

# Summarised inspection findings

**Armadale Academy**

West Lothian Council

29 January 2019

## Key contextual information

**School Name** Armadale Academy  
**Council:** West Lothian Council  
**SEED number:** 5509238  
**Roll (Sep 2015):** 959

Attendance is generally below the national average.

In 2017/18 attendance was 90.4%.

In February 2017, 16.1% per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals which is in line with the national average.

In September 2017, 14% per cent of pupils live in 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2017 the school reported that 22% per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

### 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

- Since taking up post in 2016 the headteacher has provided clear leadership for all staff in moving the school forward. She has developed a positive ethos based upon respect for every individual in the school community. She is consultative and outward looking and is well supported by her senior leadership team. The headteacher has a caring and inclusive style of leadership and staff respond very well to this. Almost all staff who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, feel that the school is well led.
- The headteacher has consulted all stakeholders on revising the school's vision and values statements in order to support a shared understanding. The school mission statement 'Learning Together Achieving Together' links with the aspirations that the school lists as it's values of achievement, ambition, positive attitude, respect, community and equity. These should continue to be reinforced with all stakeholders.
- The social, economic and cultural context of the school has changed in the last few years due to demographic and infrastructure changes within the catchment area. The headteacher recognises the importance of creating engaging approaches to communication to ensure that all of the varied stakeholders feel that their voices are heard.
- The headteacher has enhanced the leadership capacity of the school by leading an Extended Management Team (EMT) including principal teachers. Their reflective discussion helps to shape the school plans for improvement. In the future it will be important for this group to work together to take greater strategic responsibility and accountability for aspects of the school improvement plan.
- The school improvement plan is linked directly to local and national priorities. These priorities include raising attainment for all, increased attainment in literacy and numeracy, improvement in young people's wellbeing and increased employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations. Each of these areas is broken down into a large number of targets. Some of these are linked to department improvement plans. This leads to a large number of actions being worked on across the school and it is not clear enough where improvements are taking place. In order to plan and manage change leading to improvement, there would be benefit in streamlining plans and reducing the number of targets to be overtaken. This will enable each target to be clear and well understood with a focus on being able to measure improvement leading to success and a sense of achievement for staff.

- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has a key role to play in driving improvement as well as monitoring the effectiveness of delivering school priorities at department level. Departmental improvements need to be regularly evaluated and critical reflection should take place with senior staff in order to make sure changes being implemented in departments are leading to improvements in outcomes for young people.
- The SLT feel that a distributed leadership approach is an important driver of change. There are three staff working groups but these now need to have clearly structured action plans linked closely to school improvement. Most staff responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire believe that they have regular opportunities to undertake leadership roles and are given the opportunity to become involved in addressing the school improvement priorities. Staff speak positively about the encouragement they receive to assume leadership roles. This includes Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) initiatives and leading the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy across the school. The SLT recognise the importance of providing leadership opportunities for staff to develop skills and build capacity..
- The professional review and development (PRD) process for teachers within the school is clearly linked to the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) standards. Staff welcome the support of the headteacher in taking forward their professional development and are positive about the opportunities that are provided. There is scope for the school to align school improvement priorities and professional learning more closely to ensure that learning opportunities meet both individual and school needs. There are planned opportunities for staff to engage in professional discussions and reflect on challenge questions from How Good is our School? (4th Edition). A number of staff are involved in Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) duties. The school should continue to share the expertise that teachers gain from these activities across the school. This will help to develop a greater understanding of standards, for example the expectations in the qualifications taken by young people in the senior phase.
- The majority of young people who responded to pre-inspection questionnaires believe that they have opportunities to provide feedback and contribute their views about school through completing surveys and through pupil forums. Only a minority of young people however, believe that their views are taken into account and they would welcome better opportunities to give their informed views on school improvement priorities. Senior S6 pupils are more involved than others in the life of the school and local community. They can talk enthusiastically about leadership roles which they are adopting, such as school and house captains. There is scope for young people across all other stages to become more involved in leadership opportunities across the school and in the local community.
- The school PEF plan has secured staff resources to provide strategic and operational direction to the school's work with targeted young people. The PEF strategy is to target interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Senior leaders should continue to align the PEF plan with key improvement priorities in order to streamline the work of the staff.
- The senior pupil leadership team plays an important role, dealing with some aspects of the life of the school. The young leaders are elected to take on lead roles in, for example, discussing possible areas for school improvement, social events, and the use of national resources such as How Good is our School? (4th Edition) for young people. These experiences provide them with significant challenges and opportunities to develop their personal, organisational and interpersonal skills, and to demonstrate their effectiveness as leaders. Inspectors discussed

with the school the need to provide equally strong leadership opportunities for all young people.

