

Summarised inspection findings

Beath High School

Fife Council

30 April 2019

Key contextual information

Attendance is generally below the national average (88.4% in the school in 2016/17 compared with 91.2% nationally).

There were 79 cases of exclusion (70.6 per 1000) in 2016/17 which is above the national figure. In September 2017 the school reported that 26% of pupils had additional support needs (ASN) compared with 29% in secondary schools nationally.

In February 2018 19.7% of pupils were registered for free school meals which is significantly above the national average of 14.4%.

In September 2017 50.2% of pupils on the school roll live in SIMD deciles 1-3 (the most deprived datazones in Scotland).

At the time of inspection the headteacher has been in post for five months.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- In most lessons, there is a positive ethos as a result of the shared commitment to positive, nurturing relationships between the staff and young people of Beath High School. The recently appointed headteacher and the senior leadership team have prioritised the promotion of positive relationships and rigour in standards as important first steps in driving improvement at Beath High School. The school community is currently engaging all stakeholders in reviewing the vision, values and aims of the school. This has been identified as a priority in order to establish more fully an inclusive school environment in which all can flourish. Senior leaders should continue to support all staff, parents, carers and young people in understanding their role in school improvement.
- Most young people participate in the activities they are given, although they are not always meaningfully engaged in learning. In too many lessons, learning is overly task-oriented and tasks and activities are not always well-matched to the needs of all learners. Teachers need to develop further their approaches to differentiation to ensure that tasks and activities are well-matched to the needs of all learners. This requires more consistent and focused collaboration between teachers and support staff. It will help to improve the quality of learners' experiences, and provide appropriate support and challenge for learners across all departments. Young people could be more motivated by being actively involved in learning activities which are relevant to real life contexts, and which encourage them to make connections in their learning.
- Young people in the senior phase are starting to have a better understanding of their own progress, targets and next steps in learning. They need to have more regular opportunities to discuss their learning in each subject area. Teachers should ensure that they receive frequent and timely feedback on how to improve, and appropriate opportunities to act on this feedback. This approach to supporting young people to make the best possible progress needs taken forward as a priority.

- Young people value the consultative approach taken by the headteacher. Most of them feel their views are listened to. Focus groups of young people gave examples of how their views have influenced changes in aspects of school life, for example the formation of the LGBT Group and improvements to toilet facilities. Within the senior phase, young people's experiences beyond the classroom are enhanced through assuming a range of leadership roles. This includes being prefects, house captains and sports leaders and being ambassadors in contexts including online safety, and My World of Work. Such roles are helping young people develop self-confidence, teamwork and communication skills. Senior leaders are currently exploring ways to extend leadership opportunities across all year groups.
- On a few occasions, young people in classrooms lead aspects of their own learning. They report feeling more engaged in their learning when they have such opportunities. In a few lessons young people are given the opportunity to offer feedback regarding how learning and teaching could be improved. When this happens young people say they feel valued and welcome having such responsibility. This approach should be applied more widely across the school to encourage young people to have a voice in improving learning and teaching. Senior leaders are aware of the need to continue to develop mechanisms to engage, and respond to, the pupil voice. Young people are not all sufficiently aware of the structures and systems for providing their views on aspects of school life.
- While there are a few examples of effective practice, the quality of teaching across the school is not consistently of a sufficiently high standard. In most lessons, teachers share expected learning with young people and in a few lessons, this is used to inform a helpful plenary of the lesson. However, this approach is not sufficiently consistent across lessons. Staff should explore and share examples of approaches to sharing expectations of learners to ensure that all young people make appropriate progress in the course of their learning. This should support learners to understand the progress they make in each lesson.
- Across the school, the pace of young people's learning is too variable. In most classes the pace of learning is set by the teacher for the whole class. Teachers should reflect on the approaches they are taking to ensure that all young people learn at a pace that is suitable for them. For example, while many learning activities are timed, this does not equate to effective pace unless all young people are making progress in their learning at an appropriate rate.
- A voluntary group of staff has recently begun to lead focused whole-school approaches to developing aspects of learning, teaching and assessment through a teacher learning community (TLC) approach. Teachers would benefit from having more opportunities to share effective practice beyond the school and local authority area. This should support teachers to develop and improve their understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment approaches. In turn, this can support staff and young people to develop a more consistent and clearer understanding of expectations in learning across each subject area. As the work of the TLC develops, it will be important to ensure that the effectiveness of new approaches is evaluated using evidence of improved outcomes for learners. Young people should have further planned opportunities to evaluate, discuss and reflect on their learning and targets with their teachers.
- Inspectors observed a few effective examples of young people having planned opportunities to use digital technologies to enhance and deepen their learning experiences. The school currently has no overarching digital strategy in place to ensure that all young people develop their digital skills appropriately. Staff need to ensure that digital technology is used effectively to enhance and extend learning and helps to sustain motivation and engagement for learners. For example, they should explore how portable devices and other digital skills and technologies can be built into planning learning and teaching in a purposeful way.

