Summarised inspection findings

Pitlochry High School

Perth and Kinross Council

27 June 2023

Key contextual information

School name: Pitlochry High School
Council: Perth and Kinross Council
SEED number: 5351332
Roll: 310 (Primary 197 children, secondary 113 young people)

Pitlochry High School is an all-through school providing education for children and young people from nursery up to S4 in the town of Pitlochry and surrounding areas. The nursery provision was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary and secondary school stages. There are eight classes in the primary department. On leaving the school, almost all young people move on to Breadalbane Academy in Aberfeldy. A few young people move on to college, training or employment.

The headteacher has been in post since 2016. She is supported by a deputy headteacher for primary, a deputy headteacher for secondary and a business manager.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average. In 2021/22, attendance in the primary department was 90%. In the secondary department attendance was 88%. In the primary and secondary departments these attendance figures are declines on previous years. Exclusions are below the national average.

In September 2021, no pupils at the school lived in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland. In February 2022, fewer than five per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals. All young people live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles six to nine.

In September 2021, the school reported that 39% of pupils had additional support needs. In the primary department 34% of children have additional support needs. In the secondary department 49% of young people have additional support needs.

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1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory

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

■ Across the school, staff know children, young people and their families very well. They have worked successfully together to ensure the school has a warm, welcoming and positive ethos. Staff are very responsive to the wellbeing and academic needs of children and young people. There are long-standing vision, values and objectives in place. The values of openness, honesty, integrity, fairness and compassion, while clearly demonstrated in the interactions across the school, are not well-understood by learners. Senior leaders have identified correctly the need to refresh the vison, values and aims to reflect better the current context of the school. Significant staff absence, particularly in the senior leadership team, meant this work did not progress during COVID-19. Senior leaders are aware of the need to ensure all stakeholders are involved in creating a vision, values and aims that are meaningful to the whole school community.

■ Staff rightly identified the need to focus on respectful behaviours, following the return to restriction free schooling post COVID-19. They established clear expectations to "be safe", "be ready" and "be respectful". These are well understood by learners across the school. These have been supported by a strong focus on the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The school community has been successful in gaining rights respecting accreditation for their successful work to promote children's rights both within the class and beyond. Children are positive about the impact of the rights-based agenda on the behaviours demonstrated in the school and playground.

■ School improvement planning processes were impacted by absence amongst the senior leadership team towards the end of 2021/22. As a result, a number of school improvement priorities were carried over to 2022/23. Priorities focus on improving wellbeing, increasing attainment, the development of consistently high-quality learning and teaching and the continued implementation of children's rights across the school. Senior leaders should continue to develop approaches to improvement planning to ensure priorities are based on the current needs of the school community. They need, for example, to improve the curriculum across the school, and in particular the development of a curriculum rationale. Increased involvement of learners, parents and partners in the improvement planning process will allow stakeholders to have greater ownership of improvements across the school. The use of pupil equity funding (PEF) is planned appropriately.

■ Senior leaders now need to consider how to make the strategic direction of the school clearer to all stakeholders. Senior leaders should work with all staff to ensure there is a clear strategic overview of all improvement and development activities. This will help demonstrate to all stakeholders the interconnectedness of staff's work in improving the experiences of children and young people.

- All teachers are involved in self-evaluation activities. They engage well in "big" questions focused on identified areas of improvement such as numeracy or learning and teaching and in planned activities based on their quality assurance calendar. Teachers work well with senior leaders to reflect the impact of their work through monitoring and tracking meetings and other activities, such as lesson observations or attainment reviews. Secondary departmental improvement plans take into account improvements specific to their subject needs. These plans align closely to the school improvement plan. Staff are using a greater range of evidence increasingly, to inform these plans. However, the quality of these plans is variable. Senior leaders should work with principal teachers to share effective approaches found in a few departments. In addition, further work is required to ensure all staff have a clear understanding of evaluating the impact of planned improvements or interventions.

- Senior leaders work well together. They have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that require improvement. Staff feel the pace of change has been appropriate and manageable within some challenging circumstances in recent years. There is now a need, however, to increase the pace of change in several areas. For example, the development of a refreshed vision, values and aims, and in the primary department, the pace of change of curriculum development. This includes ensuring staff make the best possible use of the local context.

