

Summarised inspection findings

Selkirk High School

Scottish Borders Council

29 April 2025

Key contextual information

School Name: Selkirk High School
Council: Scottish Borders
SEED number: 5619831
Roll: 394 young people in September 2024.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average. Exclusions are generally below national levels. In September 2024, 17.5% of young people were registered for free school meals. In September 2023, 13% of young people lived in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland. Senior leaders provided updated data which highlights that the number of young people who are recorded as requiring additional support for their learning has risen from 39% at the end of June 2024 to 59% in September 2024. Senior leaders acknowledge that further work is required to ensure the validity of this data.

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

- Positive relationships between staff and young people are evident in almost all classes. This has created a nurturing and supportive learning environment where young people are comfortable to seek support when required. Young people are confident that the support they receive from their teachers is helping them to make progress in their learning.
- Teachers have developed a shared whole-school approach to planning and delivering lessons, 'Empowering learning at Selkirk High School'. This, together with a robust programme of well-planned faculty self-evaluation approaches, is leading to greater consistency of learning routines in most faculties. All teachers engage in a well-developed and evidence-based professional learning programme. They use this learning to provide young people with strong routines and increased expectations. Teachers are empowered by these approaches and as a result, have improved the quality of learning for almost all young people.
- In the majority of lessons, starter activities are well-paced and planned appropriately to recap prior learning. Across the school, all teachers share learning intentions and success criteria consistently. These are of variable quality. In the majority of classes, this is supporting young people to understand what they need to do and how to measure their progress in learning. In a minority of lessons, success criteria too often focuses on the completion of tasks rather than how young people show progress in learning. Middle leaders should continue to share best practice in high-quality learning intentions and success criteria to ensure a greater consistency of approach.
- Teachers, in a minority of lessons, use plenaries effectively to check young people's understanding. Teachers should develop a more consistent approach to check for

understanding throughout lessons. This could support teachers better in their planning and delivery of subsequent learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers use questioning well to check young people's knowledge. All teachers should develop and extend their use of questioning by using more open-ended questions to develop higher-order thinking skills in young people.

- Almost all teachers have an awareness of the needs of individual young people from a recently introduced school overview. The whole school overview of needs is a helpful start in supporting teachers to plan tasks and activities set at the right level. Teachers need to use this information more effectively to plan learning at a more appropriate pace. In the majority of classes young people are doing the same task with the pace directed by the teacher. A few young people are not fully engaged with their learning and demonstrate low-level off-task behaviour. Senior and middle leaders should continue to monitor the planning and delivery of learning and teaching to ensure appropriate pace and challenge in learning for all young people. They should also continue to evaluate the information provided in the whole school overview of needs.
- All young people have access to their own digital device which they use effectively to support their learning in school and at home. In a majority of lessons these devices are used creatively by teachers to enhance learning for research tasks or to access a wide range of learning resources. Young people have access to a comprehensive online platform that is used well by teachers to support learning and teaching. The majority of teachers use a variety of digital platforms well for starter activities, sharing learning intentions and success criteria, and for plenaries. Teachers are developing highly-effective digital skills. As a result, most young people apply these digital skills confidently across different contexts.
- Most teachers use a range of assessment approaches effectively to measure young people's progress. Teachers use self-and peer-assessment strategies well to support young people's progress in learning. In the broad general education (BGE) teachers are becoming increasingly confident in using a greater range of assessment strategies. Teachers are also becoming more confident in their professional judgements of achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level and their planning for learning. In the senior phase, teachers use summative assessments well to inform young people of their next steps in learning as well as to predict target grades. They should use formative assessment more regularly to adapt their planning in response to young people's needs. Staff across the school should continue developing a shared understanding of assessment methods so that they continue to expand their range of assessments more consistently.
- School leaders have a clear understanding of the 'Selkirk Moderation Cycle' which reflects national guidance very well. Teachers engage enthusiastically in ongoing planned professional learning to support better their understanding of moderation activities. This results in teachers planning courses, lessons and assessment more effectively in the BGE. Young people now experience clearer structures, routines and assessment that largely align to national standards. Teachers should continue to engage more regularly with colleagues within, across and outwith the school in order to ensure teacher professional judgements of a CfE level are more robust and reliable. In the senior phase, teachers are supported with moderation and verification activities by colleagues who have taken on Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) responsibilities within their subject area. Most teachers are developing a clearer understanding of national standards in the senior phase as a result of this work.
- Almost all teachers provide helpful digital, written and verbal feedback to learners about their progress in learning. Teachers provide real-time high-quality feedback to young people on their work. This helps young people understand how to make progress in their learning. All teachers support young people through well-considered learner conversations in the senior phase, using

