

# Summarised inspection findings

Wallace Hall Academy

Dumfries and Galloway Council

25 February 2025

## Key contextual information

School Name: Wallace Hall Academy  
Council: Dumfries and Galloway Council  
SEED number: 5939739  
Roll: 573 young people

Wallace Hall Academy is part of Wallace Hall campus, which includes Wallace Hall Primary School and Wallace Hall School Nursery Class. The campus serves the town of Thornhill and surrounding rural areas. The headteacher, who has been in post for 16 years, has overall responsibility for the Wallace Hall campus. He is supported in the running of the secondary school by his senior management team which includes two depute headteachers, a middle leader with additional senior leadership responsibilities, and a school support manager.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average. Exclusions are generally in line with the national average. In September 2023, 14% of young people were registered for free school meals. In September 2023, most young people lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles five to seven. In September 2023, 6.5% of young people live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland. In September 2023, the school reported that 39% of young people had additional support needs.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

very good

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

- Wallace Hall Academy has a well-embedded motto: 'Together, we grow, learn and achieve', which underpins the very positive and forward-looking school ethos. All members of the school community have a strong knowledge of the school's '8Cs', which are communication, collaboration, citizenship, compassion, creativity, composure, curiosity and critical thinking. These capacities help to create a coherent sense of community values, as young people and staff work together towards agreed aims. Young people and staff demonstrate the '8Cs' routinely in daily interactions. Senior leaders should, as planned, now review the rationale underpinning the '8Cs' and consider how the school vision, values, aims and '8Cs' can be streamlined and simplified. This should help young people to be clearer about how they measure their progress against these capacities.
- The compassionate and well-respected headteacher, supported very ably by senior leaders, leads improvement work effectively. Senior leaders create skilfully the conditions where staff at all levels are empowered to develop their professional capacity by leading a wide range of improvement projects. This is a considerable strength of the school. Young people, especially in the senior phase, lead change through a range of groups, such as the charities committee, sports leadership and transition work. Staff support and encourage a few young people to participate in important regional and national youth democratic processes, such as Scottish Youth Parliament. They exercise decision-making and influence change at a high level. Senior leaders are committed to continuing to develop further opportunities for young people at all stages to participate in leadership roles.
- The headteacher has recently streamlined the annual school improvement plan (SIP) to ensure all staff recognise improvement priorities and how they contribute to them. Senior leaders identify SIP priorities strategically built on robust approaches to gathering data, direct observation, and seeking the views of the school community. The current priorities, improving learning, teaching and assessment, attendance and raising attainment, are well chosen. Most staff feel that they are involved in agreeing and planning improvement priorities. The SIP targets are supported by detailed team improvement plans (TIPs) outlining next steps at departmental level. Staff's well-designed systems and processes ensure that improvement activity supports the SIP and is focused on improving outcomes for young people.
- Staff use detailed and rigorous self-evaluation and quality assurance calendars to monitor very effectively the progress of improvement projects. Senior leaders have an important role in overseeing and supporting improvement work across the school. Middle leaders and teachers appreciate the challenge and support provided by senior leaders. Senior leaders maintain a relentless focus on ensuring change results in improved outcomes for young people.

