

Summarised inspection findings

Kinross High School

Perth and Kinross Council

29 April 2025

Key contextual information

School Name: Kinross High School
Council: Perth and Kinross Council
SEED number: 5350530
Roll (Sep 2023): 912

Kinross High School is located within the Loch Leven Community Campus and benefits from purpose-built facilities for use by the school and wider community. The senior leadership team is well established and comprises the headteacher, three deputy headteachers and a business manager.

Attendance is generally above the national average and exclusions are below the national average.

In September 2023, 3.6% of young people were registered for free school meals.

In September 2023, most young people lived in the 20% least deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2023, the school reported that 36% of young people had additional support needs.

Over the past few years, challenges in recruiting staff, particularly the issues in covering short-term positions, has impacted on the pace of progress and improvement in a few subject areas.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	very good
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ learning and engagement■ quality of teaching■ effective use of assessment■ planning, tracking and monitoring	

- Staff and young people have developed very positive relationships in almost all classes, which are a strength of the school. The school values of being ambitious, responsible, resilient, and compassionate, underpin practice in almost all classes. Staff work diligently to ensure a calm, safe, and respectful culture for learning. Almost all interactions between staff and young people are supportive and built on a climate of high expectations and mutual respect. In almost all lessons, there is a highly purposeful learning environment where young people are motivated to learn. The behaviour of almost all young people is exemplary.
- Senior leaders have supported staff effectively to improve learning, teaching and assessment through a sustained focus on pedagogy across the school. Through the work of the professional development group on learning and teaching, the revised “Kinross Way” has been developed by staff with input from young people. Teachers use this interactive resource creatively to structure their approach to planning and delivering lessons. Young people benefit

from consistency in the quality of classroom practice and most staff have developed a shared and clear understanding of high-quality teaching and learning. Senior leaders should continue to identify and share highly effective practice in all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment across the school.

- Staff are developing and implementing effectively the Kinross High School Skills Framework of Communication, Creativity and Critical Thinking. They have a strong emphasis on skills development through subject areas and strong subject specific partnership working, for example, with the NHS and voluntary organisations. This is helping young people to develop important skills for learning, life and work.
- Almost all young people engage well in their learning and are highly motivated to succeed. The very positive learning environment is supporting young people to contribute well in lessons. Most teachers plan appropriately challenging and enjoyable learning for young people. Most teachers use a range of teaching approaches which support young people to work collaboratively and independently. Most young people work together well and take increasing responsibility for their learning.
- Almost all teachers have a clear structure to their lessons. Teachers share clearly the purpose of the lesson and use a range of effective starter activities well to structure young people's learning. This supports most young people well to understand what they need to do and how to measure their progress. As planned, teachers should continue to develop their effective use of plenaries to enable young people to reflect on their next steps in learning.
- In almost all lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Teachers are developing well their use of skilful questioning to support young people to think more deeply about their learning and to develop their higher order thinking skills.
- In almost all lessons, teachers use digital technology effectively to enhance learners' experiences. The majority of teachers use digital technology well to enable young people to access learning from home. Senior leaders and teachers are now well placed to build on the highly effective examples of an increasing minority of teachers who are creative in their use of digital technology to promote motivating learning experiences. Staff are currently developing their approaches in line with the Digital Schools Award to enhance further young people's digital skills.
- Almost all teachers make effective use of questioning to check young people's understanding in lessons. Most teachers use questioning well to encourage deeper thinking from young people. Teachers use questioning and a range of approaches effectively to check for understanding and to inform responsively their daily planning of learning and support for young people.
- Almost all teachers plan learning very effectively to include a range of formative assessment strategies such as "show me" boards and peer assessment. These approaches allow teachers to develop effectively their daily lesson planning and adapt their planning to the emerging needs of young people. Teachers use the 'Kinross Way Lesson Planning Template' to provide a consistent and clear structure for planning learning experiences. Teachers have strong approaches to planning medium and long term learning which result in young people experiencing consistently well-considered activities.
- Almost all teachers provide highly effective feedback to young people. This helps young people to understand their strengths in learning as well as how they can improve further. This includes

the use of very detailed and well-structured written feedback. Young people also benefit from regular and ongoing verbal feedback, including impactful learning conversations. This range of feedback provides clear next steps to learners in both the broad general education (BGE) and senior phase. As a result, almost all young people speak confidently about their progress in learning. Teachers plan carefully their approaches to feedback so that young people are supported consistently to make appropriate progress through all stages.