- The headteacher recognises the importance of building the leadership capacity of staff. Several staff are developing their leadership skills well through acting posts as a result of staffing challenges. This is helping to create a greater understanding of how to lead and manage change effectively. Staff take on leadership roles across the school readily. They engage regularly in professional learning and lead the development of key areas of work such as 'What does high quality learning look like at Pitlochry High School', rights respecting accreditation and literacy and numeracy as a responsibility of all. This is supported by effective approaches to the professional review and development process which is clearly aligned to the GTCS standards.

- There is a strong focus on pupil voice across the school. The views of learners are regularly sought in class surveys, learning conversations and at tutor time in the secondary department. Views are also gathered through the well-planned use of How Good is OUR School "wee questions" for learners in P4 to S4. A clear next step for staff is helping learners understand better how their voice is heard, acted upon and what changes it leads to. At present, all learners do not have a sufficient understanding or ownership of school improvement priorities or their role in this.

- Staff value the input of partners and the support they provide to young people. They work well together to meet the needs of children and young people across the school. This includes bespoke arrangements where required. Senior leaders and partners should consider how they can be more effective when evaluating their joint work. Senior leaders should also engage partners more successfully in the school self-evaluation and improvement planning process. This will ensure all partners are aware of the school improvement priorities and the role they play in enhancing experiences for learners.

- The Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) plan aligns with the school improvement plan. This outlines skills development expectations for staff to follow during Personal and Social Education (PSE) time. However, there is no clear DYW strategy linked to the school curriculum plan or staff development to embed meta skills fully into the curriculum.

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

■ Children and young people are polite, kind and respectful to each other and to adults. In all lessons there are positive relationships between learners and their peers and staff. There is a calm and settled atmosphere and a respectful ethos conducive to learning throughout the school.

■ Most children and young people participate in tasks and activities appropriately. However, too often lessons are directed at the whole class. Learners need to be given increased opportunities to engage in paired and group tasks on a more regular basis. A significant minority of children and young people who complete set tasks would benefit from more challenging activities. This will help them to maintain meaningful engagement in learning and motivation for the duration of the lesson.

■ Younger children have a few opportunities to learn through play-based activities. Teachers should continue to develop children's learning experiences through a play-based approach. This includes improving the learning environment; the quality of children's experiences; and interactions between staff and children. Staff would benefit from further professional learning and use of early years national practice guidance, Realising the Ambition: Being Me (2020). They would also benefit from looking outwards at other schools where there is high-quality play-based learning.

■ Almost all lessons are well structured. In most classes, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. They recap on prior learning and tasks are explained well. Teachers share the purpose of learning with children and young people. As a next step, greater focus could be given to the skills, knowledge and understanding young people are learning rather than tasks. In addition, teachers could be more explicit and specific on what successful learning looks like.

■ In a few classes, teachers use effective questioning to extend learning. There is a need to improve the quality of questioning across the school. This includes developing approaches to questioning that supports higher order thinking skills, curiosity, independence and learners' confidence. Teachers should work together to build on the stronger practice evident in a few lessons.

■ In the primary department, children have access to shared digital tablets. A group of children lead digital activities. They also support younger children to upload evidence of learning to share with parents. This helps to promote an increase in parental engagement. In the secondary department, teachers use interactive whiteboards to present information and to highlight learning intentions and success criteria. Staff are beginning to use digital applications to enhance young people's learning. They should continue to include opportunities for young people to engage more often with digital technology. The use of digital technology is not yet of a consistently high quality across the school.

- In the primary department, teachers use a variety of assessment evidence to support their professional judgements. Teachers check children's progress in literacy and numeracy using local authority tracking tools. They make effective use of diagnostic information from Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) and literacy assessments to support children as they transition across stages.

- In the secondary department, teachers use a variety of assessment evidence including tests and feedback on class work to inform young people about the level they are working at. A minority of teachers provide opportunities for young people to take part in peer assessment. In tutor time young people analyse their progress based on the comments teachers write in their annual reports. With the support of staff, they identify their own next steps in learning across all their courses and programmes of study, based on the teacher comments. As a result, young people feel supported by their teachers, well informed about their progress, and know what their next steps are.

- Teachers monitor and track the progress of all children and young people. In the Broad General Education (BGE) phase, learners' progress is measured against the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. There are regular meetings within the primary and secondary departments to discuss children's and young people's progress at regular points throughout the year. As a result, teachers and senior leaders have a strong understanding of the progress children and young people are making. They use this knowledge well to plan next steps in learning. Teachers are making use of networks across Perth and Kinross Council to support work being undertaken to moderate course work. This is increasing their confidence in making judgements on learner progress.

