

Summarised inspection findings

Mallaig High School

The Highland Council

9 June 2020

School name: Mallaig High School
Council: The Highland Council
SEED number: 5135834
Roll (Jan 2020): 111

Attendance is generally in line with the national average.

Exclusions are consistently well below the national average.

In February 2019, 5.1% of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2019, no pupils lived in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2019, the school reported that 28% of pupils had additional support needs.

Key contextual information

Mallaig High School has a unique catchment area that comprises a combination of small islands, a remote peninsula accessible only by water, a mainland village and rural areas. The school provides both English and Gaelic Medium Education. The on-site residence provides high-quality accommodation for young people from the small isles and Knoydart. In August 2018, a new management structure for local schools was completed. The headteacher and depute headteacher, although based part of the week in Mallaig High, have responsibility for four primary schools in the cluster. They are supported by another primary-based depute headteacher and, currently, five principal teachers in the High School.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

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

- The current shared values are responsibility, respect, and resilience, creativity, curiosity and compassion. These underpin a warm and caring ethos in the school. They were developed by stakeholders in the last year and are evident in the positive respectful relationships within classes and across the school community. The school plans to review these again soon and intentions include a wide consultation with parents, pupils and staff from both the high school and associated primary schools. Additionally, consultation with other key stakeholders, including the Parent Councils, should enable a clearer understanding of the school values by the whole community. The school's vision will also be reviewed in the coming year. The development of a new school vision, which lies at the heart of the life and work of the school, should support change and continuing improvement in Mallaig High School.
- Mallaig High School is central to the life of the local community. The headteacher is well regarded by parents and stakeholders. He has responsibility for leading the high school and four of the primary schools within the cluster. This recently established arrangement enables a single improvement plan for all five schools. All staff are involved in its development. The leadership team should move forward, as planned, to develop further the consultation on improvement planning. This should include pupils, parents and partners more fully. Additionally, strategies to monitor the progress of achievement of the priorities in the plan throughout the year should be developed further. The depute headteacher within Mallaig High School is helping to support improvement across the cluster and leads on a number of priorities for improvement.
- The leadership and wider staff team evaluate the progress young people are making in their learning. Regular whole staff discussions about pupil progress are leading to staff having a clear view of the socio-economic contexts of the young people they teach. This helps teachers understand the barriers to learning that young people may face.
- The creation of small working groups should enable more focussed work and discussion on areas of priority, offer leadership opportunities for staff across the school and drive forward school improvement activity at a faster pace.
- Planning for continuous improvement is shared across the whole school through the work of enthusiastic and dedicated teaching staff. Their expertise and drive ensures that learners' experiences are as wide ranging and as relevant as possible within the context of the school. The staff embrace opportunities for leadership, which involve looking outwards, and seeking partnership arrangements with neighbouring schools and professionals working within the local community. The inputs, which these partners are able to offer, serve as relevant, engaging and motivating contexts for young people. The staff team take on leadership roles within their classes and subjects as well as supporting other aspects of school development. Teachers

meet annually with the headteacher to discuss Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) results, any possible actions required to improve results, and targets for the following academic session. This is helping to maintain good outcomes for learners.

