

Summarised inspection findings

The Royal High School

The City of Edinburgh Council

28 February 2023

Key contextual information

School name The Royal High School
Council: The City of Edinburgh
SEED number: 5533732
Roll : 1395

Attendance is generally above the national average.

Exclusions are generally below the national average.

In February 2021 7.1 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2021 5.1 per cent of pupils lived in 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2021 the school reported that 32.8 per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

This is lower than the National figure.

Based in the West of Edinburgh, The Royal High School is one of the oldest schools in Scotland with a history of almost 900 years. The school is a non-denominational six year comprehensive with young people who transition from four local primary schools. A significant number of placing requests are received each session. The school roll is around 1,400 young people. The staff complement is around 120. The Royal High School was relocated from Calton Hill in 1968 and refurbished in 2004. More recently, the PE facilities were refurbished in 2015. Over 60% of young people come from SIMD deciles 9 and 10 with a few living in lower decile areas.

1.3 Leadership of change

excellent

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

- All staff have a very strong understanding of the vision for their school. The vision 'We all belong here' reflects the increasingly diverse school population, the impact of COVID-19, and the school's relentless commitment to placing wellbeing at the centre of all that it does. Staff have a very good understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school. This is clear from recent priorities such as the changes to reduce the cost of the school day and the work around equalities, wellbeing and learning pathways for all. The school's vision, values and aims are developed with the whole school community and are reviewed annually. As a result, they continually reflect the school context. Staff, pupils and parents talk confidently about how the vision and aims inform the change agenda. The school's vision and values consistently drive the school's improvement agenda.
- The headteacher demonstrates outstanding strategic leadership of the school. She displays confidence and courage in decision making and has a relentless focus on securing improvement for all young people. She has successfully established a very inclusive ethos across the school based on values and young people's rights. By using a range of creative approaches to promote professional dialogue, she has developed a strong culture of collaborative working and collective learning. As a result, staff have ownership of the direction of change and high numbers of staff feel empowered to lead aspects of school improvement. Together, senior leaders make an exceptional team. They model highly effective leadership and guide and support staff very well to lead on aspects of school improvement. In this way, the school is successfully making improvements across a number of different priorities and has built leadership capacity at every level.
- The headteacher has put in place highly effective systematic approaches to continuous self-evaluation. This ensures that a range of strong evidence is gathered to inform priorities for improvement. This includes rigorous analysis of data at both faculty and school level, extensive use of pupil surveys and focus groups and an annual programme of focused learning observations in faculties. Middle leaders use data systematically to evaluate the impact of their work on outcomes for young people. Time is protected for them to meet weekly to share practice and support and challenge one another. Middle leaders are very positive about the impact of this collegiate time which is empowering them to lead change and improvement confidently across their faculties. This group are highly motivated and demonstrate a strong commitment to the school's vision and aims. They have a sound understanding of local and national priorities and use these and professional reading effectively to inform their planning.
- Despite the challenges of COVID-19, senior leaders have continued to drive improvement and manage the pace of change very well. They have invested in professional learning in strategic planning which is having positive impact on focusing their priorities for improvement on three key areas. There are clear connections between the different priorities which reinforce the

central vision for the school. The purpose of all improvement initiatives is clear and outcomes are identified and measurable. While there are a significant number of actions related to each area, staff are achieving them due to very structured cycles of action and review, and the highly effective distributed leadership model.