- In the primary department, teachers should increase consistency in giving children verbal and written feedback. Teachers have identified correctly that they should build on moderation approaches in writing as part of the school's planning for improvement. In the secondary department, all young people feel supported by teachers to progress in their learning. Teachers write comments and give feedback in jotters which young people value. However, the quality of this feedback is variable, and staff would benefit from sharing good practice to improve consistency.

- Across the school, teachers plan learning over a variety of timescales. In the primary department, teachers share with parents, on the school's website, an outline of their planned learning for the term. In the majority of classes, children share what they already know and what they would like to learn. Children enjoy this approach and can talk about what they already know and would like to learn more about in classes. In the secondary department, teachers use the CfE benchmarks and SQA criteria to plan learning. Teachers know their pupils and their needs well because of the small classes. There are informal opportunities to discuss young people and their progress with colleagues who work close by. Teachers would benefit from further professional learning to support their collaborative planning of learning which matches more closely the needs of young people. This would ensure appropriate challenge at all levels. A few young people speak about repetition and revision of curricular content in some areas in S1 which would be improved by better cross sector planning for curricular transition.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ Children and young people experience a broad and balanced curriculum as they move through the primary and secondary stages. Senior leaders and staff are proud of the family, community feel of their all-through school and the collaborative way that staff work together. Senior leaders and staff have not been able to develop the curriculum as they had planned over the last few years, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An important next step for the school is to develop a dynamic curriculum rationale that is tailored to its unique context and the whole school community.

■ Staff have identified that they need to develop the key transferrable skills, that children and young people should experience within the curriculum linked into the world of work. Staff have also identified certain unique features, such as local vocational education and employment opportunities, which should underpin the curriculum rationale. Staff should continue to build on interdisciplinary learning and courses, such as rural skills in the secondary. This is demonstrated already in a few curriculum areas. These examples already take good account of the school's context and the local employment opportunities for young people.

■ At the primary stages, children at P1 to P7 benefit from specialist teaching in physical education (PE), music, and art. Their work in these areas is of high quality. In addition, this approach supports children well in making the transition to S1, as they are very well used to learning in the secondary environment. Children also benefit from effective specialist teaching in Gaelic (learners) from P1 to P7.

■ Staff across the primary stages use Perth and Kinross Council's helpful progression pathways for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to plan learning. This supports well teachers' assessment of children's progress in these areas. Senior leaders have plans in place to adopt similar progression pathways for all curriculum areas next session, as these become available from the local authority. Primary staff have recently developed a new approach to termly planning. As the new curriculum rationale develops, primary teachers should ensure that the traditional interdisciplinary themes and topics are reviewed and refreshed to meet the needs and interests of current cohorts of children. Now that COVID-19 mitigations have relaxed, staff should continue with their plans to further embed learning outdoors in the local environment and community as a key focus for learning.

■ Gaelic language learning is provided to all classes at the primary stages as part of a language learning 1 + 2 approach. This is delivered weekly by a visiting specialist. Children extend their understanding of Gaelic using phrases during conversations and activities. They can now discuss their feelings, the weather and occupations in Gaelic. Children's progress in Gaelic is tracked using 'Go! Gaelic' assessment tools. Staff now need to use the Gaelic (learner) benchmarks to plan and assess the progress children are making from early to second level. They should also, as part of their curriculum development, review their Gaelic (Learners) provision in line with the 'Advice on Gaelic Education' section on Gaelic (Learners). Children are encouraged to participate in local Mòd poetry and singing competitions. Senior leaders should consider ways to extend Gaelic (Learners) provision throughout the BGE and into the senior phase. This would allow young people to develop further the fluency they have achieved by the end of P7, as well as ensuring equity of access and maintaining an inclusive approach to Gaelic.

■ There are formal transition events for P7 to S1 and well-established links between primary and secondary through, for example, outdoor learning, extra-curricular activities and sports day. There are, however, missed opportunities for more collaborative work between primary and

secondary in curricular areas to build on children's learning. Improving this collaborative work will support children's progress more effectively when they start the secondary phase of their education.

■ Young people in S1 to S3 are receiving their entitlement to experiences and outcomes in almost all curricular areas in the BGE. Senior leaders recognise that there are gaps in the breadth of provision, for example in business.