- A few young people are aware of skills for learning, life and work and teachers are working to promote employability and transferable skills. For example, in Spanish, learners are exploring aspects of the world of work and gender inequalities. The development of generic skills is a feature in the majority of lessons, but the relevance and quality of this varies across subject departments. Further opportunities for staff to plan relevant contexts for learning, which are underpinned by these skills, will help to ensure the more coherent and progressive development of skills across all curriculum areas.
- Approaches to moderation to develop teachers' understanding of national standards, and achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level, are at an early stage. Teachers would benefit from opportunities to engage in moderation activities across and beyond the local area to develop their understanding of national standards for the broad general education (BGE) more fully. From next session, senior leaders are planning for all staff to be fully engaged in school improvement groups. Empowering staff will support professional collaboration and promote necessary professional collaboration to share effective practice and shape school policy.
- Staff have developed systems to track and monitor the progress of young people's attainment and achievement in the senior phase. The school is not yet tracking and monitoring young people's progress effectively across the BGE. Staff have correctly identified this as a priority area for development. There is an urgent need for senior leaders and teachers to develop a robust system that collates reliable data showing learners' progress over time across all curricular areas. This should also include tracking and monitoring of overall health and wellbeing and the development of young people's skills through wider achievement activities. This should support staff and stakeholders to design targeted interventions that are well-matched to the needs of all learners. It should also help to ensure suitable pathways for young people and options for positive, sustained destinations. We discussed with senior and middle leaders the importance of ensuring that any new curricular model continues to provide young people with their full entitlements in relation to the BGE.
- Teachers would benefit from increased collaboration with cluster primary colleagues to help them to design S1 courses which take good account of their prior learning and provide appropriate levels of challenge. A shared understanding between cluster secondary and primary colleagues of expectations across the curricular levels should support teachers to plan appropriately progressive learning pathways for young people across the BGE.

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

weak

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

Broad general education (BGE)

- In 2018, almost all young people achieved third curriculum level in literacy and numeracy. The majority of young people achieved fourth curriculum level in listening and talking, but less than half did so in reading and writing and in numeracy. Senior school leaders acknowledge that data provided in relation to achievement of a level cannot be regarded as robust. They comment that teachers need to develop more fully their understanding of the Benchmarks and increase their participation in moderation activities. This will support them more effectively to make reliable and robust judgements about young people's progress in learning which are more clearly evidenced. Senior leaders acknowledge that there is a need to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy, and have recently introduced additional support for identified groups of young people.

Senior phase: Leavers

Literacy

- In 2016/17, almost all young people left school having achieved SCQF level 4 or better, most achieved SCQF level 5 or better. Between 2015 and 2017 the percentage of S5 leavers attaining literacy at SCQF level 4 or better and 5 or better was significantly higher or much higher than the virtual comparator (VC). Over a five year period, there has been an increase in the percentage of S5 leavers achieving literacy at SCQF 5, including through a course award. Over the same period the percentage of young people achieving literacy at SCQF level 6 has increased overall, despite a fall in the last year, and is in line with the VC.

Numeracy

- In 2016/17, most young people left school having achieved SCQF level 4 or better which is in line with the VC. The percentage of S4 leavers achieving SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy is significantly lower than the VC in the latest year.

As young people move through the senior phase

Literacy

- The percentage of young people attaining literacy at SCQF levels 5 or better and level 6 in S5 and S6 is in line with the VC in the latest year. In S4, the percentage of young people gaining SCQF level 5 or better has dropped and is significantly lower than the VC in the latest year.