a common coaching strategy. This collaborative approach to learner conversations is supporting young people to identify better their strengths and next steps in learning. Almost all young people in the senior phase are aware of their target grade and their current working grade. Young people find these conversations supportive and helpful in understanding their next steps in learning. The information is shared and helps parents to understand their child's progress. Teachers in a minority of subject areas have high-quality learning conversations in the BGE. In these areas, young people understand their strengths and set targets for their next steps in learning. Senior leaders should continue with plans to build on this work by developing a more consistent approach to learner conversations across the BGE.

- Across the school, teachers use a variety of approaches to record, track and monitor young people's progress. This allows teachers to assess carefully the progress being made by all young people. They use tracking information to identify young people who require interventions to make appropriate progress in their learning. In the BGE, a minority of teachers use tracking information very well to help young people understand their progress in learning. As a result, young people speak confidently about their strengths and next steps in learning. In a few effective examples, teachers and middle leaders use this data effectively to plan and support improvements in learning. A minority of staff are not yet using tracking approaches well. Senior leaders need to ensure that all staff understand and follow clear protocols for assessing and monitoring young people's progress. Senior and middle leaders need to consider how best to share the most effective practice in using this data. They should ensure that following the regular tracking periods, teachers use the data more effectively to make appropriate adjustments to their planning of learning.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

BGE

- Almost all young people achieved third CfE level literacy and numeracy in 2023/24. This increased from most young people achieving this level in the previous session. From 2021/22 until 2023/24, the majority of young people achieved fourth CfE level literacy by the end of S3. In 2023/24, the majority of young people achieved fourth CfE level in numeracy by the end of S3. This improved from a minority of young people achieving at this level from 2021/22 until 2023/24. Young people's literacy and numeracy attainment in the BGE is improving and is generally above local authority levels and comparable with national levels.
- Senior leaders and staff use increasingly more reliable data to identify young people who require interventions to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. They are improving how they use this data to measure the impact of how these inputs are improving young people's progress in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders acknowledge that further work is required to ensure articulation between the BGE and the senior phase.

Senior phase

Leavers

- Most young people who left school in the five year period from 2018/19 achieved Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better in literacy. Just under half of young people leaving school achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy since 2021/22. Performance at these levels is generally stable and in line with the Virtual Comparator (VC).
- The majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy on leaving school from 2018/19 to 2022/23. A minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in 2022/23 and this is significantly higher than the VC. With the exception of a dip in attainment in 2019/20, performance at this level is generally showing a pattern of improvement.
- Young people leaving school who require additional support for their learning perform similarly to the VC and national levels at SCQF level 5 or better in literacy and numeracy and SCQF level 6 in numeracy. Performance at SCQF level 6 or better in literacy for young people who require additional support in their learning is substantially below the VC and national levels in the latest year of available data, 2022/23.
- Senior leaders and staff have developed effective approaches to ensure that almost all young people leave school with a qualification in literacy and numeracy.

Cohorts

- At S4, almost all young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in 2022/23 and 2023/24. From 2020/21 to 2023/24, with the exception of 2021/22, performance at this level

has either been significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC and is generally following a pattern of improvement. By S5, as a percentage of the S5 roll, all young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in 2023/24. This increased in 2023/24 from most young people achieving this level from 2019/20 to 2022/23 and is significantly much higher than the VC. Also by S5, just over half of young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy from 2019/20 to 2023/24, in line with the VC. Performance at this level is not showing a consistent pattern of improvement over this five-year period. By S6, as a percentage of the S6 roll and between 2019/20 and 2023/24, most young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy, generally showing a pattern of improvement across these years.