■ Young people receive regular opportunities within S1 to S3 to experience learning in different contexts. Staff provide a well-planned interdisciplinary learning programme for all young people in S1 to S3. They work positively with partners, making use of the local area and local labour market intelligence. Young people can gain accreditation through the John Muir Award, Junior Rangers and Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI). All young people in S4 are offered a relevant work experience placement supported well by the DYW co-ordinator and local businesses. In addition, young people make choices from a range of themed wider achievement opportunities. These include Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), creative studies, health and wellbeing, business and environment.

■ Young people make subject choices at the end of S2 and S3. They benefit from an improving range of programmes and courses. At the end of S3 young people make further choices which allows them to undertake up to eight SQA courses in S4. Following S4, staff ensure effective transitions for young people as they move to Breadalbane Academy, college, work or training. Teachers work well to meet the majority of learners choices, given the challenge of the size of the school. This work is based on the unique context of the school, working with partners such as Skills Development Scotland and local businesses. As a result, there is progression and appropriate learner pathways into the senior phase and beyond. Staff should now work on developing a skills framework as planned as well as literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing strategies.

■ In Personal and Social Education (PSE) young people work on skills for learning, life and work supported by the SDS careers advisor. This work should be linked into a clear skills framework so young people have a better understanding of how the skills they are developing in school will support them into and beyond the senior phase.

■ Almost all staff are aware of the priorities of DYW. There is a consistent and individualised approach to ensuring young people are supported sufficiently to make informed choices about their career aspirations.

■ The school library is attuned well to the learning needs of the school. Resources are well matched to achievement programmes such as the John Muir Award and the Rapid Response Engineering Challenge. The staff lead study skills sessions including referencing, plagiarism and research. This is helping young people to prepare for exams and further education. A range of literacy and numeracy packs are supporting learning at home for P1-P3. These are evaluated positively by parents who use them.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ Almost all parents feel that staff across the school are caring and supportive of children and young people. Most parents commented that they feel comfortable to contact the school if they have any concerns or queries. Almost all parents say that their child likes being at Pitlochry High School and that staff know children and young people very well as individuals. At the primary stages, a minority of parents would like more information about how their child is assessed and how staff can support them to develop their child's learning at home. Across the school, a minority of parents feel that work is not always challenging enough for children and young people. Parents are looking forward to becoming more active partners again in the life of the school, particularly at the primary stages since mitigations for COVID-19 have now relaxed.

■ Senior leaders use a range of ways to communicate with parents, including letters, newsletters, text messages and social media. At the primary stages, most parents appreciate teachers' use of an online app to share what children are learning. However, a few parents feel that this could be used more consistently across the primary classes. Overall, there are strong levels of parent participation at parents' evenings. The school should continue with plans to build on curriculum information sessions and family learning events to support parents further in their role as partners in their child's progress in learning.

■ During the pandemic, the Parent Council was unable to operate as members would have liked. This academic year, the Parent Council has been reinstated with all current parent members new to the group. The Parent Council meets termly and is supported well by the wider parent body, principally from parents of children in the pre-school and primary stages. Parents have raised significant funds to support the school community through subsidising events and buying resources to enhance learning outdoors.

■ A minority of parents feel their views are not taken into account by staff when changes are made in the school. The Parent Council is very keen to support the school in continuing to improve. As yet, parents are involved in school improvement in limited ways. Senior leaders recently issued questionnaires to all parents, and quickly followed up any emerging issues with individual families. School leaders should continue to seek ways to further engage parents in supporting learning and teaching; in evaluating the impact of new initiatives; reviewing the curriculum on offer; and in raising attainment and achievement.

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 education authority.

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

■ Staff and learners in Pitlochry High School have created a calm, purposeful learning environment. All staff work closely with each other to ensure learners' needs are met. Staff place a strong focus on ensuring children and young people are cared for and nurtured well. This approach means that children and young people feel a sense of belonging.

■ In the primary department, children have a strong understanding of their rights. They use the language of children's rights well to articulate the importance of treating others with respect and kindness. In the secondary department, most young people treat each other and staff with respect and, as a result, they feel that Pitlochry High School is a place where they belong. This helps staff and learners to share positive relationships across the school.

