

Summarised inspection findings

St Mary's Kenmure

6 February 2024

Key contextual information

St Mary's Kenmure is an independent special school located in Bishopbriggs, East Dunbartonshire. The school provides residential care and education for young people in secure care. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 14. Most young people are in the senior phase of education. Young people are placed from local authorities across Scotland and England. Young people's average length of placement at St Mary's Kenmure is approximately 60 days. Placements can start or end abruptly with little opportunity to plan for transitions.

A single Board of Directors is responsible for governance across both care and education. There is currently no Director of Services in place at St Mary's Kenmure. Two external consultants are performing the duties of a Director while the post remains vacant. The education of the school is led by a headteacher who has been in post for over four years. She is supported by an education manager and principal teacher. The head of care is the child protection co-ordinator across both residential care and the education provision.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

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

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

- The effective headteacher provides strong leadership in the education provision. She has successfully promoted the value of education to young people and their families. As a result, most young people are attaining and achieving well.
- The headteacher and staff have implemented a clear vision for the school. They ensure that all young people and their families embrace the importance of education and learning. The school values of learning, inclusion and respect are well embedded in daily life and promoted by the headteacher and staff on a daily basis.
- The headteacher works effectively with staff to implement change and improvement. All staff have a shared understanding about the needs of young people and how best to engage them in learning. Staff have used national guidance such as The Promise and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to inform improvement priorities. This well-considered self-evaluation allows staff to evaluate their practice against these important national priorities for care experienced young people. As a result, young people are gaining a better understanding about equality, tolerance and diversity. Staff are focused on ensuring that young people have a clear understanding of their rights. Priorities in the school improvement plan reflect well the context of the school and the profile of young people. Recent priorities such as raising attainment in literacy and numeracy, and widening the curriculum have had a positive impact on young people's learning experiences. As a result, young people are attaining well and engaging purposefully in learning. The headteacher and staff should continue with their plans for improvement to provide young people with opportunities to shape and lead initiatives.

- A Board of Directors has overall responsibility for the leadership of St Mary's Kenmure. In the absence of a Director of Services, they are currently supported by two consultants. The Board of Directors meet regularly with the consultants to discuss performance across both the care and education provision. However, the quality of governance across St Mary's Kenmure needs to be strengthened. The Board of Directors should develop a closer working relationship with young people and staff. In partnership with senior leaders and staff, the Board of Directors need to implement robust approaches to monitor the quality of the work at St Mary's Kenmure. As an immediate priority, they must introduce ways to closely monitor child protection and safeguarding approaches, particularly in residential care.
- The headteacher and staff evaluate the quality of the work of the school effectively. They gather robust evidence to determine what is working well and what needs to improve. The headteacher routinely asks young people to provide their views about school performance. Teachers are fully involved in evaluating the work of the school, participating in regular collegiate activities to identify areas for improvement. They meet regularly to discuss the impact of existing priorities and identify new areas to focus upon. Teachers are enthusiastic about leading on improvements. They take on leadership responsibilities such as Developing the Young Workforce and the 'LGBT Charter'. These roles provide staff with opportunities to contribute meaningfully to school improvements.
- The headteacher undertakes a range of useful quality assurance approaches such as observations of learning and evaluating young people's plans. As a result of these approaches, she has a very good understanding about the work of the school. She identifies and takes action to support staff when required. She has implemented a peer observation programme for teachers. This allows staff to share good practice and provide feedback to each other about learning and teaching. Quality assurance approaches should continue to include a greater focus on the quality of teaching.
- Staff across the school are highly committed to developing their skills and understanding to ensure they are equipped to support young people. Staff are well supported by senior leaders to develop their professional knowledge. They participate in regular discussions with the headteacher about their own professional development. Teachers know what they need to do to improve in order to meet better young people's diverse learning needs. As a result, most young people's individual needs are met very well. Staff across the school have valuable opportunities to participate in induction training, such as de-escalation strategies, that support them well in their role.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the impact the school is making in supporting young people to succeed. They describe how young people were not engaging in education for significant periods of time before attending the school. The average length of placement at the school for young people is just over 60 days before they move to another establishment or service. As a result, there are challenges in involving parents and carers in meaningful opportunities to contribute to school improvement. Parents and carers are in regular contact with the school and contribute to individualised planning for young people. The headteacher and staff should continue to adopt creative ways to enable more parents and carers to evaluate the work of the school and contribute to change and improvement.
- Young people are able to identify how the school has impacted positively on their lives. Although most young people attend for a short period of time, they feel included in the life of the school. Young people are confident that they can put forward ideas about changes and that their views are valued. When presented with opportunities, they participate enthusiastically in organising events and leading on areas such as the 'LGTB Champion Group'. Staff should now extend leadership opportunities for young people across the school.