- As part of school's self-evaluation, senior leaders conduct annual professional review and development meetings with staff. This offers teachers an opportunity to discuss their professional learning activities and the impact these have had. The leadership team are responsive to requests from staff for appropriate career-long professional learning activities to improve their curricular offer and their pedagogy. Staff attend SQA inputs on, for example, understanding standards and aspects of subject development where appropriate. This supports staff in ensuring that standards are being met and young people are able to achieve and attain well. Additionally, collegiality and collaborative working is strongly encouraged in Mallaig High School.
- Staff work together well informally to develop their practice. This includes working in trios on classroom observations and offering supportive feedback to colleagues. The headteacher is ambitious for his staff and they appreciate the positive way in which the senior leaders support them in accessing training. Senior leaders need to ensure that self-evaluation informs appropriate career-long professional learning which is more closely aligned to improvement priorities and impact upon school improvement.
- The headteacher has been successful in developing a collegiate culture of consultation and decision making. This will continue to be an important factor for successful change as the school moves forward. Staff in departments and across the school would benefit from engaging more regularly in reflection and self-evaluation activities and develop their understanding of current national issues. The school should ensure that time allocated to whole-school professional learning is used appropriately to inform improvement.
- Young people have limited opportunities to develop leadership skills. A few young people are involved in supporting others as sports leaders within the school, promoting and supporting events and activities involving other pupils. This is developing their confidence, their leadership and communication skills. In the broad general education (BGE), recently formed groups, for example, Eco-schools Scotland and digital committees, have issued surveys. These seek the views of young people about the types of activity they would like to engage in to improve the school. The groups meet infrequently, and as yet, have had little impact on improving aspects of the school. The slow pace of this work is impacting negatively on the enthusiasm and drive of the young people involved.
- In the senior phase, there are no formal committees or senior executive teams leading areas of the school. Opportunities to develop a wide range of skills, including interpersonal and organisational skills, are being missed as a result. The school should continue, as planned, to develop the pupil participation within the school and utilise the range of resources available nationally to support this work. Young people should now be offered a wider range of appropriate opportunities to lead projects and initiatives which will have a positive impact on both themselves, their school and their community.
- The school plays an active and supportive role in planning and delivering the developing the young workforce (DYW) priorities for its young people. Staff work closely with West Highland College, Fort William DYW team and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to host employability-related events, across a range of venues, and these help young people to understand the world of work and inform future career choices. Planned activities are communicated well to both staff and pupils and are promoted effectively through school publications. A whole-school delivery of tailored career-long professional learning would

support staff better to understand and deliver on key priorities, particularly related to the Career Education Standard (CES) and career management skills.

- Senior leaders use the school's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation for additional support staff hours to improve the learning experiences for young people. Senior leaders are aware of the need to develop further self-evaluation processes to determine the impact of this PEF funding.
- Senior leaders make appropriate strategic decisions about the curriculum offer for individual young people including those who require additional support with their learning. They support their choices and ambitions in accessing appropriate courses and programmes both within and outwith the school, and make bespoke, flexible arrangements for those who cannot access the full curriculum.
- The school works with a range of partners through links developed between departments and external organisations. In addition to local partnerships, staff make efforts to develop national and international experiences for young people in recognition of the need to broaden horizons beyond the Mallaig High School community. Staff at departmental level work well to meet the needs of individuals through links with external partners. However, the school needs to take a more planned and strategic approach to the development of partnerships, informed by an evaluative overview of strengths and areas for development.

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

- Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and pupils show respect to staff and to each other. Almost all classes have a strongly supportive environment where young people are encouraged to learn.
- Most young people work well both independently and in small groups, and remain on task throughout lessons. Most lessons provide valuable opportunities for young people to share views or explore topics together with their peers. More opportunities could be provided for young people to take a leading role in their learning. Almost all young people are engaged in their learning and are keen to do well.
- In most classes, activities and contexts are well matched to the learning needs and the interests of young people. Teachers know young people well, and most young people experience an appropriate level of challenge. A few young people could be challenged further in their learning.
- The introduction of electronic notebooks for every pupil has increased options for using digital technology and most teachers have embraced these opportunities. Innovative use of digital technology is enhancing learning in a range of ways. For example, the use of video capture and editing software, sound technology, and interactive assessment. In addition, the use of online platforms, has allowed learning to take place out of the classroom. This has been of particular advantage to young people whose access to school can be disrupted by adverse weather and allows additional flexibility for those who are studying individualised programmes. The use of open and distance learning (ODL) has extended the range of opportunities available to young people. There is scope to further exploit the opportunities presented by this technology.
- Almost all teachers are responsive to young people's needs, and look for flexible solutions which ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of courses and levels. In most classes, young people are clear about the purpose of learning and lessons are well structured, with careful planning evident.
- Questioning is used effectively in the majority of classes. This could be extended through questioning which supports young people to develop higher-order thinking Skills and deeper understanding of concepts. Regular written or oral feedback is provided for young people in most classes, and instances of very high-quality feedback were observed. Where feedback was most effective there was a measurable impact on pupils' learning and confidence. Good practice in effective learning conversations should be extended more widely across the school. Senior staff should now identify agreed aspects of good learning. A refreshed learning, teaching and assessment policy should support improved consistency in teaching and learning

across the school. A few subject areas provide opportunities to learn outwith the classroom environment and fieldwork. This is a regular feature of geography, history and biology courses.