■ In the primary department, children describe confidently how staff help them to develop their wellbeing. They explain well aspects of healthy eating and the importance of exercise to help them to be healthy and active. Almost all children demonstrate they understand the need to include everyone in play and work if they want to be included. Young people in the secondary department talk about their wellbeing and feel equipped with strategies they can employ to keep themselves healthy and safe. There is helpful information on the school website with links to organisations that offer support for challenges that are pertinent to the young people. Young people feel well supported both in and outwith school. Teachers now need to help learners across the school to develop their use of the language of the wellbeing indicators. This should help all learners to talk about their own wellbeing and identify areas of strength and next steps to develop their wellbeing further.

■ Across the school, most learners report that the school teaches them how to lead a healthy lifestyle. In the primary department, children are developing their health and wellbeing skills well through the planned, progressive health and wellbeing curriculum. They identify that staff and partners support young people to develop their physical fitness through physical education and out of school sports clubs. Young people in the secondary department discuss ways that they can support their own health and wellbeing. They identify areas of the personal and social education programme that help them with this.

■ Staff have created an inclusive learning environment across the school. Senior leaders meet weekly to discuss and review the effectiveness of support strategies and targeted interventions. They use information gathered in these meetings to develop bespoke support strategies to best meet the needs of all individuals. Senior leaders have regular, purposeful meetings with multi-agency partners to share information about children's and young people's wellbeing. This helps them to identify children and young people who are experiencing barriers in their learning and provide effective support.

- Senior leaders and multi-agency partners have a clear focus on identifying all children and young people for additional multi-agency support when required. They offer a 'family-centred' approach providing support for the whole family. This focused approach ensures staff meet learners' and families' needs well. This is helping children and young people engage more fully with the life and work of the school.

- Teachers meet regularly with senior leaders, parents, children and young people and multi-agency partners to review the progress and plan support for learners who have additional support needs (ASN). In secondary, staff responsible for pupil support share this information effectively with teachers. Senior leaders and teachers now need to ensure individual targets are specific and measurable. This should help learners and teachers to clearly identify how well learners are making progress towards meeting their targets.

- Across the school, bullying incidents are logged and senior leaders analyse the incidences of bullying to identify commonality in these incidents. Most children in the primary department feel the school deals well with bullying incidents. In the secondary department, the majority of young people report that the school deals with bullying incidents well. Senior leaders should now streamline processes for recording incidents of bullying behaviour in the primary department in line with processes used in the secondary department.

- Across the school, senior leaders and staff fulfil their statutory duties well. Staff understand and apply their statutory responsibilities in relation to child protection, safeguarding and meeting the additional support needs of learners. Senior leaders monitor children and young people's attendance closely. They are proactive in addressing concerns and contact parents to offer support to help children return to school. Levels of attendance are in line with the national average.

- Staff have put in place supports for pupils who are at risk of exclusion. There have been no exclusions this session. If a young person is excluded, senior leaders work with the learner and their family to ensure appropriate supports are in place for their return to school. This has reduced the number of repeated exclusions for pupils who have been excluded in the past. It has also ensured that the young person is able to re-engage with their learning as quickly as possible.

- Across the school, learners are developing their understanding of equality and diversity through the school's health and wellbeing and religious and moral education programmes. Senior leaders and teachers now need to support all children and young people to develop further their understanding of the protected characteristics. Senior leaders have worked with local authority colleagues to seek the views of staff and learners about equality and diversity. As planned, they should use data gathered to further develop the school's approaches to equality and diversity. A key part of this work will be including learners fully in this process. This should help children and young people develop a stronger appreciation of the importance of equality and fairness in society.

- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children/young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children/young people through food in school. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

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

Primary stages
- In 2021/22, most children in P1 achieved Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) early level in literacy and numeracy. By P4, most children achieved CfE first level in literacy and numeracy. By P7, most children achieved CfE second level in literacy and a majority achieved CfE second level in numeracy. Senior leaders are predicting for 2022/23 that the majority of children in P1 and most children in P4 and P7 are on track to achieve the expected CfE level.

Attainment in literacy and English
- Overall, children are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking
- Children are making good progress in listening and talking. Almost all children listen well during lessons and respond appropriately to teachers' questions. At the early level, a few children need support to take turns and to listen to the ideas of others. At first and second level, most children talk confidently in pairs but there is scope for children to have further opportunities to collaborate with others in groups. A few children require support to present ideas and share their views during discussions in classes. Overall, children would benefit from talking in unfamiliar contexts. In P7, children engage confidently in dialogue while making inferences about images and texts. They have not yet fully developed skills required for debating themes. Across the school, children's skills in listening and talking are developing further through French and Gaelic language learning experiences.