Numeracy

- Young people are making insufficient progress in numeracy as they move through the senior phase. The percentage of young people across the senior phase attaining in numeracy at SCQF levels 4 or better, 5 or better and level 6 has been variable over the past five years. In the latest year the percentage of young people attaining SCQF level 5 in S4 and S5 is significantly lower than the VC, and lower than the VC in S6.

Attainment over time

Broad general education (BGE)

- The school provided figures for literacy and numeracy Curriculum for Excellence attainment for 2017 and 2018. Senior leaders acknowledge that these figures are not reliable or based on robust evidence of progress. Curriculum for Excellence levels are currently recorded for all young people in the BGE across all curriculum areas. As yet, this data is not collated or analysed. The new tracking system being introduced across the school has the capacity to support the analysis of how different cohorts progress in their learning through the BGE. This system is currently more developed for young people in the senior phase. Teachers should continue with plans to extend its use in the BGE, to ensure that appropriate interventions can be planned to support all young people make the best progress in their learning. This will help them to be more fully prepared to benefit from learning across the senior phase.

Senior phase

- A new tracking, monitoring and reporting system is currently being developed by senior leaders. This is intended to support teachers to collate and analyse an appropriate range of information in order to ensure that appropriate experiences and pathways are provided to ensure all young people make the best progress in their learning. This is supporting the production of more detailed and regular progress reports, which are being welcomed by young people and their parents. Working together, teachers should continue to develop and embed this system to ensure that the needs of all young people are reviewed, addressed and met regularly to help them achieve success in their learning.

Leavers

- The average total tariff scores for the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people, are in line with the VC between 2012 and 2017. For the lowest attaining 20% and middle attaining 60%, the average total tariff points has reduced from between 2015 and 2017.
- In S4, complementary tariff scores for all pupils are significantly lower or much lower than the VC in the latest three years. In 2017/18, the complementary tariff scores of the highest attaining 20% have fallen to significantly lower than the VC, while the complementary tariff scores of the lowest attaining 20% and middle attaining 60% have fallen to significantly much lower than the VC.
- By the end of S5, young people are attaining significantly lower than the VC in the latest two years. In 2017/18, the lowest attaining 20% of young people attain in line with the VC, while the middle and highest attaining complementary tariff scores are significantly lower than the VC.
- By the end of S6, in 2017-18 young people overall are attaining significantly much lower than the VC. The complementary tariff scores of the lowest and highest attaining 20% have decreased from being in line with the VC to significantly lower than the VC, while the scores of the middle attaining 60% have fallen to significantly much lower than the VC.

Breadth and depth

- Senior leaders have already begun to make progress in addressing concerns around behaviour. They recognise that attendance and the number of young people leaving school at the end of S4 and S5 are areas that should be addressed as a priority. Senior leaders accept that the curriculum does not currently meet the needs of learners and the development of a new curriculum offer is among the current school improvement priorities.

- In S4, at SCQF level 4 or better, the percentages of young people attaining two or more to six or more courses has fallen to significantly lower or much lower than the VC in the latest year. At SCQF level 5C or better, and 5A or better the percentage of young people achieving one or more to six or more courses has fallen to significantly, lower or much lower than the VC in the latest year.
- By S5, at SCQF level 4+, the percentage of young people achieving three or more to five or more courses, is significantly lower, or much lower than the VC in the latest two years, although, based on the roll at the start of S5, the figure is in line with the VC.
- At SCQF level 5C or better, the percentage of young people achieving four or more to nine or more courses is in line with the VC. The proportion of young people achieving one to three courses is significantly lower in the latest year. At SCQF level 5A or better, the percentage of young people achieving two or more to seven or more courses is in line with the VC in the latest year. At SCQF level 6C or better, the percentage of young people achieving one or more to five or more courses has moved from significantly below the VC to in line, with the exception of three or more courses. The percentage of young people achieving one or more to five or more courses at SCQF level 6A+ is significantly lower than the VC in the latest year.
- By S6, at SCQF level 5C and 5A or better the percentage of young people achieving one or more to nine or more courses has fallen to significantly lower, or much lower than the VC in the latest year. At SCQF level 6C or better the percentage of young people achieving one or more to six or more courses has fallen to significantly lower, or much lower than the VC in the latest year. At SCQF level 6A or better the percentage of young people achieving one or more to four or more courses has fallen to significantly lower, or much lower than the VC in the latest year.
- In S4 young people living in deciles 2 and 3 performed significantly lower or much lower than young people living in the same deciles nationally. In S5 and S6 complementary tariff scores for young people living in deciles 2 and 3 are in line with young people living in the same deciles nationally. In a few departments, teachers are beginning to make use of Insight data to identify actions to raise attainment. However, across the school, teachers are not yet analysing data sufficiently well in order to consistently target interventions to raise attainment of all young people, and particularly identified groups and individuals.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people are benefitting from access to a very wide range of opportunities for achievement. This is leading to extensive participation in sports, music and the arts, citizenship and activities within particular curricular areas. For example, 60 young people are currently sports leaders and there is a high completion rate by participants in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. The school has recently gained a Gold School Sport Award and the Active Schools Coordinator has been effective in supporting an appropriate variety of physical activities for young people. Young people engage enthusiastically in roles such as Water Safety Ambassadors, Online Safety Ambassadors and My World of Work Ambassadors. Such roles are supporting learners to become more confident and to develop attributes such as teamwork and communication. Young people express appreciation of the range of activities open to them. The school celebrates young people's achievements in a number of effective ways including colours awards, presentations at assemblies and prize-giving events. Achievements in a range of contexts are also prominently featured in the local press.
- There is currently no effective mechanism in place to accurately track and monitor levels of participation. There is a need to establish processes that confirm such participation and allow the school to analyse trends in terms of characteristics such as socio-economic circumstance, gender, being a young carer and being care-experienced. This will help to ensure equity and