- Almost all teachers use a range of strategies to assess pupils' progress. Teachers in all curriculum areas have identified key assessment tasks to be used in the BGE. They use well-planned termly assessments which are clearly linked to National Benchmarks. The school has some strong examples of innovative assessment tasks which could be more widely shared.
- Teachers use questioning well in almost all lessons. Young people respond well to opportunities for peer and self-assessment. A few, very high-quality examples of assessments developed by teachers exist. It would be helpful to share these more widely with other teachers in the school.
- Some moderation work has taken place within curriculum areas and staff are using wider links across the local authority to carry out moderation of planning and of pupil evidence. This is supporting greater consistency and reliability in teachers' judgements. Staff are able to make appropriate interventions to support young people and modify learning experiences and courses to meet their needs. These discussions are crucial to ensuring that young people are able to make good progress and access support from staff. These discussions should be recorded more rigorously and any agreed actions closely monitored by appropriate promoted members of staff.
- Through regular tracking and monitoring, pupils who are not making sufficient progress are identified and recorded. Importantly, strategies to support them are put in place. This data could be brought together more effectively to provide an overview of pupil progress across the curriculum, particularly in the BGE. Subject improvement plans are in place for almost all curriculum areas, though a more strategic and long-term approach to planning improvements may help teachers develop pedagogy more systematically over time.
- Although many staff work in single-teacher departments they create opportunities to work together and learn from one another. Staff are very reflective about their practice. Many staff network across and beyond The Highland Council and utilise digital networking to work collaboratively, providing valuable opportunities for professional learning and support. This supports teachers in providing relevant and motivating learning experiences for young people.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The school is committed to providing a curriculum which is centred on high-quality learning and teaching. It aims to be relevant to the local and national context, responding to the needs of young people. In most respects, the curriculum is developing in line with these aims.
- The school has a few curriculum links with its associated primary schools, including numeracy and mathematics. The school should further develop the range and depth of curriculum links with its associated primary schools, including moderation activities, to ensure that young people can build effectively on their prior learning when they enter S1. The revised management structure is providing a new and improved context for greater collaboration across the sectors.
- Currently, young people from S1 to S3 are not benefiting from their full entitlement to a broad general education (BGE). At present, opportunities in technologies are limited. For example, the school currently only provides a limited experience of home economics. Staff are working creatively to find a solution and should work at pace to finalise plans for technical studies. The school should develop further progression routes from the BGE into the senior phase. The curriculum includes options for personal achievement from S1-S6. For example, in the areas of music, school shows, FilmG, sports and charity work. Young people experience interdisciplinary learning in the BGE and the school is at the early stage of developing courses, one with a focus on Scottish identity and another on coasts.
- A small number of young people who require additional support with their learning are following pathways to meet their particular needs.
- The school should review the value added and quality of experience through young people's participation in the health and wellbeing, support and consolidation periods to avoid overlap and duplication as well as ensuring challenge and relevance.
- Young people study on average six courses in S4, five courses in S5 and at least three courses in S6 in the senior phase. The school has widened the range of courses and programmes available. This has resulted in an improvement in a number of outcomes for young people. Most young people in S4 study subjects at SCQF level 4 or 5, but a few successfully work towards a Higher qualification. Classes contain young people in S4, S5 and S6 and multi-level teaching is widespread and effective across the school.
- At the senior phase, the school offers a good range of courses and qualifications to meet the varying needs of learners, including an increasing number of options that prepare young people for the world of work. The curriculum is broadened by courses offered through The Highland Council's Virtual School arrangements and West Highland College. The senior phase curriculum includes courses leading to National Qualifications at SCQF Levels 2 to 4 for young people who require additional support with their learning.
- In S6, young people can select from a range of courses at Advanced Higher level. At all stages, the majority of young people feel well supported and confident when they made their options. The school holds a well-attended careers event at the local community centre, for S1 and S2 pupils, to outline potential career opportunities available to them. Attendees include local and national employers, West Highland College, and Police Scotland. In addition, the SDS careers adviser provides helpful advice and guidance services which informs pupils of their subject and pathway choice options.