Reading
- Children are making good progress in reading. At early level, children identify the different sounds made by letters and are beginning to use these to read unknown words. A few children are reading longer stories independently in P2. Across the school, most children display a real enjoyment of books and engage enthusiastically in reading events organised regularly by the school librarians. Almost all children choose books confidently weekly to borrow from the class libraries. They talk about the books they have read and make appropriate predictions. At first level, most children can identify and compare fiction and non-fiction texts. Children would benefit from more practice reading aloud to improve fluency and expression. At second level, children read a range of genre and are increasing in confidence when asking and answering inferential questions.

Writing
- Children are making satisfactory progress in writing. At early level, most children produce detailed drawings, and a few are beginning to form words legibly. Children need a wider range of opportunities to develop writing skills in real contexts. At first level, children are beginning to

recognise and apply punctuation within sentences and to create questions, with support. At second level, children write using different genres. A few children use paragraphs to separate their thoughts and ideas within their writing. Teachers should continue to share samples of moderated writing to support consistency in expectations. In a few classes, children need to be reminded to set themselves higher standards of presentation.

Numeracy and mathematics
- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children at first and second levels exceed national expectations.

Number, money and measure
- By the end of early level, most children are confident using addition and subtraction and can count accurately, forwards and backwards in sequence to 20 and beyond. A few can count in twos and in fives. They need to be further challenged to extend and apply their numeracy skills in a range of contexts, including through better planned opportunities for play. At first and second levels, most children demonstrate mental agility appropriate for their stage. Almost all children carry out calculations confidently and accurately. A few children at second level would benefit from more practice in multiplication tables. Children would benefit from further practice with multi-step word problems. At first level, most children round to the nearest ten and hundred confidently. They convert between pounds and pence and can apply estimation skills well. They are confident in working with fractions. At second level, children apply their learning and skills well in number, money and measure to real-life, practical contexts. Almost all children on track to achieve second level confidently convert fractions, decimals and percentages. A next step is for children to explore financial education, such as the differences between debit and credit cards and working within a budget.

Shape, position and movement
- By the end of the early level, most children identify two-dimensional shapes and a few three-dimensional objects. At first level, most children name an increasing range of three-dimensional objects and use the appropriate vocabulary of position and movement when describing the location of items in relation to one another. Most can describe the properties or different types of angles. At second level, most children are accurate in working with compass points and co-ordinates. They can describe the properties of a range of angles, including reflex angles. They are less confident in their understanding of the properties of circles, such as circumference, diameter and radius. They can calculate the area and perimeter of quadrilaterals confidently.

Information handling
- At the early level, most children sort items confidently appropriately according to shape, size and colour. Most children working at first and second level use a few key skills in information handling well to discuss how they would carry out a simple survey. For example, they use tally marks well to gather information. They are less familiar with different types of graphs and charts to present and interpret information. They would benefit from increased opportunities to apply information handling skills in real-life contexts and using digital technology to present their learning.

S1 to S3
- In 2021/22, almost all young people achieved CfE third level in literacy. All young people achieved CfE third level in numeracy. Around half of young people achieved CfE fourth level in literacy. A majority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in numeracy.

S4

■ At S4, between 2017/18 and 2021/22, almost all young people achieve Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level four or better in literacy. Most young people achieve SCQF level 5 or better in literacy, except in 2020/21 where it was almost all. Both of these measures are in line with the virtual comparator (VC).

■ At S4, most young people achieved SCQF level four or better in numeracy in 2019/20 and 2021/22. All learners achieved this level in 2021/22. Most young people achieved SCQF level five or better in 2020/21 and 2021/22. This is an improvement on previous years where it was a majority of young people. Both of these measures are in line with the VC. Less than half of young people achieved numeracy as part of a course award in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2021/22. Senior leaders are aware of the need to develop effective approaches to improve the number of young people in a cohort who achieve National 5 Mathematics.

Attainment over time

Primary stages

■ Teachers and senior leaders monitor attainment over time effectively. Children's attainment has remained consistently high or has improved in listening and talking and reading over the last six years. Most children attained the expected CfE level in these areas. The majority of children achieve the expected level in numeracy and writing between 2016/17 and 2020/21. This has improved to most children for 2021/22. Senior leaders have identified correctly a decline in attainment at P1 this year. They have also identified the need to improve the attainment in writing across the primary department. Children who require additional support with their learning are making appropriate progress from previous levels of attainment.

