Summarised inspection findings

Gryffe High School

Renfrewshire Council

11 August 2020

School name: Gryffe High School
Council: Renfrewshire Council
SEED number: 8633436
Roll (Sep 2018): 923

Key contextual information

Attendance is generally above the national average. Exclusions are generally below the national average. In February 2019, 5.9% of pupils were registered for free school meals. In September 2018, 1.4% of pupils lived in 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.
In September 2018, the school reported that 35% of pupils had additional support needs.

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 school values of 'Caring, Learning, Achieving' at Gryffe High underpin the very strong ethos for learning. As a result, the school community has very positive, nurturing relationships between the staff and young people. The school's on-going work to achieve enhanced national recognition is demonstrated through a diverse range of awards. These include Fair Achieving School; gaining the Rights Respecting Silver Award; achieving their third Eco Green Flag; Golden Sports Scotland Award and the Digital Schools Award. Young people have principally led all of these awards. The headteacher demonstrates very high expectations for young people that supports a climate of high aspirations for all. Most young people participate very well in their learning, are highly motivated to learn, and demonstrate a very strong work ethic. Young people and parents are highly appreciative of the extensive opportunities that exist to support young people's learning beyond timetabled classes, such as supported study.

■ In most classes, young people have regular opportunities to lead aspects of their learning. This includes presenting to peers and groups across the school and local community. For example, the Houston Community Council, the Gryffe Valley Rotary and cluster primary schools. Young people demonstrate great maturity in taking responsibility for their own learning. They are self-sufficient in many aspects of their learning. Almost all departments adopt a range of approaches to seek the views of young people. However, young people are not always sufficiently aware of how their views help to inform practice.

■ Digital infrastructure across the school is inhibiting staff making full use of digital technology.

■ Where possible, staff are working well to integrate aspects of digital technologies more fully into lessons to deepen learning and promote further curiosity in young people as they learn.

■ Teachers' instructions in almost all lessons are very clear and young people understand the purpose of what they are learning. They are at times less clear on what successful learning looks like. There are skilled teachers who develop young people's higher order thinking skills

through effective questioning techniques. In the majority of lessons, young people are encouraged to demonstrate skills such as analysis and evaluation. This needs to be a more consistent across the school.

- Staff effectively use a variety of assessment approaches to enable young people to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. In almost all classes, young people receive regular feedback on their progress. This allows young people in most subjects to identify their strengths and next steps in learning. Staff monitor these targets and areas for improvement relentlessly to ensure young people are not at risk of under-achieving. In the senior phase teachers very effectively engage young people in regular learning conversations to highlight next steps in learning. The school is building on these approaches across the broad general education (BGE).

- Staff are becoming increasingly confident when making their assessment judgements in the BGE. They make good use of a range of attainment data to validate these professional judgements. They have also made a positive start in developing a rigorous approach to the moderation of learning, teaching and assessment in the BGE. They should continue to extend opportunities for staff to take part in moderation activities both within and beyond the school. This should include the moderation of course planning as well as the ongoing evaluation of standards of learning, teaching and assessment in the BGE. Staff have worked with colleagues in associated primary schools to agree shared expectations and standards in literacy and numeracy. They should now build on this very strong foundation for other curriculum areas. As teachers continue to share, understand and agree standards in the BGE, this should support them to provide tasks and activities set at the right level for young people.

- Staff are very confident when making their assessment judgements in the senior phase. They build upon and share the considerable expertise provided by those staff across the school who undertake assessment duties for the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). This assists them in planning appropriate support when potential under-achievement is identified. Persistence in responding to assessment data exemplifies the school's ambition to ensuring positive outcomes for all learners.

- Highly effective on-going assessment practice in the BGE is evident in a few departments where teachers make sound judgements in the course of teaching. They respond very effectively to meet the needs of individuals. Through a range of assessment strategies, they monitor and track the progress of all young people in their class. This then informs subsequent changes to teachers planning so that further support or challenge is tailored appropriately to their learners. The school's collegiate working group is very well placed to drive forward further improvements in a way that makes clear the inter-relationship between learning, teaching, the use of assessment and planning, tracking and monitoring. Providing greater depth to the 'excellent learning' framework may act as a suitable reference point on which to base this improvement.