- A number of subject areas engage enthusiastically in DYW priorities. However, this varies across the school. More work is required to ensure that all staff have a full understanding of the DYW agenda, for example the CES. The school is at an early stage of encouraging young people to make good use of My World of Work as a tool to support their understanding of themselves and the job market.
- Some subject teaching staff make reference to employment opportunities within their own subject areas. They link this well through visits made to local and national employers, promotion of Young Enterprise activities and trips to Scottish Universities. Sciences, technologies, engineering and mathematics (STEM), are promoted well through pupil attendance at a three-day event organised by the local DYW team and the Engineering Development Trust. Teachers and senior leaders support young people very well to attend vocational programmes. Attendance on some vocational provision involves up to three days away from school. Teaching staff support pupils to catch up with classes they have missed and provide tailored support which enables them to keep up with their studies and assessments.
- Over time, the school has expanded the range of vocational pathways available to young people. Senior phase pupils select and attend a range of vocational programmes delivered at the school or the local college. Current subject choice options include: computing; maritime studies; business; music; early education and childcare; fashion and textiles and psychology. Thirteen young people are enrolled on West Highland College programmes. Foundation Apprenticeships are offered to senior phase pupils but, currently, only a few are enrolled on this provision. Through this range of subject choice options, which includes provision delivered through the local authority's Highland Virtual Academy, young people are supported to select programmes, which interest and motivate them to study and remain at school. It would be helpful for the school to review how it supports young peoples' resilience and independence. This should help the move by young people to Higher or Further Education out of the local area. This could also help to reduce the small number of young people leaving their university or college course to return home.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The school plays a high profile role in the community and parental engagement is a priority for school leaders. A survey of parents confirmed they have a very positive opinion of the school. They welcome the open-door policy offered by the school and a mutually respectful approach has led to a very trusting relationship between parents and the school. This is exemplified by the liaison between the school and the parents of those young people that stay in the Mallaig High School Residence. Nearly all parents say they feel comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions and any issues of concern.
- Parents feel that they receive regular and helpful feedback about how their child is learning. A minority of parents would welcome receiving further advice about how they can support their child's learning at home. In a few cases, the learning of young people is enhanced by the involvement of parents supporting the teaching of the curriculum within the school.
- The views of parents are sought through surveys that are available online and at parents' evenings. The majority of parents feel that the school takes their views into account when making changes. Approaches to how parents are engaged in the planning and evaluation of the school's improvement agenda should be extended.
- Parents support and attend a wide range of events that feature young people from Mallaig High School. These take place both in the school and in the wider community. They include music, cultural, sporting and fund-raising events. Additionally, parents' evenings that focus on young people's progress are well attended and the school offers a degree of flexibility of timings of parental attendance. This increases the number of parents able to attend.
- The school is very proud to be part of a very specific geographical context. School leaders have, as a priority, the use of communication methods that effectively reach all parents including those in island and other communities. The school is planning to review further how it communicates with parents and is exploring how social media and digital contexts can more consistently be used to reach all parents. The very thorough newsletters produced give parents a detailed picture of the life and work of the school.
- The Parent Council meets on a termly basis. Most parents feel that they are made aware of the work of the Parent Council and are encouraged to be involved with its work. The Parent Council strives to ensure equity of access and involvement across all areas within the Mallaig High School catchment. This has included facilitating parental representatives to join in meetings through digital links. Such approaches confirm the aim of the Parent Council to be fully representative of the diverse school community.
- Parents appreciate that their child accesses Gaelic Medium and Learner Education at Mallaig High School. Parents' views should be sought on Gaelic Medium Education and how it may be extended. They should be involved in planning and evaluating improvement.
- The school handbook should include details of Gaelic Education.

