Summarised inspection findings

St Modan's High School

Stirling Council

25 April 2023

Key contextual information

School Name   St Modan's High School
Council: Stirling
SEED number: 5726336
Roll: 1022

St Modan's High School is located in the town of Stirling. There are six associated primary schools, and the school is attended by young people from across three local authority areas. Due to placing requests, the school has young people enrolling in S1 from more than twenty different primary schools each session. 40.2% of young people in the school attend because of placing requests. In September 27.2% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland. In February 2022 13.6% of pupils were registered for free school meals.

The headteacher has been in post since April 2020 and is supported in the senior leadership team by four depute headteachers and a school resource officer. One depute headteacher post is shared between two members of staff.

In September 2021 the school reported that 40.7% of pupils had additional support needs. Senior leaders shared an updated figure for this session. They have identified that, at present, 44.0% of young people have an additional support need. This continues an increasing trend since 2017.

Attendance has been generally in line with or above the national average over the past five years.

Exclusions are generally below the national average.

Senior leaders highlighted several challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes challenges with young people's attendance and re-engagement with school.

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

■ The school community places a strong emphasis on promoting core Gospel values. The school's '3 R's: Ready Respectful Responsible' set clear expectations for young people. This successfully creates a calm, positive, inclusive learning environment, based on mutual respect and a shared sense of purpose. The school's values are evidenced in the behaviour and attitudes of all members of the school community. Visual displays across the school capture young people's participation in wider aspects of school life, reinforcing an ethos that encourages ambition and celebrates success.

■ Young people identify strongly with the school. They know what is expected of them as learners. They feel well supported. Most young people participate well in their learning. They feel that school staff encourage them to give of their best. Most young people are motivated and keen to do well, responding positively to encouragement and advice. They welcome opportunities to express their views. Within all curriculum areas, teachers capture the views of young people about their learning. Most young people feel that their views about their learning are listened to but are less sure about how their views are influencing decision making.

■ Young people, particularly in the senior phase, take on a range of roles and responsibilities that impact positively on the life of the school. Staff should look to expand opportunities for young people to discuss and reflect on the skills and attributes they develop through engagement in classroom activities and in wider aspects of school life. This will benefit young people as they develop the skills and attributes they will need when they leave school.

■ Across all curriculum areas, staff work well together to develop an increasingly shared understanding of high quality learning and teaching. Approaches to improving learning and teaching are informed by professional reading and research. Resources posted in the school's in-house portal support staff in delivering the St Modan's Standard for Learning and Teaching. Senior leaders and faculty heads need to ensure that agreed approaches continue to be embedded at all stages to secure consistently high-quality classroom practice. This will help staff secure stronger outcomes for learners.

■ In most classes, learning is being planned as whole class activities. Young people facing barriers to their learning are supported through a staged intervention approach and, where appropriate, assistive technology. In the majority of classes, teachers set the lesson's context with learning intentions and success criteria. Staff should continue to refine the language of success criteria. This will help young people to reflect on their learning and understand how they can improve and make progress.

■ In most lessons, teachers provide clear direction and instructions. Explanations are informative and support learners' understanding. In the majority of classes, young people work well in peer and group activities, and in focusing their efforts on addressing areas for improvement in their learning. In a minority of classes staff should make sure that lessons are appropriately balanced between teacher-directed learning and activities which empower young people. This will enable teachers to embed further opportunities for developing young people's skills of collaborative working and independent learning. In a minority of lessons, teachers use plenaries effectively to draw together young people's learning. Linking plenaries more closely to success criteria will help learners consolidate their understanding of lesson content and support teachers in planning follow-up activities.

■ Staff know young people very well and provide individual support. In the senior phase, learning is planned to reflect accredited course requirements and in most classes is appropriately paced. In the broad general education (BGE), senior leaders should, as planned, work with teachers in a minority of classes to ensure that learning experiences offer appropriate relevance, pace and challenge to meet fully all learners' needs. In the majority of classes across the whole school, most questioning focuses on young people's understanding and recall. Staff should place a greater emphasis on more open-ended evaluative questioning, especially in the BGE. This will promote higher order thinking and an enquiry-based approach to learning.