- Throughout the school, staff set ambitious but achievable attainment targets for their young people based on prior attainment data. This is particularly effective in the senior phase. Progress against these targets is monitored regularly. The school's monitoring and tracking system is very well-developed. It enables staff at all levels to identify young people who may be making limited progress for any reason, at the earliest stage. Senior leaders, supported by Principal Teachers Raising Attainment, following analysis of data put in place a series of highly successful measures to support young people's attainment. This can include one-to-one support, supported study opportunities, mentoring by the pupil support team, and parental contact. Combined, these approaches have been highly effective in improving outcomes for all young people.

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	**excellent**

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

■ The school has a culture of high expectations. The headteacher, supported by his senior leadership team, has a relentless drive to ensure that each individual young person fulfils their potential. He continues to build the leadership capacity across the school which is having a significant impact on attainment. A few leadership positions are supporting the analysis of attainment and progress data that is helping to target focused support. Staff across the school have a high degree of accountability for both BGE and senior phase attainment.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy
Broad general education

■ Young people are attaining very well in literacy and numeracy and sustaining these high standards over time. By the end of S3, almost all young people are achieving third Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level or better in literacy measures of reading and writing. In 2019, all young people achieved third level or better in listening and talking and numeracy. This high level of achievement has been sustained between 2016 and 2019. In 2019, by the end of S3, most young people achieved fourth CfE level in all literacy measures and almost all achieved numeracy.

■ The English department has very strong moderation practice that helps them make increasingly reliable professional judgements. The principal teacher, a former quality assurance and moderation support officer for the local authority, has led this work very effectively. The school also has a clear and shared strategy for the development of literacy skills as the responsibility of all staff. As a result, other curriculum areas provide assessment evidence in aspects of literacy that help confirm professional judgements. Promising work is taking place in the maths department to improve the use of national benchmarks at fourth level.

■ Aspects of outstanding practice in primary to secondary transition result in continuity and progression in children's learning. Teachers at Gryffe High School spend significant time in their associated primary schools. This is having a significant impact on understanding standards that allows for seamless progression.

Senior phase
Leavers

■ Almost all young people are attaining very well in literacy and most are attaining very well in numeracy by the time of leaving school. High levels of scrutiny of monitoring and tracking data by senior leaders allow for targeted and bespoke strategies (outlined in QI 2.3).

Literacy

■ Almost all young people leaving school between 13-14 to 17-18 attained literacy at SCQF level 5 or better with most achieving SCQF level 6. Over the same time period, the school is consistently performing significantly higher or much higher than the virtual comparator (VC) for the percentage of young people leaving with literacy at SCQF level 6.

Numeracy

■ Almost all young people leaving school between 13-14 to 17-18 achieved numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better with most achieving at SCQF level 5 or better and a majority achieving at SCQF level 6. Over the same time period, the school is consistently performing significantly higher than the VC at SCQF levels 5 or better and from 14-15 to 17-18 performs significantly much higher than the VC at SCQF level 6.

Cohorts

■ As young people move through the senior phase, they are consistently sustaining very high standards in literacy and numeracy. Both literacy and numeracy remain a significant feature in the school improvement plan.

Attainment over time
Broad general education

■ 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 third 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 between 2016 and 2019. The data on the percentage of young people achieving fourth CfE level in all other curriculum areas outwith literacy and English, and numeracy and Mathematics has varied considerably over the last three years, due partly to the changing confidence of staff in assessing the 'achievement of a level'.

Senior phase

■ The school has sustained strong attainment in National Qualifications over the past five years.

■ Based on average total tariff scores, the school is sustaining very high standards for the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% as they leave the school. Broadly between 14-15 to 17-18 for all these attainment groups, the school has sustained a significantly higher or much higher performance than the VC. The only exception being in 2015-16 when the highest attaining 20% performed in line with the VC.

■ As young people move through S4-S6, based on complementary tariff scores, performance remains at a high level, reflecting the very strong attainment of young people in the senior phase.

■ In S4, by S5 and by S6 complementary tariff scores for the lowest attaining and middle attaining groups are consistently significantly higher or much higher than the VC in the past five years, with very few exceptions. The highest attaining group generally perform in line with the VC.

Breadth and depth

■ The school has maintained a strong performance in attainment in the senior phase over the past five years.

- At S4, there are very high standards of attainment being consistently sustained at SCQF level five or better over time. The percentage of young people attaining National Qualifications at SCQF level 5 or better for one or more to seven or more courses is significantly higher or much higher than the VC. At SCQF level 5A or better, the percentage attaining one to six courses is significantly higher or much higher than the VC in the past four years from 2015-16 to 2018-19.