- The headteacher is outward looking and proactive in seeking partnerships that support the school to improve. As a result, staff learn with and from other schools across and outwith Scotland. Young people also work well in partnerships with pupils from other schools to support their work. These shared improvement initiatives are resulting in positive change and improvement. The headteacher prioritises time for staff collaboration and professional learning during collegiate time. There is a strong sense among staff that they are supported well to take initiative and innovate. This is leading to highly engaged and motivated staff who use evidence-based approaches to inform their work.
- The highly effective processes for young people to contribute to and lead school improvement are a significant strength of the school. These include the 'Nation Assemblies', 'Pupil Parliament' and a wide range of pupil voice groups. Staff review the composition of these groups to ensure they are representative of the diverse school community. Young people are leading important changes within the school through their work on equalities and rights, and through the significant number of leadership and volunteering roles. This is contributing to a strong sense of empowerment and ownership of their school.
- The views of parents are sought regularly and parents are actively involved in decision making. The Parent Council is an important forum for debate where diverse viewpoints can be voiced. The headteacher works well with parents to ensure they understand the context for change.
- All staff have a strong understanding that closing the poverty-related attainment gap is an important priority. The school's work around equalities, uniform and the cost of the school day demonstrates its commitment to wellbeing as key to raising attainment and achievement. Staff use data well to identify the poverty-related attainment gap and identify individuals and groups who require additional support. There is close monitoring at school level of the progress made by individuals affected by additional challenges such as poverty, care experience or caring responsibilities. The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) budget is used to employ two Pupil Support Officers and a Youth Worker. This is enabling the school to support more families and work in close partnership with the school community. This is having a positive impact on attendance and attainment of young people. Staff work well with a range of partners to self-evaluate and plan for improvement. Primary school colleagues are involved in analysis of data at the P7 transition stage and at the senior phase and point of exit. This is used to inform target setting and pathways planning for groups and cohorts. Teaching staff in all areas have developed a network of external contacts who provide career insights for young people. This allows staff to highlight vocational pathways for learners in a meaningful way using a range of industry experts. A good example of this is 'My Future Fridays'. Each Friday a different guest speaker presents an industry insight event. All learners from S1 to S6 can attend these weekly events in person or online. All external partners talk positively of the good relationships they enjoy with school staff. These positive relationships bring a wide range of opportunities for young people that help learners to be career ready by developing employability and career skills.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

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

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

- The climate for learning in The Royal High School is a significant strength of the school. It is very positive and highly inclusive, in line with the school's vision. The school values of achievement, resilience, individuality, aspiration, respect, creativity and courage are clearly evident in the behaviours of staff and young people. Relationships between young people and staff are mutually respectful and nurturing. The school community's very significant commitment to respecting the rights of young people has achieved national recognition with the Rights Respecting School Gold Award. For example, young people's views about their learning experiences are sought through a wide range of mechanisms including Nation Councils, a Pupil Parliament, focussed discussions, walkthroughs, questionnaires, one to one learner conversations and a school digital application.
- Staff work exceptionally well together to share practice and expertise to improve learning, teaching and assessment. They take good account of current educational thinking when planning for improvement. Their professional development is very well supported by regular opportunities to learn together. The school's learning and teaching policy, 'Engage and Leaps' has been very well received by staff and young people. It defines the high expectations and characteristics of learning required to continue to improve pace and challenge in the Broad General Education (BGE). However, it also provides the space and flexibility for the creative use of learning time by staff and young people. Staff have appropriately relaunched the policy following COVID-19 mitigations to quickly refocus on their improvement priorities. They work to continuously raise standards of learning and teaching.
- In almost all lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are very clear, and young people understand the purpose of their learning. In most lessons young people are also clear about what successful learning looks like, particularly in the senior phase. This enables them to reflect on their learning, identify their strengths and next steps in learning and take more responsibility for their own progress.
- Young people are highly motivated to learn and demonstrate a very strong work ethic. In most lessons, young people are active participants in a very good range of learning activities. In most lessons, staff use questioning well to check the understanding of young people and recall previous learning. In a few contexts, where there is a focus on 'big questions' young people are excited by their learning and ask very good, challenging questions. Following COVID-19 mitigations, staff are resuming their work to develop consistent approaches to questioning which engage and activate young people's thinking skills, particularly in the BGE.
- The creative use of digital technology has significantly enhanced learning in school and at home. The use of digital technology across the school is sector leading. All staff and young people are now highly adept in the use of empowering digital applications and websites. The

use of online sharing platforms and other websites is embedded in all teaching practice across the school. For example, staff share all learning resources with young people, co-create learning resources, test understanding and provide personalised audio and written feedback. As a result, the school has achieved the Digital Schools Award, the Cyber Resilience Award, the Digital Schools European Award and is now an Apple Distinguished School. Staff continue to extend the use of technology to enhance creativity, collaboration and communication between young people and staff to enrich and personalise learning. Staff regularly evaluate the impact of digital learning and seek to continuously improve.