- The school are active partners in local regeneration networks and this enables them to have a good understanding of the issues and changes within their community. Further work is required however to consider how the school and key partners can best work together to respond to emerging needs and issues, such as anti-social behaviour incidents. There is scope to increase regular and systematic sharing of intelligence and data about community issues which affect school life. This would support the school to develop appropriate and timely responses.
- The work of partners is reflected in school improvement plan priorities. The school undertake regular and shared planning with key partners and the work is characterised by mutual respect, trust and regular communication. Examples of positive partner inputs include strengthening the curriculum offer and the learning pathways for individual learners.
- One of the changes made in response to school self-evaluation, involved school leaders changing the curriculum to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. The school improvement plan contains actions to improve employability skills for all young people as a target for this academic year. Staff recognise the need to implement national priorities such as Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), Career Education Standard (CES) and Work Placement Standard (WPS). Senior leaders recognise that there is an emerging strategy in relation to the promotion and implementation of these national initiatives and this is a key priority.
- Staff awareness of labour market intelligence (LMI) and local employment opportunities is not consistent across the school. Staff awareness of routes to employment is inconsistent across subject areas. As a result, pupils do not receive sufficient support within the curriculum to identify future aspirations and plan for next steps beyond 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

- Staff and young people work well together within a climate which is positive and respectful and which reflects the school mission statement, '*Learning Together, Achieving Together*'. In almost all lessons observed there were positive relationships between young people. Most learners report that staff are approachable and supportive. All staff are made aware of young people's barriers to learning. Appropriate differentiation to meet young people's learning needs is a recognised area for development in a majority of classes.
- Young people are proud of their school and speak positively about the support and encouragement they receive from their teachers. In a few classrooms, young people's views are taken into account and used by teachers to improve the learning experience. Young people are keen to play a more active role in improving their own learning and there is scope for the school to further develop this by engaging learners more fully in planning and leading their learning. This will enable them to become empowered learners, leading to better outcomes.
- The majority of young people report that they enjoy learning at school and respond positively when they receive well-structured learning tasks which are active and are appropriate to their needs. In the majority of classes, teachers provide learning intentions and success criteria which are designed to enable young people to understand the purpose of the lesson. The school should continue with its focus on developing better quality and consistent approaches in this area in order to enable young people to be more actively involved in what and how they are learning.
- In most classes there are clear explanations from teachers. The on-going work to develop effective questioning techniques will allow higher-order questioning and thinking skills to become more widely applied and consistently embedded in practice. The recently revised skills framework provides an opportunity to embed the language and development of skills within learning in all classrooms. It is important to continue to support an understanding of the skills needed in the world of work and to enable young people to articulate their own capacity in skills for life and work.
- In a few lessons, young people responded positively when working in collaborative groups and when given the opportunity to engage in rich, active learning tasks. In these lessons the learning is well-structured, paced appropriately with skilled questioning and good interaction with the teacher. Across the school however, the quality of teaching is too varied. The majority of lessons observed were overly teacher-led and lacked differentiation. Inspectors observed that young people were too often passive in their learning, leading to a lack of motivation and

low-level off-task behaviour. A focus on appropriate pace and challenge for all young people will improve learner engagement and attainment outcomes.

