the VC and has improved to significantly higher than the VC for two and three or more courses. The percentage of young people attaining at level 6C is in line with the VC. Level 6A or better for one to six or more courses is generally in line with the VC in three out of five years, with improvements over the last three years.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements:**

- Most young people across all year groups are engaged in wider achievement opportunities within and out with the school. Many of these are formally accredited, recognised and celebrated. However, the school is not yet tracking and monitoring wider achievement and skills development. As a result, those young people who face barriers to learning and who would benefit most may be missing out.
- There are a number of opportunities for wider achievement across the school which are well embedded. In S6, there is an expectation to take up a 'community service' activity which enables young people to contribute to the life of the school. This includes, assisting the SLT, paired reading, mentoring in Craigmarloch School or participating in the Malawi group. There are activities which attract a Saltire Award for senior pupils involved. In S3, the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) is delivered as part of the curriculum. Research into charitable causes is increasing young people's understanding of wider community needs and national campaigns. Young people are developing their confidence in public speaking, presentation and team working skills. Presentations to whole school year groups on the identified charities is also raising awareness of the local and wider charitable causes. However, there is scope for a wider range of achievements to be formally recognised. Changes to the way in which Duke of Edinburgh's Award is now delivered is beginning to improve take up and completion rates across all levels. An authority-wide no charge policy is removing barriers to participation.
- A number of departments have developed strong partnerships with community groups, CLD, colleges and universities. These partnerships are making a positive contribution to the life of the school and enhancing learning opportunities and support for young people. The partnership agreement with CLD has clear expectations and is reviewed twice yearly. The use of Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding and core CLD funding is enabling CLD to provide one to one and group work for those who are disengaged or non-attending. An agreed referral process is in place which makes use of standardised assessment data and teachers' knowledge of pupils to ensure appropriate referrals. As a result, targeted group work with boys has increased attendance, attainment and achievement.
- The school makes good use of its data hub which reflects young people's preferred post school destinations. Departments are increasingly making use of this intelligence to help to

target partners. For example, music and drama departments have strong partnerships with the local Beacon Arts Centre and the West of Scotland Schools Orchestra Trust. This is raising aspirations and providing valuable opportunities to learn, perform and compete at local, regional and national events. As a result, young people are increasing their performing skills, developing pathways to further and higher education and in a few cases gaining employment.

### **Equity for all learners:**

- Total tariff scores for leavers from the most deprived 20% of households, are generally in line with the national over the last five years.

### **Attainment versus deprivation:**

- There is an improving picture for the attainment of learners in SIMD 4 where this was higher or significantly higher than the national, in two out of the last five years. The school has been building in targeted support for specific groups of young people to mitigate poverty-related underachievement. For example, in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, pupil equity funding (PEF), has been allocated to provide targeted staffing to closing the poverty related attainment gap in these curricular areas. Complementary tariff scores for young people in S4 living in SIMD 2 have been significantly higher or much higher than the national in the last two years.

### **How well is the school improving or maintaining positive and sustained destinations for all leavers?**

- There is an overall positive picture of improvement in positive destinations, and the school compares well with the authority and virtual comparator.
- Over the last two years, almost all young people who left school have moved to a positive destination. Over the last five years, the majority of learners left school for either higher education or further education. In the latest year, there has been an increase in the number of young people moving on to higher education as a destination.
- The school works well with SDS in agreeing a demanding and useful School Partnership Agreement (SPA). The activities and targets within the SPA align well with the school plans and five year strategy. Periodic review and evaluation of the SPA has led to direct improvements in provision.
- School college partnerships are strong. The college confirms the right young people attend college, and are eager to be successful. West College describes the school as one of its best school partners. The pupils who move on to college full time are well prepared and have made well informed choices.

## Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- Arrangements to support learners and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- Overall, transition arrangements for young people are strong at all stages. The school has good relationships with the primary schools in the cluster. Sharing practice and planning for cluster events are agreed at regular cluster headteacher meetings. Staff offer a well-established programme to support young people as they move into S1 and beyond. This includes targeted early involvement for a few learners and their families along with preparation and settling in time. Annual transitions between classes support continuity and progression well through, for example, sharing of reporting and tracking systems. Although transition activities from primary to secondary were slightly curtailed last session as a result of staffing issues, initiatives in place offer strong support for learners. This includes music and drama events and various problem-solving challenges that support primary seven children to be familiar and comfortable moving into S1. A wide range of academic and wellbeing information is shared between primary and secondary staff and this is ensuring that learners' activities are well matched to their needs during S1. Staff resources are being shared, including the primary school nurture teacher working with 'Space2B' staff.
- Pupils requiring additional support benefit from an enhanced transition programme. Arrangements to ensure continuity in the transfer of all plans including child's plans or other support plans are robust. A few primary children are linked with a named person from secondary assigned to the family from as early as P6 which helps to build their confidence before they reach S1. The 'Transit' programme is run by a home link worker during the last week of the summer break. For a few learners, it is the culmination of a two year enhanced transition programme that builds learner resilience before the start of S1. A few senior learners develop and model leadership skills through providing support for the programme. Survey results at programme completion are very positive.
- Support for learning and home link workers assist targeted pupils and their parents well. A few learners and their parents are also offered focussed post-transition reviews including a wellbeing assessment. This supports staff to ensure that young people continue to build positive relationships and that their needs are met well in S1.
- Senior leaders have put in place a number of successful initiatives using PEF funding to support children in associated primary schools to improve literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The cluster teacher for numeracy is providing coaching and modelling in numeracy. This work is enabling teaching in the primary to be modelled closer to the style of learning children will experience in the secondary. Profiling, including for learners at P7 and S3, is continuing to be developed and demonstrates latest and best progress, helping to inform next stages for learning. Staff in the secondary and associated primaries understand the need to provide continuity in all areas of learning. This is at a more advanced stage for areas such as literacy and numeracy.
- Young people are supported as they complete the options process. They receive a range of information about their progress to enable them to make positive choices. Young people comment that personalisation and choice is too limited in S4 and S5. More work is needed to

broaden curriculum choices and subject levels available for learners at the start of the senior phase to ensure a more positive transition into subjects that are the best fit.

- Staff have put in place a comprehensive programme to support young people to move into a positive destination when leaving school. The deputy headteacher is providing strong strategic leadership, supported by the recent appointment of a PT Positive Destinations. This has helped develop a coordinated approach to destination tracking and support pupils on their chosen career pathway. Learners at risk of not progressing to a positive destination benefit from additional support from the SDS work coach from S3. In addition, 'My world of work' ambassadors lead learning to advise and promote potential career choices.
- Positive destinations are improving with last session's figures the best in a five year period. Learners from SIMDs 1 and 2 are tracked and monitored carefully, encouraging them to be ambitious and to make well-considered choices as they go forward each year. Young people are supported well as they prepare for higher or further education or the world of work. In S6, PSE classes offer targeted support on for example completion of personal statements. Staff also arrange suitable visits to university and colleges.
- The school works well with SDS in agreeing a demanding and useful SPA. The activities and targets within the SPA align well with the school plans and five year strategy. Periodic review and evaluation of the SPA has led to direct improvements in provision.
- Links with employers are limited mainly to departmental and personal links, and are common in most teaching areas. The links are used for occasional competitions, inputs and visits. Few pupils could recall any employer visits or interactions and the impact has at this stage been limited. There are no clear and formal agreements with employers regarding support for the whole school, although one local organisation has engaged in a range of activities with staff and pupils. The school recognises this and should continue their planned work to ensure employer partnerships are more meaningful, establishing more robust and formal links with a few major local employers.
- The school has a range of well-established and useful partners who have contributed well to the delivery of the curriculum. Partners such as West College Scotland and Inverclyde CLD work well with the school to plan and implement their offering, and young people are guided well to use these opportunities. However, key partners have a limited role in contributing to wider curriculum planning within the school. The Focus West partnership is encouraging more learners to be interested and confident about applying to University. This is one of a number of contributory factors resulting in a much higher rate of successful applications to University.

## 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.