- Staff know young people as learners very well. Teachers work in close partnership with young people to plan learning to meet their needs, particularly for those young people who require additional support in their learning. Teachers make very good use of the accessibility functions on tablet computers to make learning more inclusive. For example, the use of the audio function supports young people with dyslexia discretely. Staff make very good use of the private channels to retain two-way communication with individual young people and personalise learning tasks and targets as required. Staff should continue to develop these creative approaches to differentiation of tasks, activities and resources for young people to support and challenge their learning.
- Staff use a variety of assessment strategies and evidence to monitor the progress of young people. Teachers make improved use of a wider range of formative as well as summative assessment strategies to monitor progress and adjust their planning to meet needs. Young people have good opportunities to take part in a range of peer and self-assessment activities, both in school and at home. Most young people are very positive about improvements secured in the quality and frequency of the feedback provided by teachers, particularly via digital technology. As a result, they are able to talk about their strengths and what they need to do to improve, particularly in the senior phase. Young people regularly benefit from conversations with their teachers to review their progress and agree targets and strategies for improvement. As planned, staff should continue to build on these approaches in the BGE.
- Teachers are becoming increasingly confident when making their assessment judgements in the BGE. They continue to refine their approaches to moderate teachers' judgements to ensure that standards are shared. Teachers also make very good use of attainment data to validate these assessment judgements. Building on the very good practice that exists within the school, staff should continue to develop approaches to moderation of curriculum planning. Teachers are very confident when making their assessment judgements in the senior phase. They have well developed verification procedures in place to ensure that their judgements are valid and reliable.
- Teachers monitor the progress of individual learners during each lesson, including young people who require additional support, and intervene appropriately. Faculty heads' tracking and monitoring data is collated centrally to provide middle and senior leaders with a strategic overview of the progress of individuals and groups of young people. Targeted interventions at whole school, faculty and classroom level are put in place to support young people. This includes young people at risk of underachieving as well as those who would benefit from greater challenge. Parents are actively involved in planning supports where appropriate. These approaches have successfully improved outcomes for young people.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Learning pathways reflect the school vision which underpins the curriculum rationale. Young people progress through carefully considered and aspirational pathways suited to their needs. The headteacher and senior leaders are solution focussed and have put in place a range of flexible learning pathways.
- Staff use information from primary to secondary transition well to ensure continuity of learning. This enables learners to progress through the curriculum at an appropriate pace. Young people value opportunities to specialise within the curriculum areas from S2 while still experiencing their full entitlement to a BGE. Most young people in the BGE undertake learning at fourth CfE level which provides challenge for more able learners. This prepares them well for more advanced course work in the senior phase.
- Senior leaders ensure learners receive all their entitlements across all stages of the curriculum. Young people's views, needs and interests are taken into account in the effective delivery of 1 + 2 modern languages in the BGE. Young people receive their entitlement to high quality physical education (PE). A majority of learners in S5 and S6 choose to continue with a PE experience through the popular 'academies' option in the senior phase. Young people receive their entitlement to religious and moral education (RME) from S1 to S4. Learners in S5 and S6 receive this through planned tutor experiences.
- The school library is well resourced and used regularly by young people during breaks. Young people benefit from many initiatives to support their literacy development as well taking part in activities. In line with current plans, departments across the school should consider how to use the library service to enhance young people's experience across all curricular areas.
- Teachers use a range of evidence to reflect, review and continually refresh the senior phase curriculum offer. Senior leaders consider a range of learning pathways well, taking account of individual circumstances. A few learners are supported to undertake courses bespoke to their pathway, for example, SCQF Level 6 courses in S4 or the international baccalaureate. Senior and middle leaders should continue with carefully considered plans to widen pathways, particularly for those who aim to progress directly to the workplace on leaving school.
- Senior leaders structure the curriculum well which results in a wide range of achievement opportunities. Young people value the elective courses from S2-S6 'academies' which allow them to personalise their learning, develop skills and maintain a breadth of curricular study. Young people benefit from additional opportunities through the extended curriculum by participating in a rich range of clubs, outdoor learning experiences and volunteering experiences. There is scope to continue to broaden the range of accreditation.
- Senior and middle leaders plan the curriculum very well taking into account staff deployment, how the timetable is planned and where learning might take place. They also use an impressive range of well-considered whole school and subject specific partners, including Skills Development Scotland (SDS). SDS staff share and explain effectively labour market information (LMI) with all learners. This helps young people to make informed decisions on course choices and possible future career plans. Staff are proactive in seeking out a diverse range of partners who significantly enhance the curriculum. They plan appropriate curriculum pathways using up to date and local LMI. Partners evaluate the curriculum informally. A next step will be to create opportunities for partners to be involved in formal evaluation of the curriculum.