- In the majority of lessons, teachers made use of digital technologies to display information. In a few lessons learning was enhanced through the use of game-based learning platforms to increase motivation and sustain interest. There is considerable scope to integrate more digital technologies within learning and teaching to increase the educational benefits.
- All staff are involved in professional learning activities on learning, teaching and assessment through teacher learning communities (TLCs). A small number of staff are also involved in high quality professional learning programmes and are using this to help influence the content of TLCs. With greater levels of strategic direction, the learning and teaching working group has the potential to drive forward future improvements in this area. This will ensure that all staff have a shared understanding of what constitutes an excellent learning experience in Armadale Academy.
- Staff are increasing in their confidence in using a range of suitable assessment approaches to provide helpful feedback to learners and to support judgments about young people's progress. Within the senior phase there are well-developed internal moderation arrangements. Staff are involved in a range of professional networks, including SQA and links with other schools, which are further supporting the understanding of standards. Within the Broad General Education (BGE) staff are engaging with National Benchmarks and have reviewed courses and assessments. Moderation has taken place using local authority hub arrangements, and increasingly, within the school. There is potential to build on existing good practice in this area, particularly the good practice within English and expressive arts. Greater levels of strategic leadership across all curricular areas will ensure that there is a more consistent approach to the range of assessment evidence used to inform teacher judgments of young people's progress. This will allow staff to use this evidence to plan more effectively next steps for individual young people.
- There is a developing internal tracking system which is being used within the BGE and senior phase. This system is at an early stage in the BGE. Through further development this has the potential to track attainment in all aspects of learning in order to better plan interventions and supports to raise attainment. Data is not yet being used effectively in the BGE to monitor attainment over time for different groups of learners. The staff need to develop a strategic approach to ensure that within all curricular areas the Benchmarks are being used appropriately to support tracking and monitoring.
- Almost all young people within the senior phase are aware of their negotiated target grades and of whether they are on-track to achieve these. Most young people know what their next steps are in their learning and this is supported by learning conversations with their teachers. There is scope to ensure that these are consistently embedded and formalised across every curricular area so that all young people are aware of specific action required to improve and can increasingly take responsibility for their own learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff across the school are committed to improving their curriculum offer. They are increasing the range of learning pathways to better meet the needs and aspirations of all learners. Senior staff are aware that they now need to increase aspects such as outdoor learning and digital learning both in the BGE and the senior phase.
- There is an effective primary to secondary transition programme with an extended programme for young people with additional needs. Information is shared to ensure progression in learning across numeracy and literacy but not yet in all curricular areas. Staff should continue to ensure that all prior learning is appropriately communicated, reviewed and used as the basis for curriculum planning. There are plans to moderate standards across the cluster.
- Staff are committed to providing personalisation and choice for young people and have included broader achievement awards from S2 onwards. Staff are aware that the learning in the S2 rotational grouping in health and wellbeing should be linked to the experiences and outcomes and the Benchmarks. This will make sure that prior learning is recognised and suitable progression is planned for every young person.
- Young people from S1 through to S3 experience a broad general education with elements of specialisation built in at the end of S2. There are a number of electives added to enrich the curriculum from S2 onwards and these are evaluated positively by young people. Staff should ensure that all young people experience their full Curriculum for Excellence entitlement in all areas of the BGE in order to make sure learning experiences are broad and coherent.
- The broad choice of pathways for young people in the senior phase includes Foundation Apprenticeships, Higher National Certificate (HNC) awards, Skills for Life and Personal Achievement Awards, supported well by West Lothian College. These are in addition to the range of school options enabling progression from BGE.
- The senior phase timetable enables S4-6 to study together in classes and this has supported greater flexibility and choice in learner pathways. It is important that staff continue to review the success of this approach to ensure a suitable pace of learning and appropriate challenge for every learner.
- Young people in the senior phase would benefit from having more of an employability focus within their choice information. Staff should embed the use of the Career Education Standard, the Work Placement Standard and Career Management Skills across the school. These will help young people make more informed choices about their next steps to further learning or employment.
- The school works effectively with partners to increase the learning pathways available to young people. This is supporting individual young people to both achieve within the school day and achieve positive and sustained post-school destinations. For example, young people develop their skills and self-esteem through timetabled work placements at the Larder Cook School. For a few this leads directly to employment.
- Young people have access to clear guidance on available course options within the course choice booklet. The information is comprehensive with regard to progression opportunities that link to each subject. However, the information does not consistently identify the range of skills



or possible employment opportunities that link to each subject. The course choice booklet contains no links to the SCQF framework.