that young people have opportunities to achieve consistent with their needs and aspirations. There is also scope for the skills associated with opportunities for achievement to be more clearly highlighted and confirmed. Consistency in such an approach would encourage appropriately planned progression in such skills as young people move through the school.

- The school has provided a range of opportunities for young people to demonstrate citizenship in both the local community and a wider global context. For example, a social enterprise group work in Cowdenbeath and a high profile Malawi Project group has had longstanding impact. Social responsibility is also encouraged through young people's engagement in the work of the Child Sexual Exploitation and Online Protection Group. This has been supported through effective partnership working with Police Scotland. Similarly strong partnerships have been established with a wide range of agencies and services. Emerging from this are initiatives that support young people's awareness of aspects of health and wellbeing and improve their life-chances. Employability skills and resilience are developed through liaison with a range of professionals supporting targeted learners. A well-attended breakfast club supports young people in the BGE to make a healthy start to the school day. Additionally, the Beath Enterprise and Entrepreneur Programme (BEEP) gives focus on how young people develop entrepreneurial skills. There is potential through the school's approach to Developing The Young Workforce (DYW) to extend productive links with local business partners.
- Working with partners has helped the school to support particular young people and extend the range of learning pathways open to them. For example the Judo Group has supported them at transition from primary school and the Jigsaw Group supports young people with homework and activities at lunch and break time. A rugby-based programme 'The School of Hard Knocks', has developed confidence in learners. Additionally, partnership working is also assisting the school with increasing the number of opportunities for young people to gain formal accreditation when they engage in flexible learning pathways. This has led to young people gaining Saltire Awards, Prince's Trust Awards and Dynamic Youth Awards qualifications. Additionally, engagement with the Sutton Trust has enabled a few young people to gain admission to universities in the USA. The school has recently joined the Awards Aware Network. Senior leaders are now considering approaches to engage partners more systematically in self-evaluation and planning to support school improvement.
- The school is working effectively with Skills Development Scotland (SDS). From S1 learners are made aware of employability skills by input from the careers adviser through Personal and Social Education (PSE) lessons. The role of careers advisers, along with the professional interventions of specialist school staff, support young people in making choices at times of transition. The school is currently at an early stage of implementing the Career Education Standards (CES). Aspects of career management skills are evident within the PSE programme at all stages, and young people at risk of not securing a positive destination on leaving school receive targeted support in this regard.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders have a sound understanding of the socio-economic and cultural factors that may present barriers to learning, and how these impact on the experiences and life-chances of young people. All staff now need to ensure that they have an appropriately well-developed understanding of these factors to enable them to support all young people to reach their full potential.
- SIMD shows a profile of 50.2% of learners living in deciles 1-3. For those leavers from these deciles, there is no consistent trend in attainment over the past five years.