1.4 Leadership and management of staff: theme 1 Governance framework

- The Board of Directors have oversight of the work of St Mary's Kenmure including both the education provision and the care residences. They have responsibility for the governance of all aspects of school performance. The Board of Directors need to develop approaches to improve governance of the school. This should include more robust governance in relation to child protection, safeguarding and the use of physical intervention and segregation. Currently, lines of responsibility are not clear in terms of how board members are informed of incidents. They should also record the actions they take to ensure correct policies and procedures have been followed. Board members should routinely review the work of the school, for example data related to safe holds. Sampling of incidents and subsequent actions taken will provide them with valuable information about the safety and wellbeing of young people. Governance approaches should also evaluate the attainment and achievements of young people to ensure that they are achieving the best possible outcomes.
- The membership of St Mary's Kenmure Board of Directors has undergone recent changes and the chairperson has been in post for just over one month. He has recently made an initial visit to the school and recognises the need for board members to build a closer partnership with the school. Previously, board members routinely visited the school to meet with staff and talk to young people. Understandably, this practice was paused during the pandemic. Since then, board members have not visited or engaged with staff and young people. The board members should now resume this practice of interacting directly with staff and young people to gather views. This approach will allow them to understand strengths and needs, and be involved better in monitoring and improving the work of the school.
- The Board of Directors should ensure there is improved direct communication with senior leaders at St Mary's Kenmure, particularly the headteacher and head of care. Previously, senior leaders attended board meetings. While senior leaders submit reports to the Board of Directors, they are not routinely invited to attend. Their attendance would allow board members to question and challenge information and data about the school more rigorously.

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

- Led by the headteacher, staff have established a caring, inclusive culture across the school. The school's welcoming ethos is prevalent and is underpinned by mutual respect, encouragement and positive regard. All staff enjoy positive relationships with young people. They are highly supportive of young people and are keen to interact and engage them in their learning. Staff are skilled in identifying young people's needs, interests and aspirations.
- Most young people start their placement following an extended period of interrupted learning. Supported by care staff and psychologists, education staff work hard to motivate young people to access learning and attain as much as possible during their stay. All staff promote and value the importance of education in young people's lives. As a result, most young people improve their attendance over time and reengage successfully with their learning. A minority of learners are not sufficiently engaged in learning. Staff should continue to identify and create personalised, bespoke approaches to support all young people to attend school and engage in learning activities.
- Almost all teachers have high expectations of young people and promote independence in learning. They tailor learning activities around young people needs, interests and aspirations. Most teachers adopt a range of creative learning and teaching approaches to help motivate and engage young people in their learning. In most lessons, young people respond positively to organised, structured activities throughout the school day. When motivated, they engage purposefully in learning, working conscientiously through tasks and activities.
- Most young people enjoy participating in practical and sporting activities. In most lessons, teachers incorporate a variety of purposeful learning approaches including independent tasks and a mix of practical and desk-based activities. In a minority of classes, teachers are overly reliant on textbook and worksheet-based learning activities. Across classes, young people would benefit from more opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers.
- The school has recently invested in a range of digital technology. Teachers have participated in professional learning in the use of smartboards. They are beginning to use digital technology to enhance young people's learning experiences. However, this is not yet a strong feature across the school. Teachers should continue to develop their skills in utilising digital devices, identifying creative ways to incorporate digital technology within lessons.
- Support workers provide high quality support for young people. They work closely with senior leaders and teachers to support transitions and provide young people with valuable individualised support with learning activities. Support workers enjoy very positive relationships with young people and are highly valued by colleagues.

- A range of onsite, specialist staff carry out detailed, holistic assessments when young people begin their placement at the school. The resulting assessment information identifies factors impacting upon a young person's wellbeing and any potential barriers to learning. As a result, education staff are provided with a highly detailed assessment of young people's learning needs. This helps enable staff to develop bespoke programmes and targeted interventions based on young people's individual needs.
- Most teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments well to demonstrate young people's progress, particularly at the senior phase. A minority of teachers could develop further their use of questioning to assess young people's level of understanding. Most young people know the progress they are making towards gaining qualifications and awards. However, they have a limited understanding of the skills they are developing. Teachers should identify more ways to support young people to appreciate the skills and attributes they are gaining through their learning.
- Senior leaders have implemented effective arrangements to track and monitor young people's progress in learning in class and at whole school level. The approaches focus predominantly on young people working towards National Qualifications. Teachers monitor effectively young people's progress at the senior phase in a consistent manner across the school. They do not yet employ consistently high-quality approaches to track the progress of young people at the broad general education (BGE). As planned, the headteacher and staff should continue to adapt and develop tracking approaches at the BGE. In doing so, they should strengthen existing approaches to the tracking and monitoring of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- The headteacher has introduced a range of moderation activities across the school. Teachers are linking well with colleagues from other schools to develop a clearer understanding of standards. The headteacher should continue to develop and increase moderation activities both internally and with neighbouring schools. This will help ensure teachers' build their confidence in making professional judgements, particularly at the BGE.