- Young people develop skills through a range of activities in lessons and through subject specific and whole school meaningful interdisciplinary learning contexts. SDS staff support this further with the development of career management skills. Although not explicitly signposted for learners, the Career Education Standard 3-18 is embedded well in all parts of the curriculum. In all curriculum areas, staff link skills development and subject teaching to the world of work. This includes producing informative notice boards in corridors. These provide learners with important insights into possible future careers.
- The school college partnership (SCP) is strong and well established. This results in young people being offered a wide range of choices in different subject areas. Vocational pathways are offered in S4 to S6 and are delivered at the local college in a wide variety of career pathways. College vocational programmes are promoted carefully, ensuring parity of esteem to other choices offered to learners. Young people benefit from meetings of the 16+ team which provide opportunities for planning, evaluation and overcoming challenges. This team works well with school staff to co-ordinate appropriate pathways for young people. This includes supporting a few learners to undertake Foundation Apprenticeships successfully.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents in Royal High School are very supportive and involved with the school. They are enthusiastic supporters of their child's learning and wellbeing. Staff consult regularly with parents through the parent forum and other opportunities. The headteacher has succeeded in mediating the wide range of views of the diverse parent group. This has led to significant decisions being implemented successfully.
- Senior leaders involve parents and carers meaningfully in creating priorities for improving the school. Most parents appreciate the regular communication and consultation on, for example, important changes to the curriculum and wider life of the school. Most parents welcome the regular feedback on their child's progress.
- Parents feel encouraged to take part in the work of the active Parent Council, which represents a range of views. Learners' experiences have improved as a result of input from the Parent Council who work well with senior leaders and staff to support school improvement priorities.
- Senior leaders should continue with plans to involve all parents fully in supporting their child's learning.

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, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

excellent

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

- Staff across the school are passionate about wellbeing, equalities and inclusion. The school vision is lived and promoted successfully in all aspects of school life. This, along with the view that everyone is different, and everyone is valued, leads to a welcoming, caring ethos. Young people from a wide variety of backgrounds and with a range of different needs thrive in Royal High School. As a result, all staff and young people feel very well included in the life and the work of the school. They respect one another and value each other's differences.
- Staff and young people have a shared understanding of wellbeing grounded in children's rights and nurture principles. Staff have a deep understanding of the principles of 'Getting it right for every child'. This is evident in the range and application of strategies employed to address barriers to learning. Staff care deeply about all young people and that all young people should experience success. This leads to positive daily experiences for young people, for example, where staff listen and respond to needs and where individual concerns are addressed.
- Senior leaders, in partnership with young people, review the school's wellbeing strategy termly. A range of outstanding self-evaluation approaches helps inform the development of approaches to wellbeing. These include views from the pupil led Nation Councils and wellbeing surveys across all year groups. Staff ask young people to identify actions to support everyone to feel safe, respected and included. Based on this feedback, senior leaders reviewed the 'positive relationships' policy. Senior leaders, staff and young people are working together on explicit definitions of what it means for staff and pupils' to be 'Ready, Respectful and Safe.' Consequently, young people feel that their views are respected and that they play a key role in affecting positive change in their school community. This is resulting in confident and successful young people who have a strong sense of agency across the school.
- Following significant self-evaluation, the school implemented a highly effective mental health strategy. As a result, young people have an increased understanding of their own feelings, trigger points and how to self-regulate in challenging situations. Staff plan to link how young people use the wellbeing indicators in Personal and Social Education and the S1 Health and Wellbeing plan. This should support young people in setting personal targets related to their wellbeing.
- Commendably, staff plan and deliver a very good Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme informed by the views of young people. In S1 to S3, each unit has been adapted to include success criteria linked to health and wellbeing indicators. As a result, young people have a very strong understanding of contemporary social issues, build on their prior learning well and make informed choices. Young people benefit from daily contact with their form

teacher and a weekly check in with their guidance teacher during PSE lessons. As a result, young people feel valued and listened to.