- The school is consistently sustaining an exceptionally high standard by S5 and S6 over time. The attainment of young people by S5 and by S6 at SCQF level 6C or better for one or more to five or more courses is consistently significantly higher or much higher than the VC. By S5, the attainment at SCQF level 6A or better for one or more to four or more courses is consistently significantly higher or much higher than the VC in the past four years from 2015-16 to 2018-19. This has improved from being in line to significantly much higher than the VC for five or more courses in the latest two years. By S6, the attainment at this level is also significantly higher or much higher than the VC.

- By S6, the percentage of young people attaining one to three National Qualifications at SCQF level 7C or better has improved to significantly much higher than the VC in 2018-19.

- A significant number of young people undertake and successfully gain other qualifications such as the Scottish Studies Award, Personal Development Award, Mental Health and Wellbeing Award, and Leadership Award in S4, S5 and S6 at SCQF level 5 or better.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Almost all young people gain an impressive range of skills and develop attributes through the extensive range of out-of-class activities provided. These range from sporting activities, musical events, cultural experiences to residential trips and visits abroad.

- The highly successful 'Activ8' wider achievement programme focuses upon developing young people's understanding of the benefits of physical activity. This supports improvements in young people's wellbeing, self-esteem and resilience. A significant strength of the school's wider achievement programme is the variety of leadership posts held by young people across the school. This includes House Leaders of Achievement, Wellbeing Ambassadors, Modern Language Ambassadors, Heads of Citizenship, Eco, Charities, Communities and leadership roles in music and drama. Young people articulate confidently the skills they are developing and also the importance of these in future career choices.

- Young people, especially in the senior phase, are able to articulate confidently how they apply their skills in a range of contexts. They are also developing very well their ability to relate these skills to those required for life, learning and work. Commendably, young people are gaining accreditation in a number of areas. For example, almost all young people in S4 gained the SQA leadership Award and the well-established Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme is supporting effectively improvements in young people's problem solving, communication and team working skills.

- The whole school values of 'Caring, Learning, Achieving' are promoted very effectively in recognising and celebrating of young people's achievements. 'Gryffe Life' notice boards provide a focal point for the school community to recognise and celebrate the wide range of achievements. Young people appreciate and value highly the many awards, achievement certificates and house token system used to acknowledge and reward achievements across the school and the wider community. Staff and young people work well with key partners, including St. Vincent's Hospice, to support young people emotionally and academically during challenging times in their lives.

■ Senior leaders continually track young people's participation in wider achievement activities. This includes recognising achievements outwith school at national and international competition level. Staff use this information very effectively to develop a number of approaches to encourage young people to become engaged in activities and to review and improve the wider achievement offer. Young people regularly record and update their achievements and skills in learner diaries and in online profiles. As planned, teachers should continue to engage young people in meaningful learner conversations that develop young people's understanding of skills in a progressive way.

Equity for all learners

■ The majority of young people reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 8, 9 and 10. As these young people leave the school, they are consistently performing significantly much higher and significantly higher than young people living in the same deciles across Scotland. This is also the case as these young people move through the school.

■ Senior leaders have consulted with all stakeholders on the use of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). Senior and middle leaders use enhanced monitoring approaches well to identify and support improvements in attainment for a targeted group of young people. Additional staffing from PEF is improving outcomes for identified young people. Also, senior leaders ensure that cost is not a barrier to any young person accessing opportunities and resources.

Destinations

■ The percentage of young people in S4 and S5 who stay on at school is very high. Only a small number of young people leave at the end of S4. Between 2013-14 and 2017-18, almost all young people have entered a positive destination on leaving school. The majority go to higher education on leaving school with a minority leaving to enter employment. Targeted work with the school Project Leader of Employability and Skills Development Scotland ensure a focused approach on each individual's transition. A 'destination audit' undertaken in the senior phase enables pupil support staff to identify changes in aspirations and inform future pathways for young people.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- Developing leadership at all levels where key staff take responsibility for driving forward significant aspects of school improvement. The headteacher has been instrumental in creating an empowering culture within the school based on core values.

- The analysis of attainment data that result in timely, highly effective strategies to support young people who are under-performing. Young people's outstanding outcomes in attainment and achievement are the result of meticulous data analysis.

- Outstanding approaches to understanding standards and moderation practice in the English department. This is resulting in professional judgements of Curriculum for Excellence levels that are reliable. This is very well supported by primary to secondary curricular transition that results in continuity and progression in children's learning.

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.