2.4 Personalised support: theme 2 Targeted support

- All young people have a key worker in the residential care provision and a key teacher in the education provision. Staff across care and education share useful details of daily challenges and requirements for immediate adaptations to learning plans. These meetings help enable the education staff team to respond and adapt to young people's emerging support requirements.
- Young people's personalised strengths, needs and interests are captured well in attendance and engagement plans. Individual approaches and strategies provide staff with useful ways to support young people, helping young people to engage with their learning. The headteacher and staff need to determine how this information better influences young people's individualised education plans. In doing so, they should consider streamlining overall approaches to planning, tracking, reviewing and reporting on young people's progress.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the Board of Directors that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

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

- Young people benefit from positive relationships and a warm, welcoming learning environment. Almost all young people and staff are respectful to each other. Staff have put in place well organised structures and routines to help young people understand their daily timetable. This approach contributes to a calm ethos across the school. Young people are positive about the impact of the school upon their health and wellbeing. Young people feel that the school provides them with good opportunities to learn and that they are safe and happy. They identify staff that they can talk to if they have concerns.
- Education staff are able to identify how relationships with staff, bespoke learning and personalised interventions are improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for young people. For example, most young people engage better in learning and have improved their physical fitness following placement at St Mary's Kenmure. Education staff should now develop approaches to identifying, tracking and monitoring young people's individual health and wellbeing achievements. This will allow staff and young people to understand better what progress they are making and how to build on this to ensure continued success.
- Most young people have good attitudes to physical fitness. They participate enthusiastically in activities such as football, swimming, kayaking and trampolining. Young people also have opportunities to participate in a wide range of sporting activities beyond the school day such as working one-to-one with personal trainers. As a result, many young people excel in areas of sport and physical activity during their placement at St Mary's Kenmure. Staff should now support young people to identify better their skills and achievements in physical exercise and sport.
- Young people talk enthusiastically about how staff support them to be healthy. They identify that since attending the school they are making better lifestyle choices through healthy eating and physical fitness. For many young people, attending the school has resulted in successful cessation of smoking, vaping and substance misuse. Young people engage well in sessions to help them sustain these healthier choices.
- Education staff do not routinely use the language of the wellbeing indicators to inform learning. As a result, young people are not familiar with the language associated with their wellbeing. In collaboration with care staff and the SIT, education staff should consider how the wellbeing indicators could support further young people to understand and talk about their own health and wellbeing. Most young people placed in secure care attend a range of different education settings over time. Using the wellbeing indicators would help support continuity and a common language and understanding about wellbeing that is widely used across Scotland.
- Staff have detailed knowledge of the strengths and needs of young people. The SIT work in collaboration with education staff to assess and compile detailed information about young

people. This resulting 'formulation plan' includes in depth details of early childhood, trauma and a range of support strategies for each young person placed at St Mary's Kenmure. This plan provides those who are supporting young people with a good understanding of their social, emotional and behavioural needs. Given that almost all young people attend the school for a short period of time, the plan provides useful information at transition stages and to support young people's future placements. The SIT should now work together with education staff to monitor the impact of the formulations and how these plans are improving wellbeing outcomes for young people.

- Young people benefit from a range of interventions to support their social, emotional and behavioural needs. The SIT provide direct support to young people to address specific barriers to learning. This includes sessions to help young people understand and manage their emotions. Young people talk about how these interventions are helping them manage their behaviour and emotions.
- Most young people experience challenges in regulating their behaviour. Almost all education staff use appropriate de-escalation approaches, including the occasional use of physical intervention where necessary. They are effective in supporting young people to manage their emotions and engage with learning. However, current records and reports of physical interventional incidences do not always provide enough relevant information as to why safe holds or segregation is being used. Staff should ensure that they follow the school's policies and procedures in relation to physical intervention and segregation at all times.
- Information sharing between the school and care staff is very effective. Daily handover meetings, weekly multi-disciplinary meetings and shared reports help ensure that education staff have relevant and up to date information about young people. Staff use this detailed information effectively to amend planned activities that reduce conflict or anxiety and help young people engage better in learning.
- The headteacher and staff have a good awareness of statutory duties. In line with national guidance and legislation, safeguarding and child protection policies and processes are in place and understood by education staff. Across St Mary's Kenmure, there now needs to be more robust and consistent application of processes about the investigation of child protection concerns. Led by the child protection co-ordinator, staff need to ensure that all actions are in line with St Mary's Kenmure's child protection policy and procedures. The Board of Directors need to work in partnership with the school and implement approaches to ensure staff consistently execute their roles in relation to safeguarding and child protection.
- Young people are developing a good understanding about equality and diversity. They are working towards the LGBT Charter Award. This is helping young people understand children's rights and protected characteristics such as sexual orientation and gender. Young people are able to discuss the importance of tolerance and recognising differences. Teachers provide high quality resources and topics across curriculum areas that reflect protected characteristics very well. Staff should now continue to empower young people to lead on future work related to equality and diversity.