- All staff have a very clear knowledge and understanding of statutory duties relating to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. They demonstrate a clear desire and commitment to get it right for every child through their consistent and effective use of a range of strategies to support all young people. As a result, young people feel valued and supported well by all staff. There is a tangible sense of young people being fully included and belonging in this school community.
- Staff take positive and proactive steps to ensure factors such as the learning environment, family circumstances, health needs and social and emotional factors are promptly identified and addressed effectively. Staff are solution focussed. Support for Learning and local authority staff helpfully lead a range of professional learning for staff relating to specific barriers to learning. This helps staff develop their practice and set tasks and activities at the right level of difficulty. As a result, almost all young people feel included, engaged and have a sense of success in their learning. Senior leaders should continue to ensure that all planning approaches for young people include appropriate learning targets.
- Senior leaders have developed very clear and effective systems and processes to support all young people to settle well in school. These processes, based soundly on the presumption of mainstreaming, recognise the need for additional support as required. Information is shared appropriately with staff to enable them to consider a variety of 'Pathway 1' strategies to support individual young people. A range of partners support a staged model of intervention, to 'Pathway 4' effectively. These include, for example, a transition teacher, youth worker and school counsellor, as well as enhanced provisions. Together with a renewed and successful focus on attendance, this is helping more young people, including those impacted by poverty, feel included in the school, attend well and succeed in learning.
- Staff recently introduced a self-service breakfast club which supports young people to maintain attendance at school, feel included and be better ready to learn. The wellbeing hub also provides opportunities for a soft start to the school day for those who may require this. This daily check-in helps a few young people to self-regulate, feel safe and plan effectively for the day ahead.
- Staff fulfil their corporate parenting duties well. This includes ensuring that they are alert to matters which may affect care-experienced young people and appropriately considering them for a coordinated support plan. All young carers are supported well to complete a young carers statement. A few staff altered the timings of out of class activities to enable young carers to attend. This results in young people feeling included and knowing that staff care and value them.
- Teachers skilfully and discretely support young people to access appropriate learning materials through their very effective use of digital technology. This respectful and thoughtful method of support allows young people who require additional support to attain well. Young people use other, universally available supports such as nurture and equipment boxes in classrooms well. This helps young people access support independently.
- Promoting equality and diversity and tackling any form of discrimination is at the core of the school's wellbeing strategy. Young people are supported very well to recognise and value difference and challenge discrimination. They are empowered to speak out when they feel that something is not right. They are very aware of, and talk knowledgeably about, issues relating to

fairness and equalities. Through a variety of programmes, underpinned by United Nations Rights of the Child, young people are encouraged to be better allies and not to stand by, accept discrimination, bullying or prejudicial behaviour.

- Equality and diversity are promoted and celebrated well. Young people, along with staff, effectively lead and support a wide range of groups and activities that focus on different protected characteristics. Groups currently centre around gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and disability.
- As a result of the work of the gender equalities group, young people are better informed about, and able to challenge, sexist comments and gender stereotypes. Across the school, there is an increase in gender-neutral language and an awareness of gender imbalances in subject areas. A significant recent change is the development of the gender-neutral, sensory aware, school dress code. Following this implementation, more young people feel accepted, and attain and achieve well.
- Staff reflected on their own conscious and unconscious biases to help them explore and discuss racial equality. Supported by Intercultural Youth Scotland, staff developed their knowledge and considered their own prejudices. As a result, they are more aware of the impact of their own practice on young people. This helps staff improve learning experiences for young people. This also results in an environment where the evidence of young people's views is all encompassing.
- Staff consider and embed opportunities to exemplify aspects of equalities effectively through the curriculum. This includes, for example, amending texts in English, discussing issues in history or adapting scenario type questions in maths to reflect better the diverse community of The Royal High School.
- The newly formed disability awareness group is helping raise awareness that not all disabilities are visible. Young people worked alongside staff to attain the LGBT+ Bronze award. Through RME and other activities, young people are encouraged and enabled to consider different religions and cultures. This increases their knowledge and awareness of different cultures and beliefs.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

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

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

- Staff remained highly focussed on achieving strong outcomes for young people over the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The school has a strong and supportive parent forum who are ambitious for young people. The headteacher and the leadership team work very well with staff to pursue high expectations for all young people. Almost all school systems and processes have been planned to support and raise attainment. Attainment and achievement outcomes are strong, particularly by S6.