- All staff know young people and their individual needs very well. Almost all young people who require additional support with their learning are well supported to make appropriate progress in class. Young people benefit from a range of supports, such as differentiated planning and resources, careful questioning, and high-quality direct input. Pupil Support Assistants support skilfully young people who have barriers to their learning in class. Young people in the senior phase support peers effectively. Most young people feel that they are encouraged by staff to do their best.
- Almost all teachers have a strong, shared understanding of assessment standards. They are confident in assessment judgements in both the BGE and senior phase. This has been achieved through professional learning and robust moderation. Teachers take part in these moderation activities regularly within the school, with cluster primaries, and within the local authority. Moderation has been used effectively to inform curriculum planning and progression from primary to secondary. Teachers should continue to embed the recent approaches to moderation within the BGE. Teachers in most departments benefit from the support of colleagues who have been appointed to work for the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). They use their experience well to support their colleagues' understanding of national assessment standards. This helps teachers support young people to progress confidently through their learning in the senior phase.
- All teachers effectively track and monitor the progress of young people. They use a blend of summative and formative assessment approaches to make well-informed judgements of young people's progress. These judgements are also used to inform further the regular planning of learning experiences and impactful support for young people. Teachers also use a range of departmental and whole-school data carefully to track and monitor young people's progress. They use this information to ensure young people make appropriate progress in their learning.
- Almost all teachers monitor carefully the progress of identified groups of young people, such as those with potential barriers to their learning. This allows teachers to make well-judged adaptations to their planning of learning, teaching and assessment. Most teachers consider carefully the appropriate tasks and activities to support their learners to make better progress. This includes providing greater levels of challenge for some and consolidation of learning for others. Staff are well-placed to continue to embed this strong practice so that all young people benefit from appropriate levels of challenge in their learning. This includes all staff making effective use of whole-school information about learners' needs.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

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

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

BGE

- Almost all young people achieved Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level in literacy and numeracy in 2023/24. This has increased from the previous session, when most young people achieved this level. The majority of young people have achieved CfE fourth level literacy and numeracy by the end of S3 since 2021/22. Young people's literacy and numeracy attainment has increased in 2023/24 and is generally in line with or above local and national levels. Staff's judgements are reliable and they should continue with moderation activities to ensure the ongoing validity of these judgements.
- Senior leaders are aware that young people's strong numeracy attainment in the BGE does not continue through the senior phase for a significant minority of young people. Senior leaders have responded by allocating additional staffing to improve young people's numeracy attainment. They have also developed a range of more rigorous systems to track young people's progress. Senior leaders support and challenge staff appropriately and they are improving their approaches to ensuring young people attain the highest level of numeracy.

Senior phase

Leavers

- Almost all young people leaving school have achieved Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better in literacy in 2022/23. This has increased from most young people achieving this level since 2018/19. The majority of young people leaving school achieve SCQF level 6 in literacy since 2018/19. Performance at these levels is stable over time and generally in line with the Virtual Comparator (VC).
- Most young people who left school achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy from 2019/20 to 2022/23. A minority of young people have achieved SCQF level 6 since 2018/19. Performance at these levels has been sustained in line with the VC from 2018/19 to 2022/23.
- For young people leaving school who require additional support for their learning, performance at SCQF level 4 or better to SCQF level 6 in literacy and numeracy is generally in line with the VC.

Cohorts

- At S4, most young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy over the five year period from 2019/20 until 2023/24, in line with the VC. By S5, as a percentage of the S4 roll, the majority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy from 2019/20 to 2023/24, generally in line with the VC. Performance at this level shows an increasing pattern of improvement. By S6, as a percentage of the S4 roll, the majority of young people achieved

SCQF level 6 or better in literacy from 2019/20 until 2023/24 in line with the VC. The percentage of young people achieving SCQF level 6 in S6 fluctuates.