■ Digital learning is an important strength of the school and is used effectively in all curriculum areas, at all stages. In most classes, teachers make use of digital tools to structure and enhance the delivery of lessons. The use of online sharing platforms supports learning well. For example, in most subjects, learners can access course notes, lessons and support materials such as video demonstrations. Digital technology also provides learners with the opportunity to post comments, submit homework and receive feedback. Young people facing barriers to their learning are supported well with access to specialised on-line resources. Young people are increasing their skills in understanding and applying information and communications technology through digital learning in different contexts.

■ A minority of teachers need to develop further their approaches for arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations in the BGE. It is important that teachers engage with the full learning, teaching and assessment cycle. This work on moderation will build confidence in their professional judgements, using reliable assessment evidence based on National Benchmarks.

■ In a few department areas, peer assessment and collaboration help learners to support and extend each other's learning. Learners, particularly in the senior phase, would welcome more opportunities to evaluate their own learning through self-assessment and to develop skills in peer assessment. Learners in the BGE would benefit from a clearer understanding of where they are in their learning and how they can improve. In the senior phase, most young people know their target grades. They appreciate the feedback teachers provide in learner conversations that profile strengths and areas for improvement following assessments. Young people feel this effectively supports them in identifying next steps linked to revision resources. Teachers within most departments have effective learning conversations with young people. As a result, these learners are aware of their strengths, next steps and targets for improvement. This strong practice should now be developed further across the school, as planned.

■ The majority of teachers use formative assessment to support teaching and learning. They use a range of strategies to monitor young people's learning. In the senior phase, teachers use

summative assessments in formative ways well, identifying gaps or misconceptions in learning. Teachers should continue to develop assessment as continuous and incremental, happening while the learning is taking place, rather than mainly at the end of units of work. This will impact positively on learners' progress. Teachers should continue to reflect on how best to plan learning, teaching and assessment, particularly in the context of double periods.

- There is strong practice in a few areas where teachers use assessment information to adjust their teaching to support and challenge learners appropriately. Senior and middle leaders should now support all teaching staff to make full and effective use of monitoring and tracking data to inform subsequent planning.

- Middle leaders in all faculties use assessment information, such as summative tests, national standardised assessments and other platforms to monitor learners' progress through the BGE and senior phase. This information is used well to identify individuals and target groups where further classroom interventions are needed.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

■ Senior leaders and school staff have identified that attainment has been adversely affected by the pandemic and other local challenges. The school has put in place various interventions aimed at improving attainment. These include attendance support, revised approaches to monitoring and tracking progress, study support in the school and local communities and mentoring for young people at risk of under-attaining. It is too early to measure the full impact of these interventions, but the school's data suggests they are leading to increased presentation levels.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy
■ Young people, especially those facing barriers to their progress, are supported in their literacy and numeracy through transition work with associated primaries. Interventions in literacy from S1-6 include one-to-one support and targeted use of software to support young people's progress in reading and writing. School staff work together well to implement the action plan for literacy and numeracy across learning. Maths department staff, for example, work with colleagues in sciences, computing and technology to promote the importance of numeracy across the curriculum. The vocational training centre offers opportunities for young people to develop specific aspects of numeracy that are relevant for future employment. These interventions are leading to improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy for young people. There is now a need for school staff to develop a whole-school strategy focused on raising levels of literacy and numeracy for every learner. This will support young people in understanding the importance of literacy and numeracy skills across all subject areas.

BGE
■ Most young people achieved third CfE level or better in literacy by the end of S3 in 2021/22. The majority of young people achieved fourth level in listening and talking and a minority achieved fourth level in reading and writing by the end of S3. Most young people achieved third level or better in numeracy by the end of S3 in 2021/22. The majority of young people achieved fourth level in numeracy. Attainment in literacy and numeracy at fourth level by the end of S3 is at its highest in seven years. The school should continue to work on approaches to moderation to continue to ensure the reliability of these judgements.

Senior phase

Leavers
■ Most young people leaving school between 2016/17 and 2020/21 achieved Scottish Credit Qualification Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better in literacy. This was significantly lower than the virtual comparator (VC) in 2019/20 and 2020/21. The majority of school leavers between 2016/17 and 2020/21 achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy. This is generally in line with the VC.

- Most school leavers in 2019/20 and 2020/21 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This is an improvement on the preceding two years and is in line with the VC. A minority of school leavers achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy between 2017/18 and 2020/21. Attainment at this level has generally been significantly lower than the VC.