- Young people are given the opportunity to personalise their senior phase curriculum. They select from a range of courses delivered from within school or offered by the local college or other partners. The local college (West Lothian) offers a range of vocational opportunities to pupils in the senior phase. In the current session there are 37 young people attending college as part of their senior phase including 18 young people undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships across a number of disciplines.
- The school has recently introduced a My World of Work (MyWoW) Ambassador programme (Mar 18). Although at an early stage, this is helping pupils in the BGE to access this important resource and is building an awareness of how it can help them to make decisions and choices about their future.
- Employability skills are developed through links with a wide range of employers who contribute to the whole school careers fair, assist in offering mock interviews, workplace visits, mentorship programmes and competitions. The school has a partnership with a local retail park and this offers good opportunities to young people to develop their awareness of the world of work specifically in retail.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders are aware of the need to improve parental engagement. The school community would benefit from working closely with partners to develop a shared programme and increase effective communication with parents. This work needs to take into account the needs and experiences of parents from different parts of this varied community. There is scope to build on the existing links with community partners for example, the School of Football. This would support more parents to understand and contribute to school life.
- The school engages with parents through SMS text messaging, the school website and parent information evenings. Currently less than half of parents who responded to the pre inspection questionnaires feel that they receive helpful, regular feedback on how their child is learning at the right time. The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire understand how their child's progress is assessed but less than half feel the school gives them opportunities to learn with their child or receive information on how to support their child at home.
- The majority of parents responding to the questionnaire think the school is well led and are satisfied with the school. However, less than half feel the schools listens to their views when making changes. Recent events have led to increased parental concerns about safety. Just under half of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire disagreed that their child was safe at school and think that bullying is not dealt with well. As a priority, the school should take closer account of the community's perceptions about bullying. Working closely with parents, partners and the local authority, the school should seek effective ways of explaining its rationale and approaches to anti-bullying. The staff and wider parent forum should continue to work together to ensure communication via social media is carefully managed to avoid misunderstandings.
- The school has a supportive Parent Council (PC). The PC works closely with senior leaders in the school. The PC however, is not currently fully representative of the parent forum. Currently less than half of parents feel encouraged to be involved in the work of the PC or are kept informed of its work. The Chair is aware of these issue and is looking to improve communication and increase the range of parents on the PC.
- The school works well with a range of partners to plan and deliver the curriculum. All partners value being involved in the timetabling meetings for the delivery of their courses.

## 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

satisfactory

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

- Senior leaders have a sound understanding of the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child and are aware that aspects of health and wellbeing are a responsibility of all teachers. Staff throughout the school are familiar with the wellbeing indicators. They are developing their approaches in using the indicators to support the assessment of young people's wellbeing. It is important that staff now make sure that all young people, particularly those in the senior phase of learning, become more familiar with the different aspects of wellbeing.
- The majority of children feel safe in school and report that the school is helping them to feel safe. There is however a significant minority of young people within the school who do not feel safe or do not know if they feel safe in school. Over a third of young people who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire disagreed that the school deals well with bullying. They know where to go for support when things go wrong and have the confidence to report incidents. However, they feel these situations are not always effectively resolved. The staff have been pursuing improvements in approaches to anti-bullying for some time. It is important to continue this work at pace in order to gain a better understanding of the perceived bullying issues, including young people's sense of feeling safe in school, and how these are impacting on young people's wellbeing. Senior leaders should also ensure all stakeholders, especially parents, have a clear understanding of the schools approach to anti-bullying and inclusion, including restorative approaches.
- The majority of children say the school is helping them to lead a healthy lifestyle. Young people's knowledge of healthy eating could be developed further through a full home economics curriculum from S1 to S6. Most young people report that there are many opportunities for regular exercise within school. The school provides the recommended two periods of physical education for all young people from S1 to S4. Many young people participate in a range of sporting activities outwith core school time, including swimming, dance, rugby, football and netball. This is helping young people to be regularly active. The school has identified a few young people who need to be more active. They should continue to develop plans to ensure these young people understand the benefits being active can bring to their wellbeing. Plans to provide opportunities for young people to engage in and enjoy active outdoor learning are at the early stages.
- Most young people in the school feel they have someone to speak to if they are worried or upset about something. They have regular contact with an adult who knows them well.