- At S4, most young people in 2023/24 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy, an increase on a majority achieving this level the previous session. Although this is in line with the VC, improvements are inconsistent. Between 2019/20 and 2021/22, performance was significantly much higher or significantly higher than the VC.
- By S5, as a percentage of the S5 roll, since 2020/21, most young people achieve SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. Performance at this level is generally improving in line with the VC. A minority of young people in S5 achieve SCQF level 6 or better in numeracy, in line with the VC. This was improving between 2020/21 and 2022/23, however, this has decreased substantially in the latest year of available data, 2023/24. By S6, as a percentage of the S6 roll, since 2020/21, almost all young people achieve SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. In 2022/23 and 2023/24, half of young people achieve SCQF level 6 or better in numeracy. This improved from a minority of young people achieving this level from 2019/20 to 2021/22. Performance at SCQF level 6 or better is in line with the VC and shows generally a pattern of improvement since 2019/20.
- Young people's attainment in National Qualifications (NQs) in mathematics and English is generally inconsistent. For English, entries at SCQF level 5 are in line with national levels with attainment generally below national levels. Entries and attainment at SCQF level 6 are generally declining and below national levels in the latest year, 2023/24.
- In mathematics, entries of young people at SCQF level 5 and 6 have been decreasing from 2021/22 to 2023/24 and these are now substantially below national levels. This is as a result of staff increasing the progression routes for mathematics through SCQF level 5 and 6 applications of mathematics and entries and attainment at SCQF level 5 are above national levels. Attainment at SCQF level 5 is decreasing and SCQF level 6 has been improving and the pass rate is substantially above the national average. Attainment at SCQF level 6 is generally substantially below national levels. Senior leaders recognise the need to improve attainment in mathematics.
- There is a notable difference between the young people who gain the literacy and numeracy award as opposed to the full course qualification in English and mathematics.

Improving attainment for all

BGE

- Senior leaders introduced processes this session to capture young people's attainment of CfE levels across all curricular areas. They are beginning to use this information to identify and support young people who are not making appropriate progress across all of their subjects. Senior leaders have reporting data from previous sessions that shows most young people achieve third CfE level generally by the end of S3 in almost all curriculum areas. This data shows a significant amount of variation between subjects. Senior leaders should continue to develop their approaches in tracking all young people's attainment over time. They should use this information to monitor young people's attainment across curriculum areas. They should

also use the data to ensure the appropriate progression of learners through the BGE to the most aspirational level of qualification in the senior phase.

Senior phase

- Senior leaders acknowledge that attainment fluctuates over time, with decreases in the latest year, 2023/24. Senior leaders have implemented a more robust raising attainment strategy this session. This includes more rigorous use of data by teachers to inform their teaching and interventions such as mentoring for identified young people. Senior leaders should consider how to increase expectations of young people in ensuring they progress through the senior phase at the highest level and attain the greatest range of qualifications. It is important that senior leaders continue to explore the reasons for decreasing attainment so that all young people attain appropriately, demonstrating continuous progress.

Leavers

- Generally, when using complementary tariff scores, attainment for the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people is in line with the VC and has been over the five year period since 2018/19. In 2022/23, attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people increased to being in line with the VC, having been significantly lower than the VC in 2021/22. Performance of the lowest attaining 20% of young people leaving school is inconsistent. Since 2018/19 to 2022/23, attainment of this group of young people was in line with the VC for three years and significantly lower than the VC for two years. The attainment of the middle attaining 60% of young people has declined from 2020/21 to 2022/23. Performance of the highest attaining 20% of young people leaving school is not showing a consistent pattern of improvement.
- Attainment of leavers who require additional support with their learning is generally in line with the VC and national levels.