- Young people, partners and parents are consulted on the identification of improvement priorities and contribute well to their delivery, including on the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Senior leaders and members of the Parent Council work well together to keep parents and partners well informed about the identification and progress of improvement priorities. Young people from across the school make up the Pupil Voice group. They gather and represent the views of young people to influence the identification of areas for improvement. Staff should continue as planned to develop further ways for more young people and parents to contribute directly to identifying, delivering and evaluating significant SIP and TIP priorities.
- Commendably, almost all teachers and a few learning assistants lead projects aimed at further improving the school's learning provision and ethos. These are resulting in improved learner experiences. For example, work on feedback is resulting in young people receiving more consistent, high-quality feedback on their learning. All teachers participate in professional review and development (PRD) linked well to the General Teaching Council for Scotland professional standards. Importantly, all teachers develop a professional learning plan (PLP) following their PRD. Each PLP outlines clearly the steps the teacher will take to improve their learning and teaching approaches. Senior leaders and teachers plan high-quality professional learning to ensure a targeted focus on improving learning and teaching. This includes training provided by external providers alongside regular learning sessions where staff share examples of effective classroom practice. Middle leaders evidence improvements in the use of pedagogical approaches by their staff, as a result.
- Middle leadership is a major strength of the school. All middle leaders work very well together, and with senior leaders as an extended management team. They support one another in bringing about positive change and improvement. Middle leaders use data and other information systematically, including the views of young people and parents, to drive their strategic planning for improvement. Their approaches to monitoring and tracking the progress of young people is highly effective and ensure young people and their needs are very well understood. Middle leaders look outwards to colleagues across the local authority and beyond to share highly effective practice. Several middle leaders lead significant developments across the local authority, such as subject network groups.
- All staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school, including the rural environment. Staff responsible for Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) have a clear vision for developing the curriculum in line with DYW priorities. This is communicated effectively with staff and has increased the range of learning pathways and opportunities for young people. Senior leaders work closely with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to identify, plan and review partnership priorities.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Senior leaders work very effectively with staff, young people and the wider school community to foster high expectations for all young people. Most young people feel they are encouraged by staff to do the best they can. Almost all staff and young people maintain very positive and mutually respectful relationships. This nurturing and supportive culture creates a positive climate for learning. Almost all classes are calm and purposeful. Young people are highly engaged in their learning as a result. Almost all young people are proud of their school and feel very well supported. Teachers seek young people's views on their learning regularly using surveys and focus groups. Teachers use this information to improve learning experiences.
- Almost all teachers make strong use of the school's agreed principles of an effective lesson to structure young people's learning. These principles were developed by teachers and young people following extensive research and enquiry. As well as informing teachers' ongoing professional learning, this is supporting greater consistency in, and improving the quality of, learning and teaching approaches across the school.
- In almost all lessons, teachers build on prior learning successfully by offering a range of interesting learning approaches, including direct teaching and collaborative working with peers. Staff use the school's rural context appropriately to engage young people in land-based learning, working successfully with community partners. Most young people engage confidently in class discussions. In a few highly effective examples, young people take responsibility for devising and leading their learning and that of their peers. When given these opportunities, young people show high levels of capability. Teachers should continue to develop activities which give young people increasing responsibility and leadership of their learning.
- Almost all teachers routinely use interesting starter activities to motivate young people. In most lessons, these engage young people quickly and create opportunities to revisit prior learning. In most classes, teachers identify and share the purpose of learning and how young people can evaluate whether they have been successful in their learning. Young people's understanding of their progress is strengthened by the well-judged and successful use of effective self- and peer- assessment. This is motivating for young people and helps them to become more confident in their learning. A minority of teachers should make more regular reference during learning to the outcomes young people need to achieve to demonstrate success in their learning. This will help them to understand their progress better.
- In almost all lessons, teachers offer clear explanations and instructions. In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to check young people's recall of previous learning and understanding. A minority of teachers use very well-developed questioning techniques to help young people think deeply about their learning and use their higher order thinking skills.