- The majority of young people report that while the personal and social development (PSD) classes are providing them with helpful information to make informed choices about risk-taking behaviours, they feel the learning is often repetitive and lacking in interest. Pastoral staff have used local intelligence from a range of partners to meet the emerging needs of young people through PSD. This includes an increased focus on mental health, anxiety and risks around child sexual exploitation. Staff plan to revise the programme for PSD. It will be important to ensure the courses are progressive and adaptive and make full use of the data gathered in the school through, for example, any trends in reported incidents.
- The school has achieved Rights Respecting Schools status and this has the potential to further promote young people's sense of inclusion. As a result of this work, most young people report the school helps them to respect other people and feel that staff treat them fairly. There is however a minority of young people within the school who have underdeveloped skills in treating others with respect. Staff and partners should continue to develop approaches to support all young people to demonstrate the skills of behaving respectfully.
- Most young people feel staff help them to be responsible for their own behaviour and take ownership of their choices and actions. Senior pupils are developing an understanding of leadership skills through the leadership academy. At present most leadership opportunities are mainly for senior pupils and this needs to be extended to include all age groups.
- Well-planned and appropriate support is in place for young people with barriers to learning. Staff have identified that they should now set more robust targets for young people with individual education programmes. Over the past three years the attainment of young people leaving school who required additional support needs has improved. Over the last three years most young people who require additional support have moved on to a positive destination on leaving school. However, the number doing so is consistently less than those from similar backgrounds in other schools. There is significant scope for the school to make better use of attainment data to analyse trends in attainment over time for young people who require additional support.
- Attendance in 2016/17 was below the national average. The school is tackling non-attendance issues through local partnership working and through the recent appointment of a family support worker. Staff work with partners and agencies to ensure that young people who have low attendance or bespoke timetables are engaged in appropriate learning activities. The senior team has significantly reduced exclusion rates since 2016/17 in line with approaches in restorative practices, inclusion and positive behaviour. There is a range of responsive strategies, often with partners, to support young people at risk of exclusion and the thinking behind this positive trend should now be shared more widely with parents and young people.
- The school takes account of relevant statutory duties. The school does not meet the statutory requirements for religious education in the senior phase nor the statutory requirements for the Health Promotion and Nutrition Act.
- Young people's readiness for learning is enhanced by the effective support provided by the pupil support team. The team provides young people with well-planned approaches which have a positive impact on young people's progress and achievement. Those young people who face particular challenges in their learning and development benefit from a curriculum specifically designed to meet their individual needs.

- Young people develop increased awareness of issues of equality through, for example, the PSD programme and school assemblies. Staff recognises the need to ensure young people have equal access to the curriculum by promoting literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. However, much work remains to be done to provide all staff with a framework which supports them in meeting this shared responsibility.
- The school benefits from the services of a Skills Development Scotland (SDS) careers adviser to support pupils who are hardest to reach, or who have disengaged from school, to progress to a positive destination. The majority of young people feel that this meets their needs well. There are missed opportunities to develop skills for learning life and work and supporting progression to positive post school destinations through the delivery of the PSD programme. The PSD programme does not include opportunities to build on the work of the SDS careers adviser to help pupils to develop their career management skills. This should now be an important aspect for development, especially for young people in the senior phase.

### 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 in the BGE**

**Overall attainment for young people across the school is good.**

- There has been a recent focus on literacy and numeracy across departments, and each area has chosen to focus on either numeracy or literacy. The data provided by the school for attainment in literacy and numeracy in the BGE shows improvements in the last two years for literacy and a significant increase between 2016/17 for numeracy. In 2017, the school reports that by the end of S3, almost all (94%) young people achieved third curriculum level in listening, talking, reading and writing. In numeracy, most (89%) achieved third level, which was a slight drop after an increase the previous year.
- The approach to moderation of achieving a level is not consistent across the school. This should be an area for closer review in order to make sure the information on attainment in the BGE is reliable.

**Attainment in literacy and numeracy in the senior phase In the text below, levels refer to the SCQF framework. The VC is the virtual comparator.**

- Almost all young people leaving school in last four years have attained level 4 or better in literacy and almost all have attained level 4 or better course award in English. The school performed significantly much higher than the VC in 2016/17 for attainment at level 4 or better. There is a similar trend in numeracy where almost all attained level 4 or better in 16/17 and this was significantly much higher than the VC in the last two years. In mathematics course awards at level 4 or better there has been a steady increase over 5 years. At level 5 or better however, mathematics course awards have decreased in the last three years. There has also been a drop in level 6 numeracy awards, and in 16/17 the proportion attaining was significantly lower than the VC.