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

Broad General Education

- Almost all young people achieve third Curriculum for Excellence level in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3. Most achieve fourth Curriculum for Excellence level in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3. There is a strong focus on high expectations and rigour in tracking progress and attainment across P7 to S3. This is supporting strong outcomes for young people.
- Teachers visit classes in P7 in the year before transition. Information on progress from across the curriculum is recorded and transferred to S1 in a transition jotter. Staff in the cluster plan and support a smooth and well-planned transition. This ensures that young people build on their prior learning well and that there is continuity of learning. For some learners, interventions are already in place for them on arrival at The Royal High.
- Teachers have regular BGE moderation meetings and this is currently under review. Teachers undertake regular Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) in relation to moderation and this supports effective judgement of levels. Staff in the English and maths departments continue to monitor and track progress in literacy and numeracy throughout the BGE. They use this information to identify and plan interventions for those who are at risk of not achieving their expected levels.

Senior Phase

Leavers Literacy

- Almost all young people leaving school between 2016/17 and 2020/21 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy and in 2019/20 and 2020/21 almost all did so through a course award. From 2017/18 to 2020/21 performance at this level was significantly higher than the Virtual Comparator (VC). There has been a steady increase in the numbers of leavers achieving SCQF level 5 as a course award in literacy over 5 years, in line with the VC. Commendably, most leavers achieve SCQF level 6 literacy award.

- In S4 from 2017/18 to 2018/19 the number of leavers achieving SCQF level 5 or better was significantly much higher than the VC. By S5, those achieving a SCQF level 5 award in 2017/18 to 2020/21 was significantly much higher than the VC. In 2019/20 numbers of leavers achieving SCQF level 6 were significantly much higher than the VC.

Leavers Numeracy

- Most young people leave school with SCQF level 5 in numeracy. A majority of young people who leave school achieve SCQF level 5 in numeracy as a course award and almost half achieve SCQF level 6.

Cohorts

Literacy

- At S4 almost all young people attained SCQF level 5 in literacy in four out of the last five years. This was significantly higher than the VC. By S5 almost all young people achieve SCQF level 5 in literacy and from 2016/17 to 2020/21 this was significantly higher than the VC. From 2019/20 to 2022 almost all young people achieved SCQF level 6 in literacy which was significantly higher than the VC. By S6, almost all young people achieve SCQF level 5 literacy which has been significantly higher than the VC in four out of five years. In 2021/ 22 the percentage of young people achieving SCQF level 6 literacy was significantly higher than the VC.

Numeracy

- At S4, almost all young people achieved SCQF level 4 numeracy as a course award in 2021/22. Most achieved SCQF level 5, with half achieving this through a numeracy course award in 2021/22. This is in line with the VC. By S6, in 2021/22 most young people achieve SCQF level 5 course award in numeracy.

Attainment over Time

- Young people are attaining very well in all curriculum areas and sustaining these high standards over time. In the BGE, the school collates data for all subjects showing the percentages of young people achieving the third and fourth curriculum levels.
- By the end of S3, almost all young people are achieving fourth CfE level or better in all other curriculum areas outwith literacy and English, and numeracy and Mathematics. The high percentage of young people attaining at these levels has been sustained over time.

Leavers

- Attainment for young people leaving school using complementary tariff points is mainly in line with the VC, although is showing an increase over three years from 2018/19 to 2020/21. For the lowest attaining 20 percent, the middle attaining 60 percent and the highest attaining 20 percent of young people, there has been a steady improvement over 5 years to 2020/21.

Cohorts

- At S4 and by S5, the attainment of the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% are in line with the VC. As young people move through the school, based on complementary tariff scores, attainment is very high, particularly at S6. By S6, attainment of the highest 20% has been significantly higher than the VC in three out of the last five years. Given the numbers of young people who stay on in school until S6, this is a strong picture.

Breadth and Depth

- At SCQF level 5, a majority of young people achieve five awards with a minority achieving seven or more at SCQF level 5 in 2021/22. The quality of passes at SCQF level 5A was

significantly higher than the VC in 2021/22 for those achieving seven and eight course awards. These high standards have been consistently maintained over time.