Leavers' destinations

- In 2017 most leavers were successful in moving to an initially positive destination. This is below the national average. Over the last three years, the percentage of leavers moving to a positive destination was below the VC, local authority and national figures. Within the last five years there has been an improving trend of leavers from S5 and S6 cohorts securing positive destinations.
- A few young people who leave school at the end of S4 do not move into positive destinations. There has been an increase in the number of young people going into higher education from S6 over the last five years. Over the same time, fewer leavers are going into further education, which is proportionately more aligned with the national picture. The school is aware of the importance of reviewing the curriculum to ensure appropriate learning pathways are in place to offer all learners progression routes throughout the senior phase.

Context

The Hub at Crossgates was set up in December 2017 as an off-site Learning Hub for up to 30 young people from S3-S6 to meet their social, emotional and behavioural needs. The Hub is situated within a local authority community facility which is also used by a variety of community groups. Young people who are disengaged from school, or find the current curriculum and structure challenging, may be referred to the Hub and attend on a part-time or full-time basis. The aim is to support young people to return to the mainstream school on a full-time basis. The school has recently set up a Junior Base in the mainstream building for S1 and S2 learners who experience difficulties in class. The school is currently reviewing the purpose and rationale of the Hub and its provision for young people with a range of ASN.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Positive relationships between staff, young people and their peers contribute to a calm and purposeful learning environment within the Hub. Young people are considerate to one another and staff and visitors who attend the Hub. They respond well to the small group setting and individual support provided by a dedicated teacher. In most lessons, almost all learners are motivated and engage well with their learning which is well-matched to their personal interests. A few teachers provide small group and individual tuition for students working towards National Qualifications. However, the learning environment is limited by too few resources. While staff bring technology with them when required, there is no access to digital technology or wireless connectivity on site. Spaces and resources are shared with the local community and cannot always be accessed.
- In most lessons, tasks are well-matched to young people's needs and abilities through close links with subject teachers. This helps to ensure that young people are supported to continue with the same work as their mainstream peers. In the best lessons, young people develop their confidence and interpersonal skills through opportunities for paired, group and collaborative work.
- In some lessons, young people have opportunities to be active in their learning and to learn in different contexts. For example, in biology, they measured and recorded different plants growing in the community centre garden. Staff provide clear and helpful explanations and instructions during teaching which support learning. In the best examples, staff use questioning effectively to check for understanding and build on prior learning. In planning their lessons, teachers should ensure that young people are aware of what they are learning, and how they can improve. Teachers should ensure that they regularly check for understanding, for example through the use of plenaries.
- Young people are not always clear about skills they are developing and what their next steps in learning are. Staff now need to evidence young people's progress more clearly and ensure that they are aware of their next steps through regular learner conversations. The school recognises that its approaches to tracking and recording young people's progress are at an early stage, particularly in the BGE. Plans are in place to increase staff's confidence and awareness of national standards through moderation activities.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- The school's own evidence shows that most young people at BGE who attend the Hub regularly are making appropriate progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. In 2017/2018, almost all young people achieved an award in English at National 4. In mathematics, the majority achieved National 4 and a few achieved National 3 awards.
- Young people are able to work with money, identify the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects, and perform calculations. They discuss features of language used by writers and write about their views on a range of a range of topics with increasing levels of challenge over time.
- A few young people successfully attained National 4 awards in biology, art and design and physical education. Parents would welcome opportunities for their children to access a wider range of subjects. The school plans to take account of the range, breadth and suitability of courses and awards for more vulnerable young people as part of its curriculum review.
- A few young people are being successfully reintegrated to classes alongside their peers in school. Staff regularly monitor attendance and work very hard to re-engage non-attenders through communication with parents and carers and with the support of key partner agencies. However, a few young people are not able to access their full entitlement to education through non-attendance.
- Young people develop important skills for life and work through achieving a variety of Prince's Trust units with a few completing SCQF level 4 Qualification Suite in Personal Development and Employability Skills. A few young people benefit from opportunities to attend college courses and work experience placements locally. There is scope to further extend opportunities to accredit young people's achievements outdoors and in the local community as part of the school's curriculum review.
- Bespoke, flexible and responsive approaches are, for the majority of young people, leading to positive outcomes in learning over time. Parents are particularly positive about care taken in grouping young people and attention to building positive relationships through opportunities to work collaboratively. They noted the impact of targeted interventions to help their children to develop team working skills on their confidence and self-esteem. They would welcome more of these opportunities.

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.