- At S4, between 2019/20 and 2023/24, the majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy, in line with the VC. By S5, as a percentage of the S4 roll, and since 2019/20, a minority of young people have achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy, in line with the VC. Performance at this level was showing a consistent pattern of improvement, until a dip in 2022/23, recovering in 2023/24. The percentage of young people gaining SCQF level 4 or better in S5 has been significantly lower than the VC in 2022/23 and 2023/24 and the percentage of young people gaining SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy by S5 is significantly lower than the VC in 2023/24. By S6, as a percentage of the S4 roll, and since 2020/21, a minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy, which has remained stable and in line with the VC since 2019/20.
- There is a notable difference between the percentages of young people who achieve SCQF level 5 numeracy through units as opposed to the full course qualification in mathematics.
- Young people's attainment in National Qualifications (NQs) in English and mathematics is strong. At both SCQF levels 5 and 6 English and mathematics, entries are generally in line with national levels and attainment is consistently above national levels over the latest five year period. Notably, the quality of A grade passes is consistently and substantially above national levels. Entries of young people into SCQF level 5 applications of mathematics are below national levels. Pass rates are above national levels.

Improving attainment for all

BGE attainment over time

- Senior leaders and staff use reliable data to capture young people's attainment over time. By the end of S3, almost all young people achieve third CfE level or better in all curriculum areas. The majority of young people achieve fourth level CfE or better in almost all curriculum areas by the end of S3. Staff use rigorous BGE tracking to support young people to make appropriate progress through CfE levels. Faculty and pastoral staff use this information to make informed interventions where young people are at risk of underachieving. Senior and middle leaders should continue to use their range of data about young people's progress to ensure stronger articulation between the BGE and senior phase.

Senior phase

- Senior leaders and staff have strengthened systems to track more rigorously young people's progress. They use this information well to identify young people who are not on track to attain appropriately in line with their level of ability. Senior leaders and staff also use this data effectively to measure young people's progress over time. They ensure that young people who are not on track receive timely interventions such as targeted attainment mentoring so that they make appropriate progress. As a result, the school has maintained strong levels of performance over time.

Leavers

- Generally, when using complementary tariff scores, attainment for the lowest attaining 20%, the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people is in line with the VC and has been generally in line over the five year period from 2018/19 to 2022/23. The school is sustaining stable levels of performance over time.
- Generally, the attainment of leavers who require additional support with their learning is similar to the VC.

Cohorts

- At S4, by S5 based on the S4 roll and by S6 based on the S4 roll, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people has been in line with the VC between 2019/20 and 2023/24. There are improvements in a few of these measures, such as the performance of the highest attaining 20% of young people in S4 which is at its highest level in the five year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24. Generally, performance is in line with the VC, however, there is an inconsistent pattern of improvement, with a few measures decreasing. For example, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people in S4 and the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people in S6, as a percentage of the S4 roll, are all showing three year patterns of decline from 2021/22 until 2023/24.