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

- Almost all staff are successful in basing approaches to wellbeing and inclusion on strong relationships, care and respect. These aim to support young people to achieve well. Young people feel safe in school, with most feeling that they have a trusted adult with whom to discuss personal issues. Almost all young people are happy with most aspects of the school. They are personally committed to affirming high standards with their behaviours.
- Staff use questionnaires and conversations to measure success in improving aspects of young people's wellbeing. Young people's use of national wellbeing indicators, to support independence in monitoring their wellbeing, is at an early stage. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to embed national wellbeing indicators within classrooms and in the totality of the curriculum. This should be taken forward along with establishing the refreshed values, and increasing young people's knowledge and understanding of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Staff make some purposeful use of collated data to improve further outcomes for young people's health and wellbeing. They use this, with their knowledge of important local health issues, to determine priorities for the curriculum. Across the school, staff make good use of professional learning on aspects of mental health, resulting in young people feeling well-supported. Staff work very productively with partners to raise young people's awareness of mental health and access to counselling services. They are working very effectively with a local charity, Ewen's Room. Additionally, through further partnership working with other professionals, all young people's curriculum gives advice on maintaining positive mental health.
- Young people have a very good understanding of leading an active lifestyle. They participate well in an extensive range of opportunities for achievement. Most young people have a sound understanding of the relationship between physical activity, food and health, and fostering good eating habits. Staff plan further promotion of healthy eating to support young people in consistently making good choices.
- Most young people feel that the school assists them in becoming more confident. Rurality, as a feature of the school's catchment area, successfully influences the school's approaches to wellbeing and inclusion. As young people move to secondary school, and to some post-school positive destinations, they recognise the need to cope with moving away from home. Young people in the senior phase benefit from developing skills for life, such as personal finance.
- As part of well-planned arrangements for transition from primary schools, staff work closely with young people and their parents. Commendably, senior leaders visit all associated primary schools, which establishes trusting and open relationships between the school and families. This results in individual young people and their needs being known very well by staff.

- Young people should be involved in co-creating a shared rationale to convince them of gains from opportunities for leadership, developing independence and taking responsibilities. Young people's empowerment through participation in committees is at an early stage. Whilst young people's views are sought on resilience and other aspects of health and wellbeing, staff should clearly inform young people how their opinions have actually led to change.
- Young people feel included within a caring and nurturing environment, in which they learn through Gaelic and English. They respond with high attendance and positive commitment to their learning. Almost all young people feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Staff have taken early steps to value and celebrate diversity. Such actions are complemented by the ways in which young people are encouraged to demonstrate positive attitudes to all people. Young people from different backgrounds express pride in being part of an inclusive school.
- Almost all young people benefit from their entitlement to universal support and personal social education. A more systematic, planned approach should be adopted to "support" lessons so that young people and teachers are clearer on intended learning and outcomes. Teachers should be given appropriate professional learning to support them in the delivery of this aspect of the curriculum.
- Current national advice and council expectations are being incorporated into school policy. As a result, codes of practice in the school provide a framework that supports wellbeing, equality and inclusion for all. Senior leaders should ensure that they have a systematic and robust approach to quality assuring and planning improvement in arrangements for safeguarding and child protection. This should ensure that policies are current and are effectively taken forward. The school's policy on attendance needs to be reviewed to check that all current expectations are being met.
- Senior leaders and staff are still to engage with the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. Gàidhlig is the only offer towards meeting a statutory proportion of the curriculum being through the medium of Gaelic. As such, time for Gàidhlig needs to be protected, with other solutions sought for extracting young people for interventions in other curriculum areas. These arrangements, where they need to happen, should be organised and publicised in advance to promote inclusion.
- Staff have established a collegiate approach to supporting young people and meeting their individual needs. The "outlier" programme offers strategies to support young people secure positive outcomes from their learning. Additionally, those young people that face potential barriers to learning, benefit from thoughtfully-planned targeted interventions. For example, young people who are care experienced or who are affected by difficult family circumstances, benefit from strategies agreed with skilled specialist staff. To support all young people to learn equitably, tablet computers are available to be taken home. Staff liaise with local charitable trusts to remove financial barriers and encourage young people's engagement in activities.
- Young people who require additional support with their learning are very well-supported. Appropriate interventions reduce the potential effect of challenges to learning faced by them. Specialist staff and their colleagues across the school have participated in professional learning, which impacts on their support for ensuring that young people make progress in their learning. Staff provide well-tailored and creative approaches to support individual learners, and to create suitably flexible learning pathways when appropriate. As a result, young people who require additional support with their learning make strong progress and attain well. This positive picture would be further enhanced by a more strategic approach to evaluating the attainment of young people with protected characteristics.