Cohorts
- In S4 in 2019/20 and 2020/21, most young people achieved literacy at SCQF level 5. In 2021/22, the majority of young people achieved literacy at SCQF level 5 or better, which is significantly lower than the VC. By S5, based on the S4 roll, most young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. This has been in line with the VC for five years. In 2021/22, a minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6. Attainment at this level has been in line with the VC for five years. By S6, based on the S4 roll, most young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in literacy, and the majority achieved SCQF level 6 in 2021/22. This is in line with the VC.

- In S4, by S5 and by S6, performance in numeracy is strong across the school. Most young people achieved SCQF level 4 or better in 2021/22 which is significantly higher than the VC. The majority of young people in S4 achieved SCQF level 5 or better, which has been significantly much higher than the VC in two of the last five years. By S5, based on the S4 roll, the majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better, which generally has been significantly much higher than the VC. At SCQF level 6, attainment in numeracy has been in line with the VC for five years. By S6, in 2021/22, most young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This is significantly higher than the VC. A minority achieved SCQF level 6 which is in line with the VC.

Attainment over time
BGE
- Teachers track young people's attainment in all curricular areas from S1-S3. The school's own data shows almost all young people are making appropriate progress from previous levels of attainment. Across all subjects (outwith literacy and numeracy), almost all young people are achieving at least CfE third level by the end of S3 and the majority are achieving CfE fourth level.

- Senior leaders are well placed to review their approaches to monitoring and tracking progress through the BGE by developing staff's shared understanding of progression through CfE levels. This will help school staff to identify and support individuals and groups of young people in the BGE at risk of under-achieving.

Senior phase

Improving attainment for all
- Senior leaders have begun the process of reviewing the curriculum. They are clear that the carefully planned introduction of courses and awards has started to provide further opportunities for young people to attain success and will continue to do so. Senior leaders should now continue with the plans that are already in place for tracking and supporting young people in the senior phase who are at risk of underachieving. This is already having a positive effect, for example in increasing presentation levels at National 5.

Leavers
- Overall, attainment for the lowest 20% of young people leaving school, using average complementary tariff scores, is generally in line with the VC over the last five years. For the middle 60% and highest 20% attainment is generally significantly lower than the VC.

Cohorts

■ The attainment of young people in S4, and by S5 and S6, based on the S4 roll and using complementary tariff scores, has generally been in line with the VC over the last five years from 2017/18 to 2021/22. This is the case for the lowest attaining 20%, the middle attaining 60% and the highest attaining 20% of young people.

Breadth and depth

■ Senior leaders have developed, in session 2022/23, refreshed approaches to monitoring and tracking attainment at a whole school level in the senior phase. They monitor the attainment of young people who are at risk of under-achieving. Importantly, they take action to make sure that young people gain a range of qualifications at the highest levels possible. This action includes mentoring and supported study. At present, the focus of these interventions is in S4, where the school's tracking information shows an increased number of S4 learners sustaining success in National 5 courses. The school should now, as planned, extend this approach into S5 and S6.

■ In S4, almost all young people in S4 attain three or more awards at SCQF level 3 or better, which is in line with the VC. Most young people in S4 achieve five or more awards at SCQF level 4 and this is in line with the VC. In 2021/22 the majority of young people in S4 achieved three or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better, and a minority achieved five or more awards at this level. This is lower than the VC. A minority of young people achieved seven or more awards at this level, which is line with the VC. A minority of young people achieved three or more awards at SCQF 5A or better, and a few achieved five or more awards at this level. This is in line with the VC.

■ By S5, most young people achieve at least one award at SCQF level 5 and the majority achieve three or more awards at this level. This is in line with the VC. A minority achieve five or more awards at SCQF level 5, which is lower than the VC. A minority of young people achieve 5 or more awards at SCQF level 5A and this has been in line with the VC for five years. For the past five years, the majority of young people in S5 achieved at least one award at SCQF level 6, which is in line with the VC. A minority of young people achieved three or more and five or more awards at this level for the past five years, which is line with the VC. A minority of young people in S5 achieved at least one award at SCQF level 6A, with a few generally achieving three or more and five or more awards at this level. This is in line with the VC.

■ By S6, the majority of young people achieved five or more awards at SCQF level 5C every year between 2017/18 and 2021/22. This is in line with the VC for four of the past five years and was higher than the VC in 2019/20. For each of the past five years a minority of young people in S6 achieved five or more awards at SCQF level 5A, and this is in line with the VC. The majority of young people attained one or more awards at SCQF level 6C in each of the past five years, which is in line with the VC. A minority of young people attained one or more awards at SCQF level 6A in each of the past five years, which is line with the VC. A few young people achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 7C or better in 2020/21 and 2021/22. This is lower than the VC. In the preceding three years attainment was in line with the VC for this measure.