- By S5, a majority of young people achieve one SCQF level 6 and in 2020/21 this was significantly higher than the VC. A minority achieve 5 or more SCQF level 6A awards and this was significantly higher than the VC in 2020/21. The quality of passes in 2021/22 was in line with the VC.
- By S6, the percentage of young people attaining one to five SCQF level 6 awards is significantly higher than the VC in 2021/22. It was significantly higher for A band passes for those achieving two, three and five SCQF level 6 awards. This is a very strong profile of attainment.
- By S6, there is a very strong picture for leavers achieving SCQF level 7 awards. For three out of the last five years, the percentage of leavers achieved significantly much higher in one to three SCQF level 7 than the VC. In 2020/21, the percentage achieving a SCQF level 7 A pass were significantly much higher than the VC.
- In almost all qualifications in the senior phase, young people are achieving well in relation to National results with Advanced Higher passes being particularly strong.

Overall Quality of Learners Achievements.

- Participation in activities, including clubs and sports out with the school, is tracked by staff. This is supporting young people to develop skills which support the broader curriculum. Young people gain confidence, improve relationships and develop their communication skills through taking part in these activities. Commendably, staff review participation on an ongoing basis and young people with no known activities are followed up with support from guidance staff. Staff are aware that their next step is to evidence the outcomes of these activities for young people, including the positive impact on wellbeing. Their plan to introduce meta-skills into career planning will support this next step.
- There is evidence of positive outcomes for almost all young people working with specific partners. Priority is given to young people living in SIMD deciles one and two. A few young people participated in an outdoor programme and a few also achieved the John Muir Award through the Forest School. As a result, attendance is maintained for this group, timekeeping is improved and young people are better able to manage their time in school. Staff should continue to ensure the skills gained in these awards are recognised through accreditation.
- Achievements are celebrated well through the school newsletter, assemblies, noticeboards and social media. This extends to young people's achievements outwith school, for example sporting achievements. The school hosts celebration events for wider achievement and a prize giving for academic achievement. Young people value these events as part of the traditions of the school.

Equity

- Staff are acutely aware of the social, cultural and economic context of the school community. They use this knowledge very well to adapt classroom practice to meet the needs of all young people. This includes those who face additional challenges, such as young carers, care experienced young people or those with additional support needs.
- Senior leaders have a strong understanding of equity across the school community. They worked with young people, staff, parents and partners to produce a 'cost of the school day'

policy. This is removing financial barriers so that young people are able to participate fully in curricular and wider curricular opportunities. The headteacher, along with the school community, have taken some bold and courageous decisions to ensure all young people have an equitable experience. This includes decisions pertaining to the school dress code, the prom and school outings. As a result, young people are empathetic and tolerant of others and of difference.

- Staff track the progress of all young people who have barriers to their learning. Staff ensure appropriate interventions are in place and that these lead to improved outcomes for these learners. Almost all young people who require additional support achieve in line or above the virtual comparator in terms of attainment. Almost all progress to a positive destination on leaving school.
- Specialist support staff funded through the PEF support young people where disadvantage is a barrier to achieving and attaining their potential. These young people benefit from targeted individual and group activities, which is improving their attendance and engagement in learning. This helps them be included and engaged in lessons. Senior leaders are aware of the need to continue to close the poverty related attainment gap for all learners in the senior phase, particularly those who qualify for additional funding.
- A range of employers support the school well by providing development opportunities for S5 school leavers. Services offered to learners include digital safety courses, CV writing support and mock interviews. These opportunities are effective in preparing learners for the workplace and are supporting positive outcomes for all.
- In the latest published figures for 20/21, young people achieved positive destinations of 97.03%. Over the last three years, the school has been consistently above the local authority figures and in line with the Virtual Comparator (VC).

Practice worth sharing more widely

The outstanding contribution made by young people to leading aspects of the school. Young people are encouraged to be confident in sharing their views and ideas both in class and in broader school activities. They are fully respected by staff and are encouraged to offer ideas and to think critically as well as being allowed to be themselves.

The outstanding approach to equality and diversity across the school. The strong respectful ethos in the school enables all young people to feel valued and to 'be who they are'. There are many groups and activities, started by young people and supported by staff. These support the individual voice and allow personalities to thrive in a safe space.

Approaches to using digital technology to enhance learning experiences for young people are sector leading. Teachers skilfully use digital devices in a range of ways that support learners to achieve.

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.