S1 to S3

■ There are clear systems in place to track and monitor attainment in S1 to S3 across all curricular areas at a whole school level. Most young people attain CfE third level by the end of S3 in most curricular areas. Staff track the progress of young people with barriers to their learning well. This includes young people who have English as an additional language or socio-economic challenges. Staff deliver bespoke programmes and courses to support individual young people. This is supporting learners to make appropriate progress from prior levels of attainment.

S4

■ Senior leaders have a clear focus on ensuring young people benefit from the small size of the school. They are proactive in their aspiration to maximise attainment for young people. They are very responsive to the views and needs of young people. They review the course offer regularly to introduce relevant courses for young people. This careful, bespoke approach is supporting good levels of attainment in S4.

■ At S4, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people, the middle attaining 60% of young people and the highest attaining 20% of young people, when compared using average complementary tariff points, has been broadly in line with the VC between 2017/18 and 2021/22. The exceptions being for the lowest attaining 20% of young people in 2017/18 and 2020/21 where it was significantly much higher than the VC.

■ At S4, most young people achieved seven or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better in 2017/18, 2019/20 and 2021/22. Almost all achieved this in 2020/21. This is either significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC for these years. The majority of young people achieve five or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better between 2017/18 and 2021/22. This is in line with the VC. In 2021/22, most young people achieved one or more award at SCQF level

5A or better. This was significantly much higher than the VC and an improvement on previous years.

Overall quality of learners' achievement
- Children and young people appreciate the range of approaches adopted in the school to celebrate their successes such as school assemblies, through the newsletter and at the annual prize giving. At primary level, the Pupil Council are developing their leadership roles, supporting younger children in the playground and helping them with reading. Pupil Council members are responsible for populating the achievement tree. Achievements placed on the tree are then acknowledged by everyone at school assemblies. Learners' sporting achievements are also regularly acknowledged through the High Triers awards and assemblies.

- Children and young people are achieving success and building their sense of pride through a range of sports provided in lunchtime and after-school clubs. This includes gymnastics, badminton, basketball, rugby and football. The school supports young people to attend competitions, representing the school at a local and regional level.

- Young people engage in leadership roles across the school. A few children in primary department are pupil council representatives. Children value the responsibility of other roles such as Rights Respecting Ambassadors and digital leaders. In the secondary department, a few young people have formal leadership roles such as head boy or girl, house captains or pupil council representatives.

- Staff are establishing and maintaining partner relationships successfully to enhance achievements for young people. These reflect the rural location, local business and industries, including computing and engineering. Strong links with partners ensure that young people's needs and aspirations are met. For example, all young people in S1 and S2 achieve the John Muir Award. This is helping young people to build skills, gain new experiences and make better informed decisions about future education and work.

- Young people, with the support of staff in the English department and Heartland FM, are improving their writing and critical thinking skills providing content for the radio station and the school newsletter.

- Pitlochry Festival Theatre is an important link, providing a drama class within the school and use of the venue for school events such as the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI). This is helping young people to build confidence and communication skills.

- Self-evaluation of wider achievement is not yet embedded across the school. The next step is to work with partners to share data that will give further insight into the impact of this work. Further work to include pupil voice in these evaluation activities will improve the offer.

Equity for all learners
- All children and young people live in SIMD deciles six to nine. Because of the rural nature of the school, senior leaders find other measures more reliable in identifying the needs of children, young people and their families. They take positive steps to ensure equity across the curriculum. For example, they ensure there are no costs for core curriculum experiences, and they promote their pre-loved school clothing bank actively.

- Senior leaders and staff use local knowledge and data well to identify gaps in learning for children and young people across the school. Interventions are often bespoke and targeted carefully at learners to improve their attainment or wellbeing. Staff monitor these interventions closely using local tracking approaches and the Perth and Kinross Council 'Closing the Gap'

tool. The targeted approach to reading, supported by the library staff, has helped increase the reading age of a few learners.

- PEF is used to fund additional pupil support staffing. This additional staffing is supporting identified children and young people to improve their literacy, numeracy and wellbeing.

- Staff's pro-active approach to partnership working has resulted in effective monitoring and tracking of pupil destinations and outcomes. A holistic approach to progression opportunities and curriculum activities is effective in supporting pupils into a positive destination. Almost all young people, upon completion of S4, move on to Breadalbane Academy on leaving Pitlochry High School. Over the years, a few young people have moved on to college, training or employment.

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.