Breadth and Depth

- Positively, senior leaders and staff have increased the range of opportunities available to young people beyond NQs, including awards from providers outwith the SQA. This is increasing significantly the range of young people's learning pathways in the senior phase. Senior leaders need to measure the added value of these additional awards to ensure that young people maximise their attainment. There is a need to increase attainment across a minority of subject areas to ensure more young people build on prior learning and attain high-quality passes.
- At S4, from 2019/20 to 2023/24, most young people achieve three or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better. The majority of young people gain four or more to six or more qualifications at this level in line with the VC between 2019/20 and 2023/24. The percentage of young people achieving four or more courses at SCQF level 5C or better has been significantly higher than the VC in two out of the latest three year period, including the latest year, 2023/24. Performance at SCQF level 5C or better fluctuates slightly across the latest three year period between 2021/22 and 2023/24, although this remains in line with the VC. The quality of A grade passes is generally in line with the VC with no identifiable pattern of improvement. The exception is young people who are achieving six or more courses at SCQF level 5A as this measure is showing a sustained pattern of improvement between 2021/22 and 2023/24.
- By S5, as a percentage of the S4 roll, from 2019/20 until 2023/24, the majority of young people gain two or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better, with just under half of the cohort achieving three or more courses at this level. Performance at this level is in line with the VC with increases in percentages of young people gaining two or more to five or more awards in 2023/24. The quality of passes has also increased in 2023/24 for young people gaining one or more to five or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better. The percentage of young people gaining two or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better is significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24.
- By S6, as a percentage of the S4 roll, between 2019/20 and 2023/24, the majority of young people gain one or more to three or more awards, with just under half of young people achieving four or more awards at SCQF level 6C. Performance at this level is stable and in line with the VC, showing no clear pattern of improvement. The percentages of young people gaining two or more to six or more awards at SCQF level 6C or above is showing a pattern of decline between 2019/20 and 2023/24. A minority of young people gain one or more awards, with a few gaining two or more and three or more awards at SCQF level 7C or better. Performance at SCQF level 7C fluctuates with no identifiable pattern of improvement. As a result of changes to the school's offer of SCQF level 7 courses, the percentages achieving one or more to three or more awards has decreased in 2023/24.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Almost all young people benefit from an extensive programme of wider achievement activities including sports, performing arts, debating and a range of subject-based activities. As a result, high numbers of young people are developing important skills and attributes for life, learning and work. Learners' achievements are recognised and celebrated within faculties and across the school in a variety of ways, including a merit system, praise cards, newsletters, social media and an annual awards ceremony. This creates a school culture which promotes individual and school success and helps young people to feel valued. As planned, senior leaders should continue to review these approaches to ensure they fully capture all learners' achievements.
- Young people across the school are building their capacity as effective contributors whilst developing strong communication and leadership skills by undertaking a range of roles. This includes the pupil parliament, S6 committees and ambassador roles.
- Young people develop a strong understanding of their responsibility towards others and contribute well to the local community through, for example, volunteering, supporting local charities, running a weekly drop-in café as well as offering a diverse programme of musical and cultural events. Young people can articulate the core benefits of these experiences and how they are developing their confidence, teamwork and communication skills. A few young people have received training to become sports leaders, mental health ambassadors and peer mediators. Through their role in promoting and supporting the health and wellbeing of their peers, these young people are developing empathy and effective interpersonal skills.
- Young people gain accreditation for their achievements, where appropriate. Senior leaders are exploring further ways to accredit young people's achievements. They have introduced approaches to track young people's participation in wider achievement, both within and outside school. Staff use this information thoughtfully to identify young people who are not involved in activities and to address any barriers to young people's participation. As planned, staff should continue to embed the school's skills framework and align it more closely with learners' attainment and achievement. Staff should then focus on helping young people understand the progress they are making in skills development.

Equity for all learners

- Almost all staff demonstrate sound awareness of the socio-economic context of the school. They are developing effective approaches to enhance the school community's understanding of the impact of the context on young people. They have focused effectively in taking steps to reduce the cost of the school day. Staff work well with a range of impactful partners, including the local foodbank, to ensure families receive the support required. They sensitively remove financial barriers to young people's participation in all aspects of school life. This includes ensuring that all young people in S1-3 have the opportunity to attend excursions, including a residential experience. Staff track young people's participation carefully in opportunities to achieve and use this data to remove successfully any financial barriers to participation and achievement.
- Senior leaders identified the adverse impact of a few young people's low attendance on their attainment. They use the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to support successfully young people's attendance, wellbeing and engagement with school. Senior leaders should continue with plans to widen the consultation of the PEF plan to consult with a wider range of the school community. Senior leaders and staff track rigorously the progress and attainment of learners who may be affected by socio-economic disadvantage. This is resulting in greater awareness by staff of the needs of these young people. Staff review regularly their progress in learning.

Senior leaders recognise that the attainment for the few young people in receipt of free school meals requires greater focus. They need to demonstrate that all poverty-related attainment gaps are closing, with identified cohorts of young people making accelerated progress in line with national expectations.