Cohorts

- At S4, attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people has been in line with the VC in 2022/23 and 2023/24. This improved from being significantly much lower than the VC in 2021/22. Attainment of the middle attaining 60% of young people has declined to be significantly lower than the VC in 2022/23 and 2023/24. From 2019/20 to 2021/22 this was in line with the VC. The highest attaining 20% of young people attained in line with the VC from 2019/20 to 2022/23. This declined in 2023/24, to being significantly much lower than the VC.
- At S5, based on the S5 roll, performance of the lowest attaining 20% of young people is in line with the VC from 2022/23 to 2023/24. This improved from being significantly much lower than the VC in 2021/22. Attainment of the middle attaining 60% and the highest attaining 20% of young people is generally in line with the VC from 2019/20 to 2022/23. Performance of these groups of young people decreased in 2023/24 to significantly much lower and significantly lower than the VC respectively.
- By S6, based on the S6 roll, attainment of the lowest attaining 20%, the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people is in line with the VC and has been since 2019/20. From 2021/22 to 2023/24, performance of S6 is generally improving.

Breadth and Depth

- Middle leaders need to improve young people's attainment. This includes across most subject areas for National 5 and higher-level national and other qualifications. Senior leaders and staff have increased positively the range of opportunities available to young people beyond National Qualifications (NQs), including awards from providers outwith the SQA. This is increasing significantly young people's learning pathways in the senior phase. Young people benefit from

well-considered pathways which reflect well the local context and young people's interests and aspirations. This approach is not yet impacting significantly on increasing the breadth and quality of young people's attainment. It is important that senior leaders and staff continue to ensure young people are undertaking the most progressive and aspirational range and level of courses in line with their needs and abilities.

- At S4, from 2019/20 to 2023/24, young people's attainment in S4 at SCQF level 3 or better or SCQF level 4 or better for three or more courses to six or more courses is generally significantly much lower than the VC or significantly lower than the VC. The majority of young people attain two or more courses at SCQF level 5C or better, with a minority achieving three or more to five or more courses at SCQF level 5C or better. From 2022/23 to 2023/24 performance is either significantly lower or significantly much lower than the VC. Apart from a few increases in isolated measures which are not sustained, outcomes for young people at SCQF level 5 are declining.
- By S5, based on the S5 roll, general performance in many measures at SCQF level 5C and 5A are declining and below the VC. A majority of young people by S5 achieve one or more courses with a minority attaining two or more to four or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better. A few young people achieve five or more awards at this level. Performance at SCQF level 6C or better generally fluctuates with many decreases, particularly in the latest year. Performance at four or more and five or more courses is in line with the VC however, young people's attainment of two or more and three or more courses in S5 is significantly much lower than the VC in 2023/24.
- By S6, based on the S6 roll, in 2023/24, most young people achieve one or more qualifications at SCQF level 6C or better, in line with the VC but decreasing from almost all achieving one or more qualifications at this level in previous sessions. A majority of young people gain two or more to four or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better. Although this is in line with the VC, performance at SCQF level 6C fluctuates over the five year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24, generally declining. Just under half of the S6 cohort achieve one or more and a minority achieve two or more awards at SCQF level 7C or better. This is generally in line with the VC.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Almost all young people achieve and demonstrate skills such as teamwork, interpersonal skills, confidence, performance skills, technical skills by taking part in an extensive range of activities. These are delivered effectively by young people, staff and partners. Young people develop additional knowledge, self-assurance and socialisation skills from a range of activities including: science, technology, engineering and mathematics, film club, fishing, bee club, and restoring a vintage tractor. Many of these clubs and activities reflect the school context well and allow young people to acquire or enhance skills beyond those developed in the classroom. Timetabled classes such as the Skills in Action course and Duke of Edinburgh in the BGE support young people to achieve a range of important attributes such as independence and creativity. Almost all young people take part in a residential experience or excursion which helps them to demonstrate strong life skills. Young people are clear how participating in local and national events and competitions helps them to develop a strong sense of community and a greater understanding of citizenship across the school.
- Young people in S6 develop important leadership skills through their roles such as captains, peer representatives, prefects or leading clubs. As Mental Health ambassadors, Mentors in Violence Prevention or being part of the Equally Safe at School programme with Glasgow University young people develop further their roles in supporting and helping others.