- Specialist principal teachers of support are also sole subject leaders. It would be useful to enable them to engage in some co-operative teaching to enhance their roles in supporting learners.

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

- As the number of young people in each of the year groups is small, care has to be taken when interpreting and analysing data. In order not to identify any of the small number of young people undertaking qualifications, HM Inspectors have been cautious in using the usual qualitative terms.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

Broad general education (BGE)

- In 2018/19 by the end of S3, almost all young people achieved Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level in reading, writing, listening and talking. This is above the national average. Between 2015/16 and 2018/19 all, or almost all, young people achieved across all organisers of literacy. In 2018/19, most young people achieved third level in numeracy. This is below the national average. Increased planned opportunities for staff to be involved in moderation activity within the local cluster is now a higher priority. Senior leaders and teachers believe that this is helping improve teacher professional judgement across the cluster.
- In 2018/19 by the end of S3, the majority of young people achieved fourth level in literacy. In reading, the achievement was above the national average. In numeracy, less than half of young people achieved fourth level in 2018/19. The data from 2016 to 2019 shows that more young people are achieving in literacy than numeracy. There are early signs of improvement in numeracy this session through greater consistency and higher quality leadership and interventions.
- The headteacher and almost all staff are aspirational for all young people. Teachers are at an early stage in terms of moderation of achievement of a level for literacy. Work on planning, assessment and moderation within numeracy has recently begun to address longstanding issues within numeracy. The school should continue to develop courses and planning at third and fourth levels in order to raise attainment further and prepare young people for the senior phase.
- At third level in S3, young people have achieved very well in Gàidhlig listening, talking, reading and writing, from 2017/19. In 2019, the percentage of young people achieving at third and fourth level in Gaelic is above the national averages. Young people's continuation with Gàidhlig to National Qualifications has improved. Whilst young people attain well in Gàidhlig, they would benefit from having a wider range of contexts in which to develop their fluency and literacy skills.
- Teachers use their professional judgement, Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSAs), Measaidhean Coitcheann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig (Gaelic Medium equivalent of

SNSA), other standardised assessments and a range of other information, to monitor improvement in young people's attainment. The school uses an authority wide approach to tracking and monitoring young people's attainment and achievements across the BGE and senior phase.

- The school should develop more explicit policies with high expectations of all teachers to have responsibility for literacy and numeracy. Moderation of these is becoming stronger between primary schools in the cluster and Mallaig High School. Almost all staff are positive about the benefits of those closer links and see potential for improved outcomes for young people and opportunities for professional learning.

Senior phase

Literacy and numeracy

- All or almost all young people leaving school between 2013/14 and 2017/18, have achieved literacy at SCQF level 4 or better and level 5. Most young people leaving school in the past five years, have achieved numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better. In 2017/18, less than half of the young people achieved numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better. The percentage achieving at this level was variable in the previous four years. In 2017/18 at SCQF level 5 or better, the achievement in literacy was significantly much higher and in numeracy significantly much lower than the Virtual Comparator (VC).

Attainment over time

BGE

- Senior leaders have an overview of progress over time and across curricular areas in the BGE. Staff are beginning to make better use of data from primary schools. Senior leaders believe that staff have improved their judgement of young people's progress through and achievement of CfE levels in English Medium (EM) and Gaelic Medium (GM) literacy. Most teachers are becoming creative in collaborating with other colleagues within the school, across the cluster and informal local or online networks, to improve their judgement of young people's progress through and achievement of a CfE level. Almost all teachers are developing their confidence in using National Benchmarks across curricular areas.

Senior phase

- The achievement of the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% on leaving school measured by complementary tariff points has improved from 2013/14 to 2016/17. However, this dipped in 2017/18. For the lowest attaining 20% this was significantly higher than the VC in 2017/18 and for the highest attaining 20% significantly higher than the VC between 2014/15 and 2016/17.

Breadth and depth

- In S4, the percentage of young people achieving six or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better is in line with the VC between 2014/15 and 2018/19. The percentages attaining three, four, five or six qualifications at levels 5C or better and 5A or better reached the highest levels in 2018/19. By S5, the percentage of young people achieving 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6C or better and 6A or better has been in line with the VC between 2014/15 and 2018/19. By S6, young people achieving one or more to seven or more qualifications at 6C or better and 6A or better has been, in a few cases, significantly much higher than the VC over the same period however is mostly in line with the VC.