- Across all departments, teachers use digital platforms effectively to support young people's learning. Young people value being able to access a range of online resources in class and at home. The use of these digital platforms supports young people to study independently and take greater responsibility for their learning. A few young people who require additional support use assistive technology well to support their learning. A few staff work together to consider innovative digital approaches to enhance learning and teaching, such as through the use of artificial intelligence.
- In all departments, teachers use a range of assessments to inform subsequent planning of learning and teaching. This is a major strength of the school. This includes an appropriate balance of formative and summative strategies. Teachers build in regular opportunities to assess young people's learning, through quizzes, exit passes, as well as more formal tests. Most teachers use the information gathered from assessments skilfully to consider young people's next steps in learning and to address misconceptions or errors. Most teachers also provide a wide range of helpful verbal, written and digital feedback to young people. This helps them to know how they are progressing in their learning and what they need to do to improve further. Young people also use supported study well and highly value its impact on their learning.
- Almost all teachers are confident in making professional judgements relating to young people's learning in the broad general education (BGE). They make very effective use of a range of assessment data to support their decisions. All teachers engage in well-planned moderation activities with departmental colleagues. In addition to these well-established processes, teachers have developed strong subject networks with other schools across the local authority and beyond. In the senior phase, almost all staff apply national assessment standards with confidence. A number of teachers have Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) roles and work with colleagues collaboratively to support the consistent application of standards. There are robust verification procedures in the senior phase to ensure that assessment judgements are valid and reliable.
- In the senior phase, most teachers use a range of information to support meaningful learner conversations with young people. Almost all young people in the senior phase are aware of their working grade, target grade and next steps in learning as a result. In the BGE, teachers in all departments have introduced a learning journal for young people in S1 to review their progress and next steps in learning. Senior leaders should continue to evaluate the impact of this initiative as they develop it across the BGE.
- Staff receive detailed, high-quality information relating to young people and their learning needs as part of transition processes at all stages. Support for Learning (SfL) staff review and update this information systematically. Almost all teachers use this information well to plan learning which meets the needs of most young people. Staff's arrangements for tracking and monitoring learners' progress are rigorous across all stages. All staff use departmental and whole school tracking to record and monitor young people's progress. This data provides middle and senior leaders with a strategic overview of the progress of individuals, as well as cohorts of learners. Staff use effective and supportive interventions to improve learners' progress and to secure positive outcomes for them. Teachers should increasingly use monitoring and tracking, and assessment information, to ensure they plan learning that provides all young people with appropriate levels of increased challenge in their learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders and staff have developed an effective and well-planned transition programme to support young people as they move from primary to secondary. It includes enhanced transition for young people with additional support needs. All departments have developed effective transition projects which help young people to feel more confident as they move to a new school. Senior leaders and staff have well-planned approaches to sharing information about young people with staff. This helps to inform the planning of learning in the BGE.
- Staff provide an effective BGE curriculum which is underpinned by the principles of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and is aligned with the relevant CfE experiences and outcomes for each curricular area. Young people in S3 are provided with suitably challenging progression routes to support their success in the senior phase. They select nine subjects, and an elective course, to complement learning in English, mathematics, physical education (PE), health and wellbeing (HWB) and religious and moral education (RME). This provides young people with opportunities for specialisation, while ensuring coverage of all of the curricular areas. Senior leaders should ensure young people receive their entitlement to modern languages by complying with the expectations of Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach. Young people receive two periods of high-quality PE until the end of S4, and learning in RME as they progress through school. Support for Learning staff also provide bespoke and progressive learner pathways for young people requiring additional literacy and numeracy support.
- Young people benefit from high-quality careers advice from pastoral and SDS staff. Staff identify young people with specific career aspirations for targeted opportunities and experiences. Pastoral staff guide young people well to make informed choices and they offer young people meaningful support with applications for further or higher education. A minority of young people in S6 benefit from comprehensive career mentoring. Career mentors drawn from the local community offer young people valuable insights and experience of desired career pathways. These approaches are supporting almost all young people to achieve a positive post-school destination.
- Staff have designed a senior phase curriculum that offers progression pathways for young people across all curricular areas. In recent years, they have broadened the number and range of National Qualifications (NQ) available to young people. The range of courses, including for example rural skills and applicant schemes for college and university, is meeting the needs of all young people more effectively. Staff adapt the curriculum skilfully to meet the needs of young people within the local context, using strong partnerships successfully. Staff ensure there is parity of esteem between academic and vocational career pathways. Staff, in partnership with regional colleges, provide a range of vocational options in the senior phase at Scottish Credit Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels 4-7, including Foundation Apprenticeships and National Progression Awards.
- Staff's whole-school approach to developing and delivering literacy, numeracy and HWB as a responsibility of all is a major strength of the school. Teachers in all departments have mapped coverage of the HWB outcomes across the curriculum. They also use the wellbeing indicators appropriately to consider aspects of the wider curriculum that would be a helpful context to inform and improve young people's HWB skills. Senior leaders have reviewed the school's approach to teaching HWB, with teachers across the school delivering aspects of the course and developing expertise in specific topics. Young people's experience of the HWB curriculum is more consistent as a result.