Overall achievement of learners

■ Young people have a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs in which they can participate. The range of clubs offered means that most feel able to take part in suitable activities. Young people can also make suggestions for different types of clubs and staff are supportive of their suggestions. Examples of this include the sign language and guitar clubs that are run by learners themselves. The majority of young people use public transport to travel to

and from school and many clubs take place at lunchtime to maximise participation. Young people attending these clubs are developing a range of skills specific to the particular club, as well as communication and collaborative skills that can be transferred to other situations. They also enjoy being able to take on leadership roles through these opportunities.

■ Young people in the BGE develop their leadership skills through participating in a range of activities such as the Youth Philanthropy Initiative, Social Justice Ambassadors, class captains and pupil council. As a result, they are developing skills in communication, research and team working. Young people in S5 and S6 have been trained as Mentors in Violence Prevention and are contributing to the personal and social development (PSD) programme for younger pupils. Young people in S6 develop leadership opportunities through roles as Subject Ambassadors, Sports Leaders and Mental Health Advocates, and in working with associated primary schools. Learners in the senior phase volunteer at lunchtime and after-school clubs, supporting the participation of younger members of the community. These examples of young people's participation and achievement reinforce the school's commitment to the importance of St Modan's High School's values.

■ Achievement and success are celebrated well in a variety of ways. All departments identify 'Pupils of the Month' on display boards in departmental areas. Young people appreciate the many ways that their progress and participation in all aspects of their learning is acknowledged by staff. This is helping to build young people's confidence. Praise postcards and phone calls home to parents and carers are used regularly to celebrate excellence and the achievements of young people. This is welcomed by learners and by parents and carers as they appreciate the time staff take to share this good news. Young people in S6 coordinate the 'Hot Chocolate Friday' initiative. Learners from S1 to S6 value opportunities such as these. They appreciate the inclusive and informal way that teachers acknowledge learners' commitment and success in classes and in activities outwith the classroom. Assemblies, an awards ceremony and social media are also used to celebrate young people's successes and achievements.

■ Pastoral support staff collate information on the participation of young people in clubs and wider achievements. The school should proceed as planned to track more broadly the participation of young people in opportunities for achievement. This will help school staff to make sure that no young person misses out. More strategic tracking and monitoring of achievement will help young people identify the skills they develop through participation and the progress that they make with these skills. It is important that pastoral care staff help young people understand and value the skills and attributes gained through their achievements.

Equity

■ The attainment of young people leaving school living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles one and two, when compared using complementary tariff points, is in line with the national average.

■ In the last five years, almost all young people leave to a positive destination with 2021/22 as the highest in the past six years. In three out of the past five years, including the most recent year 2022/23, all S4 leavers have gone on to a positive destination.

■ Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used well to increase time available for the support staff to work with identified groups of learners on attendance, engagement and attainment. This has led to the increase in positive destinations for S4 leavers and improved attainment for particular groups of learners who have faced challenges affecting their learning.

■ Following the successful pilot by S3 Social Justice Ambassadors, all pupils have access to resource trolleys that are stocked with stationery, cereal bars and personal hygiene products.

Evaluation of this initiative highlighted the need for a breakfast club. S6 pupils develop their barista skills in the Kettles Koffee bar and profit generated by the sale of hot drinks funds the breakfast club. This activity has helped the young people involved to develop problem-solving skills, empathy and attributes that will help them in future employment. These initiatives are promoting equity by making sure that as many young people as possible feel better equipped to engage with the school day.

■ There is an impressive number of ways that young people and their families in SIMD deciles 1 and 2 are supported that ensure equity for all. PEF initiatives and partnerships with local companies also ensure young people feel included and can access all aspects of school life, for example in the interventions to improve attendance and mental health for young people facing particular barriers to engagement in school.

Quality of provision of Autism Support Provision (contributes to school evaluations)

Context

The autism provision in St Modan's High School is a local authority provision for young people affected by autism. The number of young people attending the provision has grown in recent years, during which there have also been several staffing changes.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

■ All staff develop very positive relationships with young people attending the unit. Staff treat each young person with high levels of care and respect. They are particularly sensitive to each individual young person's mode of communication. They are adept in identifying when young people may be becoming dysregulated. They skilfully use a range of strategies to ensure young people remain engaged in learning. When young people do disengage from their learning, staff are able to re-engage them quickly. This results in the unit being a calm and purposeful learning environment. Staff hold high aspirations for all young people. They support and challenge young people effectively to ensure they engage meaningfully with their learning and make good progress.