#### **Attainment over time BGE**

- There is recent whole school data which records BGE attainment over the last two years. This whole school tracking has the potential to track attainment across the school but it needs to be supported by more robust tracking at a class and departmental level. Professional judgement around achievement of a level should be carefully reviewed to make sure this is supported by reliable moderated evidence. Staff are becoming more familiar with using the Benchmarks and they should now make sure that all learning in the BGE is supported by the National Benchmarks in order to ensure rigour in the pace of learning and in challenge.

## Attainment over time – Senior Phase

- Attainment for school leavers in the last four/five years is generally in line with the virtual comparator for the lowest attaining 20% and the middle attaining 60% young people. Young people in the highest attaining 20% from Armadale Academy do not attain as well as young people from similar backgrounds across the country in terms of tariff scores. Staff have reflected on the reasons behind this and are currently putting new systems in place to make sure this pattern does not continue.
- In S4, the lowest attaining 20% have achieved above the VC for the last five years. However in S6 there has been a decrease in attainment for the highest attaining 20% and this fell to significantly lower than the VC in 15/16. The staff are aware of this trend and have this year put in place a new sixth year experience which includes aspects of learning which are negotiated with young people. This should enable young people in S6 to experience a greater level of personalisation which should increase their motivation and engagement, and ultimately raise attainment.
- Senior staff are continuing to review the presentation policy and curricular offer for senior phase students. The current tracking system provides an aspirational and a working grade for each pupil in the courses leading to qualifications. This could be further developed to enable a fuller understanding of learner attainment, enabling tracking and subsequent support to be better directed leading to raised attainment. Staff have progressively introduced a wide variety of awards and courses to try to better meet the needs of every learner. In some areas, there is still room for improvement in making sure courses and awards on offer lead to appropriate challenge and positive outcomes for learners.

## Breadth and Depth Measures

- In S4 in 2018, 84% of learners were presented for 7 or more qualifications. Some of these qualifications include National Progression Awards. In National Qualifications at level 4 or better, there was a decrease in the percentage of young people achieving 5 or 6 or more in 2017/18. At level 5 in S4, the proportion of young people achieving 3 to 6 or more courses decreased in 2017/18 to below or significantly below the VC.
- There is a decrease in the percentage of young people attaining level 5C or better in 2017/18 and for 5 or more courses the attainment has fallen significantly lower than the VC. There is an increase in the percentage of young people attaining 5 or more and 6 or more courses at level 5A or better, moving from significantly lower or much lower than the VC in 16/17 to in line with the VC
- There are improvements across one or more to five or more courses at 6A+. At 6C+ there are improvements in the percentage attaining four, five or more courses, but decreases in the percentage attaining one to three courses.
- By S6, there is an increase in the percentage of learners achieving 5 or more level 6 C+ passes in the last year. Grade A passes however, have decreased and are significantly lower or much lower for those taking 1 through to 5 or more Higher courses. In the last 3 years, the school are in line with the VC for young people presented for level 7C+ Grade A passes at level 7 have risen to in line with the VC in the latest year.



- Young people who attend college while at school make good progress and attain well. There are a wide range of options which meet their needs well.

### **Overall Quality of Learners Achievement**

- Young people have increased confidence and team working skills through participation in a wide range of sporting, performing arts and youth work activities both within and out with school. Timetabled opportunities such as the School of Football, dance and Cadets increase young people's enthusiasm for learning and increase their perceptions of what they can achieve. Young people value the study support sessions offered in school and also the range of lunch time and after school clubs available to them.
- The targeted learning offer delivered with partners is supporting a few young people to achieve, reflect on their learning and build their resilience. A girls group, jointly run by the school and the CLD service, supports participants to address challenges in their lives and build their self-esteem. Home economics work with the social enterprise Beech Brae to enable some young people to explore themes such as food waste and the environmental impact of food production.
- Currently 28 young people are undertaking bronze level Duke of Edinburgh's awards with support from the school. Others have successfully gained bronze, silver and gold Duke of Edinburgh's awards through support from partners out with school. Young people would benefit from the school working with partners to further extend the range of awards they can achieve. This could include making better use of Saltire Awards to support young people to recognise how they contribute to others learning and their communities through volunteering.
- The staff recognise the need to improve how they track young people's achievements both within and out with school. Staff are working with CLD partners to research how best to build on existing profiles in order to more systematically analyse participation in achievement opportunities. There would be value in exploring how to best capture skills as part of this process.