Overall learners' achievement

- Young people in senior phase benefit from opportunities to learn on line via ODL, for example a few young people are currently taking part in a maritime studies course at SCQF level 5

delivered via University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) at Mallaig Community Centre. Higher business management and psychology have been delivered through Highland Virtual Academy. The school has recognised that connectivity needs to be improved to capitalise fully on these opportunities but the overall approach has the potential to considerably extend subject choice and achievement in the senior phase.

- Young people benefit from a range of out-of-school experiences delivered through partnerships led at departmental level. The school has well-developed links with local and national organisations. Levels of participation in out of school music activities are very high with 61 young people from the school playing a musical instrument. High numbers perform successfully taking part in Fèis Òigridh Na Mara through support from the music department and Highlife Highland. Tuition in traditional music takes place in the school and weekly at Mallaig Community Centre allowing young people to develop their musical skills. A new Mallaig Ardnamurchan and District Pipe Band (MAD) has recently been formed developing a sense of communal responsibility and skills in playing together in a larger group. Events and concerts in the local area have helped to build a strong sense of community around the school. Five hundred people attended the school's pantomime. Young people studying music have also benefited from travelling to Glasgow to take part in high profile events at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall and Royal Conservatoire. Through the Fèis and Highlife Highland, visiting specialists in guitar, drums, strings and brass and piano have helped to extend opportunities for young people studying music, extending the range of instruments and genre of music.
- The science department has worked with partner organisations to extend young people's STEM experiences and opportunities. Thirty young people took part in an evolutionary biology project involving the study of deer on the island of Rum, developing further their skills in data handling. A partnership with a local distillery has enabled young people to learn more about the science involved in the industry. The science department has enabled a few young people to take part in national and international events through partnership work with universities helping to develop their research skills. The history teacher has established two valuable links. One with a local heritage centre through which young people have gained practical skills, and another which gives young people experience of stone masonry.
- A few young people are gaining accredited achievement awards. The Highlife Highland youth worker has recently introduced the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the school. A few young people have gained bronze level awards. Similar numbers of young people have gained awards in sports leadership and the Highlife Highland Award for volunteering. A few young people have gained accreditation as Community Sports Leaders through Active Schools. Levels of participation in sport are high with 55% of young people taking part in Active Schools activities, helping to raise levels of fitness. The school based youth worker is working to engage more young people in The Highland Council youth consultation initiatives and has identified those young people from the islands as a group in need of support for weekend youth group activities.
- Young people's achievements are regularly celebrated in local newspaper articles and school newsletters. Overall, there is scope for the school to extend accreditation opportunities to help young people gain more from their experiences. Numbers achieving accreditation for their achievements are very low compared with levels of participation.
- Through links with community partners, young people have benefited from new experiences including trips abroad, sailing, and wildlife field trips to Eigg. Community partners are keen to develop more opportunities and would welcome further discussion on how to contribute their ideas to school plans in a more coordinated manner.

Equity

- The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) distribution may not fully reflect some aspects of socio-economic deprivation across the very wide rural and small island community served by Mallaig High School. There are no young people living in datazones designated as deciles 1 and 2 with almost all residing in datazones 6 to 8 according to the SIMD data from 2018. There are no significant points to make from the data in relation to attainment and SIMD. However, the headteacher is proactive in looking at ways of reducing the “cost of school day”.
- Exclusion levels have been consistently below national average since 2012/13.
- Almost all young people who have left school between 2013/14 and 2017/18 have moved on to a positive destination. The percentages doing so in each year have been in line with the VC. The percentages staying on at school, leaving and moving on to higher education or further education have varied from year to year.