Post school destinations

- Senior leaders reported a post-pandemic dip in young people leaving school to a positive destination. For example, in 2021/22 most young people progressed to a positive destination on leaving school. This was significantly much lower than the VC. Senior leaders used this data to inform the development of new approaches to support young people more effectively during the transition when leaving school. They improved coursing processes and the ongoing development of a Developing the Young Workforce strategy. Senior leaders and staff have developed effective systems to track and monitor young people's pathways through the curriculum. They use this information carefully to identify at an early stage young people who are at risk of not progressing to a positive destination. Staff proactively seek a significant range of highly-effective partnerships who support identified young people on a regular basis. As a result of these approaches, in 2022/23, almost all young people progressed to a positive destination on leaving school, in line with the VC. This has been sustained and improved further when considering 2023/24 data.
- Senior leaders and staff are widening pathways through the curriculum to reflect young people's intended destinations. They also work well with further and higher education establishments, such as local colleges and the university wider access programme. Generally, over half of young people progress to higher education, a third to further education and the remaining group progress directly to employment or training.
- Senior and middle leaders have clear strategies in place to monitor and improve young people's attendance. Attendance is currently above national averages. Staff have implemented very effective strategies to improve attendance universally, as well as for targeted groups of young people. Senior and middle leaders work very well with partners of the school to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to help all young people to engage or re-engage with their learning. This is gradually helping to improve the confidence, attainment and achievements of more young people.
- Staff make provision to accommodate young people's individual learning needs. All young people supported through additional provisions, such as the Leven class, have an individual wellbeing plan. Staff work well with families and young people to identify the appropriate support required. They should now review wellbeing outcomes to ensure that individualised education programmes are measurable and state clearly the intended educational outcomes for all young people. Teachers should ensure that all activities support progression in learning and are appropriately challenging. They should adapt activities to improve levels of engagement with learning.
- There is currently a targeted cohort of young people who engage with their learning through agreed, bespoke part-time timetables. This is helping to improve the attendance and attainment of a targeted group of learners who experience barriers engaging with school-based learning. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to ensure that those young people who are on part-time timetables receive appropriate intervention to keep them safe, secure and learning. This is a current priority area in the school's improvement plan. Senior and middle leaders should continue as planned with their strategies to reduce the proportion of young people learning through part-time timetables.

Other relevant evidence

- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of young people through food in school. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food and health promotion in the school.
- Young people experience their entitlement to high-quality physical education. Young people receive their full entitlement to religious and moral education (RME) from S1-6 and religious observance in line with national guidance. Positively, young people receive accreditation for their attainment in core RME.
- Young people benefit from an effective partnership and strong relationships with the vibrant and well-appointed local library, which is located in the school campus. Young people take part in a wide range of activities such as reading schools, learner-led reading groups and the reading café. A range of subject departments use the library provision to enhance young people's learning effectively.
- Almost all young people benefit from learning a modern language in S1 and S2. Young people currently have the option to discontinue or change their main (L2) language at the end of S2. Senior leaders should ensure that all young people experience their main language (L2) for the duration of the BGE. This will align with the Scottish Governments 1+2 languages policy.
- A significant minority of the school community provided feedback reflecting a range of opinions about various aspects of the school. A number of these comments expressed a desire for the newly established parent council to work effectively with the school, going forward.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Staff have developed the 'Kinross Way,' a teaching and learning framework, which is linked to high-quality professional learning. This ensures a consistent approach to the planning of learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers track and monitor carefully the progress of young people using a range of assessment data. They use skilfully a blend of summative and formative approaches to make reliable judgements about young people's progress. Staff work in a consistent way to use judgements to inform the short-term planning of high-quality learning experiences and support for young people. Teachers also use and discuss data regularly and effectively to monitor carefully the progress of individuals and groups of young people. They use data to inform highly-impactful interventions for young people and to measure the impact of these. This informs the ongoing and long-term planning of learning, teaching and assessment.

The school is supporting young people to lead their learning in a way that supports post-school transitions. This includes strong examples of in-depth curricular learning as exemplified by a significant number of young people in S6 who are undertaking the Science Baccalaureate. The success of this work is influencing interdisciplinary and project based learning in other curricular areas.

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.