■ The school's values underpin learning and teaching within the unit very well. All staff are creative in how they motivate young people to engage in their learning. They use a range of approaches, personalised to each young person's individual needs, to support young people to access their learning. Staff use digital technologies appropriately to enrich young people's learning. This includes supporting young people to use laptops for internet access or to prepare presentations. In most lessons, teachers' explanations are clear. This supports young people to understand what they are being asked to do. Teachers should continue to develop their approaches to questioning to support young people to understand better what they are learning. Staff use praise and feedback well to support young people to know how successfully they have completed a task. Tasks are differentiated well to meet each young person's needs. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to differentiation to ensure each young person can continue to make progress in their learning. A wide range of partners support young people to access a range of motivating experiences outdoors. Teachers should continue to develop their use of the school campus and wider community to support young people to learn in real-life contexts.

■ Young people attend the unit following a multi-agency assessment process. Prior to attending the school, effective transition processes ensure young people settle well into the unit. Senior leaders use a wide range of assessments effectively. This ensures each young person is placed in a class which best meets their social and developmental needs. Teachers use a range of assessments on an ongoing basis to ensure each young person's planned learning meets their needs and supports them to make good progress. Staff report to parents on each young person's progress using online learning journals. Teachers should now consider how their use of learning journals could be enhanced to provide more meaningful information to parents on their child's progress.

■ Teachers' approaches to planning ensure learning is progressive within each term and year. Teachers use the CfE experiences and outcomes well to ensure young people experience learning across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers should now develop further their approaches to planning to ensure this is of a consistently high standard across all curricular areas. Teachers use learning journals, benchmarks and targets in child's plans to track and monitor young people's progress. They should now consider how to streamline these

processes to support them to plan for, and track and monitor, improvements in young people's progress.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

■ All young people in the BGE are developing their literacy and numeracy skills well, taking account of their additional support needs.

■ Young people with complex needs working at the CfE early level are developing their numeracy skills well. A few young people can identify two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and sort objects. A few young people can gather and record information on what birds they have seen in the garden. A few can count forwards and backwards using numbers to ten. A few young people can tell the time using 12 and 24 hour time. A few can add three figure numbers and perform simple calculations. Teachers should continue to ensure young people experience numeracy in real-life contexts.

■ Young people are developing their communication and literacy skills well at all levels. For example, young people with complex needs working at CfE early level are making good progress. A few of these young people are developing their abilities to sign when saying 'good morning'. A minority can read and analyse texts of varying difficulties. A minority can find words with similar meanings. Most young people listen well to staff. They can act on instructions with varying degrees of success. Teachers should continue to develop young people's communication and literacy skills, taking account of their preferred mode of communication.

■ All young people are making good progress in their learning. Prior to the pandemic they were increasingly gaining national units and qualifications up to and including advanced higher. During the years 19/20 and 20/21 attainment at Nat 1 to Nat 5 level decreased. This can be attributed to the increase in the number of young people with more complex additional support needs joining the unit than in previous years. In session 21/22 attainment at Nat 1 to Nat 3 level has increased significantly. A few young people have continued to attain up to and including Higher level.

■ Young people's achievements are celebrated and accredited very well. In recent years staff have become very skilled in identifying opportunities for young people's learning to be recognised through a range of awards. These include Blue Peter and Scout badges, and John Muir, Saltire, Prince's Trust, Duke of Edinburgh and Youth Scotland awards. These recognise young people's achievements in exploring new and challenging activities such as water sports, indoor climbing, navigation and campfire cooking.

■ All young people in the unit are registered as attending the mainstream school. This ensures they can all access learning alongside their mainstream peers when appropriate. Currently half of the young people attending the unit learn in mainstream classes for some or all of their school week. Over the last three years almost all young people have moved on to positive destinations. Almost one third of these have moved on to further or higher education.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The school's work with partners supports young people in the autism provision to be recognised widely for their achievements. Staff have identified many opportunities for young people's learning to be recognised through involvement in a variety of awards. Young people have significant achievements in challenging activities such as water sports, indoor climbing, navigation and campfire cooking and these are celebrated and recognised through accreditation.

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.