- Young people are supported well by staff and partners to identify the skills they are developing through their achievements. Young people capture their skills and achievements through an effective school-developed digital programme, 'the achievement journey'. Staff help young people to understand how these skills are important for learning, life and work. The achievement journey profile is linked clearly to the Skills Development Scotland meta-skills framework which young people are beginning to use to track the skills they develop through their achievements. This profile helps young people to reflect successfully on their achievements and make connections to possible careers. Staff track young people's achievements effectively. This enables staff to reduce any potential barriers to participation and identify those who may be missing out of these valuable experiences. Senior leaders should continue to develop approaches to gathering data about young people's skills development. This is to ensure these skills are being developed progressively and applied consistently across the curriculum.
- An increasing number of young people are accredited for their achievements. Staff and well-established partners seek creatively a wide range of activities where young people's achievements can be accredited. This includes, for example, greater use of the wellbeing, dynamic youth, personal development, employability, Youth Achievement and Saltire awards.
- Young people's achievements are celebrated effectively through an extensive range of well-considered and highly-visible approaches. This includes special assemblies, the values in action awards, praise postcard, social media, certificates, house competitions and points, noticeboards, achievement walls, departmental approaches, the school bulletin and local media. Parents are encouraged to share their child's successes.

Equity for all learners

- Almost all members of the school community are aware of the socio-economic context of the school. They are developing effective approaches in reducing the cost of the school day. They ensure that fundraising is thoughtful and impactful in providing resources and wellbeing support to young people. Staff also support sensitively the removal of financial barriers to young people's participation in all aspects of school life.
- Senior leaders use data effectively to identify young people who may benefit from resources and initiatives funded through the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). Senior leaders consult with staff and the Parent Council to agree the PEF plan. Senior leaders and staff have allocated the PEF spend appropriately to improve attendance, wellbeing and participation of young people in all aspects of the life of the school. Senior leaders and staff have improved how they monitor the progress of learners who may be affected by socio-economic disadvantage. This is resulting in the identification of attainment gaps with young people who are in receipt of free school meals. The attainment of this group requires significant improvement.
- When using complementary tariff scores, the attainment of young people who left school and who reside in decile two of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, has been significantly lower than the VC in 2018/19, 2020/21, 2021/22. Attainment for this group is significantly much lower than the VC in 2022/23. A few young people in this group engaged well with a community mentoring programme which led to improved attendance at school. Senior leaders are aware of the need to continue to focus on this group of young people in order to raise their attainment.
- From 2018/19 to 2022/23, almost all young people progress to a positive destination on leaving school. This measure has shown a clear pattern of improvement from 2019/20 until 2022/23. Generally a third of young people progress to higher education, a third to further education and the remaining group leaving school directly to employment or training. Staff are proactive in

sourcing a wide range of highly-effective partners. These partners support young people's progression to a positive and sustained destination on leaving school. Positively, partners, senior leaders and staff track the progress of young people who remain in positive destinations. Staff can demonstrate that these high levels are sustained, above local and national levels.

- Overall, young people's attendance is generally in line with national levels. Senior leaders and staff monitor carefully the attendance of young people. Senior leaders need to ensure that all attendance and absence is coded correctly. Attendance at school for most young people as they move through the school is either being maintained or improving. More than a third of young people attend school for less than 90% of the time and a few attend for less than 80%. In addition, a few young people, mainly at the senior phase, often attend school but not class. Senior leaders should continue to support these young people to maintain attendance in class. Senior leaders help young people and their families with for example, one-to-one supports, home visits, referrals to other agencies or mentoring programmes in order to encourage and enable young people to attend school more regularly. Staff across the school need to be more proactive in ensuring that young people attend school and class regularly.

Other relevant evidence

- 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 young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of young people through food in school. Several areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.
- Young people benefit from a well-resourced library, staffed three days a week. Staff in the library promote nurturing approaches to provide young people with support. Young people use the library mainly for private study and assessment arrangements.
- Young people learn French and Spanish on rotation across S1 and S2. They experience small inputs of learning about Scots language and sign language through short courses in S2. However, this approach does not enable young people to experience fully modern languages in line with national policy.
- Young people in the senior phase do not experience their full entitlement to religious education and religious observance in line with national guidance. Young people experience their entitlement to two periods of physical education in line with national guidance.

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.