School empowerment

■ Curriculum

- The school are working within the context of advice and policies developed by Highland Council and national advice; with support from the Regional Improvement Collaborative. There is, for Mallaig High School, an element of freedom within these frameworks. This allows the school community to shape the curriculum and to acknowledge the unique characteristics of the school. The school's situation, serving a hinterland which includes a combination of island and remote rural communities, necessitates working differently to many other Scottish schools. Learning through Gàidhlig and English is an important element of the identity of Àrd-sgoil Mhalaig. Providing continuity and progression in both GME and EME adds value to the young people, staff and parents of all children.
- The recent shared management with most of Mallaig High School's associated primary schools is providing senior leaders and staff with exciting opportunities which are being explored and developed.
- The school has created a culture for teachers to be empowered and supportive in the development of their leadership roles. Almost all staff show commitment and enthusiasm to this agenda. They contribute to school improvement priorities across 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 leadership roles which contribute to improving outcomes for young people and targets within the school's improvement plan. Senior leaders recognise the need to develop leadership skills and abilities of staff further in order to sustain improvements. The school is building teacher capacity in the cluster with a focus on numeracy and sharing assessments. Staff are enabled to undertake professional learning; a few undertaking masters level learning.
- Local partners such as West Highland College allows the school to respond to the needs and aspiration of young people. ODL opportunities allow the school to offer a breadth of learning in the senior phase. Senior leaders listen carefully to the ambitions of young people in constructing the timetable and curriculum offer.

Quality of Provision of Gaelic Medium Education

Leadership of change

Specialist staff for Gaelic lead change well in delivering Gàidhlig and Gaelic (Learners) as subjects within curricular areas.

- The school's improvement plans over time do not detail whole-school action points bespoke to the Gaelic sector, or linking to national planning for Gaelic. Senior leaders are not using national advice and guidance to impact on the school's strategic planning for Gaelic Education. More strategic direction is required to meet statutory requirements and stakeholders' interest in expanding current provision. This interest should be maximised in collaboration with young people, parents, partners, staff, Gaelic organisations and primary colleagues.
- Senior leaders would benefit from regular specialist professional learning on Gaelic Medium Education, including from visiting practice at other schools.
- There could be more impact for learners from within the current staffing resources. Relevant professional learning and resources should be provided to support them in delivering aspects of Curriculum for Excellence through the medium of Gaelic.
- Staff should improve their understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school as it relates to Gaelic Education. The development of vision, values and aims should recognise that the school has two mediums through which young people learn.
- Staff should make more use of DYW to increase young people's awareness of career-related opportunities available to those fluent and acquiring the Gaelic language.
- Parents of those in Gaelic Education are not involved in improving the sector of education for which they have opted.
- Young people should be afforded opportunities for developing leadership skills through the medium of Gaelic. Recently formed pupil groups do not enable improvements to Gaelic Education. These are missed opportunities to develop fluency, as well as other skills for learning, life and work.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- Staff and young people enjoy positive relationships, which is an important factor underpinning learning through immersion.
- Specialist staff and young people show a sound understanding of the importance of immersion to their fluency. Staff plan to develop a statement on effective learning, teaching and assessment for use across the school. This should include immersion, and how it interacts with English medium education within an inclusive manner.
- The tracking and monitoring of attainment needs to show clearly how young people are progressing in Gaelic Medium Education, whilst also checking that they accrue the benefits of bilingualism.
- Young people should be encouraged to be responsible for developing further their skills in Gaelic beyond the school.

Learning pathways

- At subject level, a start to a policy for Gaelic Medium Education recognises the school's legislative commitment to securing a sustainable future for the language. This policy needs to be owned by all staff and stakeholders. The policy should be developed further.
- All young people have access to literacy and Gàidhlig in the broad general education, with progression to National Qualifications in the senior phase. Staff make purposeful use of national events and competitions for Gaelic Medium Education. These provide young people with good immersion experiences, as well as contexts in which to apply their learning.
- Interdisciplinary learning, and opportunities for personal and wider achievement should be made available through the medium of Gaelic.
- Staff do not have curriculum links to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. They should ensure young people have access to Foundation Apprenticeships that are offered through the medium of Gaelic, as well as other qualifications and awards.
- Young people may choose Gaelic (Learners) from S2, with progression to National Qualifications in the senior phase. In ensuring equity of access to Gaelic, and maintaining an inclusive approach to Gaelic, senior leaders should consider making Gaelic (Learners) available from S1.
- Staff should articulate their GME curriculum offer to support young people in making subject choices. This should include offering the option of accessing a course through Gaelic using mediums such as e-Sgoil, or similar services.

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.