### **Equity for All Learners**

- The headteacher is highly committed to making sure the needs and aspirations of all young people are met. There has been a whole school focus on equity and young people were involved in supporting and leading this drive. Staff are made aware of socioeconomic data to support teaching and learning. This is leading to positive outcomes for some young people, in particular, there is early evidence that the school is closing the poverty-related attainment gap in relation to literacy and numeracy.
- In the current year there has been a considerable reduction in the number of exclusions, following a year with very high levels of exclusion compared to national figures. This reduction has been carefully planned alongside the introduction of restorative practices. Senior staff are aware that open and carefully planned communication with parents, teachers and young people should now take place. This will ensure a whole school understanding of processes around managing incidents and behaviours and support stakeholder engagement.

## Choice of QI: 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
- Impact on learners' successes and achievements

- Staff use a variety of effective approaches to evaluate and improve the work of the school. A quality improvement calendar describes a range of scheduled activities that take place in all curricular areas. This includes analysis of SQA results; PRD reviews; structured walks to observe learning and teaching; questionnaires; peer observations; jotter and assessment sampling; and curriculum area reviews (CARs). This range of activities provides important information to inform improvement planning within curriculum areas and across the school.
- Staff are working well together and there is an increasing culture of collaboration. The curriculum principal teachers (CPTs) meet regularly to discuss evidence from evaluative activities. These meetings enable curriculum leaders to share ideas for improvements and develop more consistent practice and standards in the school. They are also outward looking and engage with their counterparts across West Lothian to share thinking and work which is leading to improved outcomes for young people.
- Curriculum areas are reviewed regularly. Review teams include senior leaders, CPTs and class teachers from within the school as well as staff from other schools in West Lothian and other local authorities. Pupil focus groups also take part in the reviews. These reviews have evolved over recent years, using a validated self-evaluative approach for several years and more recently answering the three questions in HGIOS4? (How are we doing, how do we know and what are we going to do now?). Recent reviews have had a closer focus on aspects of the work of a department within a curriculum area. Written reports are provided with the noted strengths and recommendations or next steps for improvement. Evidence is needed that these steps are leading to the intended outcomes.
- A range of intelligence and data is available to staff. This includes data such as SIMD, and SQA attainment data. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on evidence and think about their own contributions to whole-school improvement. Teachers across the school are developing their knowledge of Insight and beginning to examine and analyse data to plan appropriate work to secure improvements. They should continue to develop their understanding of performance information to inform ongoing improvements to learning pathways in order to raise attainment and ensure the best possible progress in learning for all groups of young people.
- The headteacher provides staff with a helpful overview of the national and local context for taking forward improvements. Staff then work together well in curriculum teams to carry out a reflective self-evaluation exercise and review their evidence against HGIOS4 quality indicators. This work then usefully informs school improvement plans and in turn department improvement plans. It would be helpful for staff to refine the numbers of targets to be overtaken each year.
- Tracking systems are used to good effect to monitor young people's progress in the senior phase. Young people's performance is tracked against target grades for the qualification and

reports are sent home at regular intervals. The house team have an overview of the tracking information to support individual learners. Senior leaders use the tracking information to take a more strategic look at where young people are on track and where there are concerns about the reliability of assessment information. Discussions at ELT then inform the steps required to improve outcomes for young people. The tracking of young people's progress across the school from S1 to S3 is still developing. Information from assessments within each department along with standardised tests is available and is used in some departments to inform expected progress. It is important that senior staff continue to monitor areas where improvement is required. Clear action points and frequent follow-up meetings should ensure improvements are being secured.

- Questionnaires are used to gather the views of young people, parents, staff and partners working with the school. Young people are involved in evaluating aspects of the work of the school through the pupil forum. Their views are also gathered in surveys. The information is used as part of the overview of school self-evaluation. There is further room for improvement in securing the voice of all young people in shaping school improvement.
- Improvements achieved through effective self-evaluation identified by staff include improvements in attainment in, for example, literacy. Reliable evidence from self-evaluation informed the strategies that have resulted in improved levels of attainment for young people.
- Staff recognise that there remains scope to involve young people further in self-evaluation and increase their understanding of their important role in improving the work of the school to meet the needs of all young people. Plans for use of HGIOURS? are underway.
- Senior staff should now ensure that evidence from self-evaluation is synthesised and used increasingly as part of a planned, coherent strategy to address those key priorities which will have the greatest impact on improved outcomes for young people.

## Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.

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