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

- Taking account of their additional support needs and barriers to learning, most young people's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good.
- Almost all young people have experienced significant interrupted learning prior to attending St Mary's Kenmure. Staff identify barriers to learning well and plan effectively to close any gaps in young people's skills and knowledge in literacy and numeracy. Most young people are making good progress in reading, writing and numeracy. Most young people are making satisfactory progress in listening and talking. At the senior phase, most young people are successfully attaining National Qualifications in both literacy and numeracy.
- On account of the small roll, general statements about attainment and progress have been made to protect the anonymity of individual young people.

Literacy and English

Listening and Talking

- Overall, most young people are making satisfactory progress in listening and talking. They respond well to literal questions about texts and give clear explanations for their answers. They talk knowledgeably about a variety of genre and make use of vocabulary related to their learning. A minority of young people can share extensive knowledge and specialist vocabulary about areas of particular interest. Young people are not confident in working with others within a classroom setting. Outside of sporting activities, young people do not participate in enough learning activities which involve collaborative working or presenting to an audience. Across the curriculum, teachers should incorporate more learning activities that enable young people to develop their listening and talking skills.

Reading

- Overall, most young people are making good progress in reading. Most young people are developing skills in response to complex questions about what they have read. They engage well with a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts. However, most young people are not reading for enjoyment. Staff should encourage young people to read for pleasure and make greater use of the small library in the English classroom.

Writing

- Overall, most young people are making good progress in writing. Most young people are developing confidence to write independently. A minority of young people produce high-quality extended pieces of writing for a range of purposes. They apply a wide range of interesting vocabulary to engage the reader. Staff need to minimise the use of scribing and encourage all young people to develop their writing skills.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most young people are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Overall, most young people demonstrate confidence in number use and explain calculations well. They are developing their understanding of money. A minority of learners are extending their learning to include foreign exchange and comparing prices. At all stages, learners are developing a range of skills to calculate percentages, decimals and fractions. Young people would benefit from more opportunities to use these emerging skills in new and unfamiliar contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Overall, most young people are able to identify and describe the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They can describe accurately the properties of shapes such as angles and symmetry. Young people need to understand further the properties of shape in real-life situations.

Information handling

- Overall, most young people are able to identify suitable ways to collect data, organise it in a chart and display it using bar graphs, line graphs and tabular form. Across the curriculum, young people are confidently presenting information in a variety of ways, notably in social subjects.

Attainment over time

- Taking account of their length of placement, additional support needs and barriers to learning, most young people at both BGE and senior phase attain well over time. A minority of young people have made significant progress compared to previous education placements. A minority of learners' attainment is impacted negatively by their barriers to learning notably attendance and their level of engagement in learning activities.
- The school can demonstrate that they are raising attainment over time at the senior phase with young people gaining more awards, often at a higher level, year on year. Most young people are attaining successfully a number of National Qualifications. They attain course and unit awards at National 3 and National 4 with a few attaining at National 5. Most young people are gaining awards across a wide range of curriculum areas, including history and physical education.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people's achievements are widely celebrated across the school and residences. Staff work diligently to recognise any small successes young people achieve. As a result, young people are proud of their achievements. Education staff should now showcase young people's wider achievements in displays across the school. This would support young people to have a greater understanding of their personal achievements and skills development.
- Education staff have recognised that young people need to build their skills for life and work. 'Developing the young workforce' is a key component of school improvement. The school is beginning to establish closer links with Skills Development Scotland and community partners to strengthen their work in this area. As a result, young people are starting to appreciate the importance of developing skills such as resilience and working with others.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff have a sound understanding of the additional support needs, barriers to learning and socio-economic background of young people at the school. Staff provide targeted, equitable support to help alleviate any challenges faced by young people. They are successfully accelerating progress and attainment of most young people adversely affected by their personal circumstances. Young people do not always understand equitable approaches targeted for individuals, often regarding these approaches as unfair or showing favouritism. Staff need to be mindful that any equitable approaches across the school and residences are understood by young people and deemed fair. This will help ensure individualised approaches do not result in unnecessary conflict and resentment amongst young people and their peers.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| 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.