- Staff have embedded a clear, strategic framework for the development and assessment of young people's literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Teachers in all curricular areas deliver well-planned activities that align with literacy and numeracy CfE experiences and outcomes. Importantly, staff demonstrate confidence in applying literacy and numeracy assessment standards. Teachers in English and mathematics work with teachers across the school to moderate assessments to ensure professional judgements are robustly and consistently applied. This highly effective approach is allowing young people to demonstrate their progress in literacy and numeracy in a range of contexts and to maximise their opportunities for success.



## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders, staff and partners work well together to develop effective approaches to engage parents. These include a broad range of well-received communication such as newsletters, social media, the school website, information evenings and surveys. Most parents feel confident that staff respond quickly and effectively to address any concerns they may have.
- A majority of parents feel they receive information at the right time to support transitions, course choices and assessment preparation. Most parents appreciate helpful, regular feedback received on how their child is learning and progressing, particularly through digital platforms. This helps parents to feel more able to support their child with their learning. Senior and middle leaders should continue to extend family learning opportunities offered to parents. This will help to engage parents more fully in the life of the school.
- The Parent Council works in partnership with staff to support school improvement. They survey and collate the views of parents and young people regularly at parents' evenings. The Parent Council now aim to encourage increased parental involvement in a series of planned improvement projects designed to enhance the learning environment and to support equity for all young people.

## 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, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very 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

- The school's highly-effective approach to wellbeing is underpinned by strong approaches to monitoring and evaluating school practice. Almost all young people have a strong sense of belonging to their school. They feel included members of their school and wider community. Most young people feel safe in school and recognise that staff help them to feel safe. Young people feel valued, nurtured and respected by staff as a result.
- Staff understand clearly their responsibilities for, and have a coherent approach to, developing young people's HWB skills. Young people learn about how to maintain and improve their wellbeing through a progressive and responsive HWB curriculum, delivered by teachers across the school. All teachers also deliver learning about HWB across the curriculum in a planned, coherent and progressive way. For example, young people engage in high-quality learning across curricular areas relating to their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. This includes being able to assess and manage risks confidently. As a consequence, young people are developing an increased sense of safety and health.
- Groups of young people in the senior phase lead aspects of HWB by serving as 'Mentors in Violence Prevention', My World of Work ambassadors and through groups leading on bullying prevention and inclusion. They act as role models to younger peers and offer them learning which is highly relevant and motivating. Young people value the chance to develop their confidence and leadership skills through these opportunities. They are helping their peers to develop emotional resilience, and supporting them to make more informed decisions about their future careers.
- Senior leaders and staff employ a range of very effective approaches to evaluate young people's wellbeing. These include helpful surveys, listening to and taking account of young people's views, and robust approaches to tracking young people's sense of wellbeing. Pastoral staff conduct termly wellbeing check-ins with young people online and in person. These support young people to reflect purposefully on their wellbeing and identify their strengths. These processes also provide pastoral staff with valuable information which enables effective planning of support. Consequently, young people who require universal or targeted support are identified early for appropriate and impactful interventions. This support is responsive to the immediate and the longer-term needs of young people. Staff should continue to review these processes to ensure they continue to meet the needs of all young people.
- Senior leaders, pastoral and SfL teams are proactive and highly effective in addressing the needs of young people who require additional support with their learning or wellbeing. Learning assistants provide invaluable help to targeted young people in and outwith lessons. Young people requiring additional support benefit from carefully planned, holistic support which is

monitored and reviewed regularly and systematically. Staff also work very successfully with well-considered partners who offer a range of interventions to help young people progress in their learning or improve their wellbeing outcomes. Young people's plans are detailed and offer clear information about the evaluation of need. The plans also suggest strategies to support improvements, set targets and reflect the views of young people, their parents and staff. Staff use a range of high-quality data successfully to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and adjust plans responsively to better meet the needs of learners. These robust systems and processes help to ensure barriers to learning or wellbeing are identified quickly and addressed proactively. The attainment and achievements of young people accessing support are improving over time as a result.

- Staff fulfil their corporate parenting duties well. This includes ensuring that they are alert to matters which may affect care experienced young people and consider them appropriately for a coordinated support plan. Pastoral staff track the wellbeing, skills and attainment of care experienced young people robustly. They also monitor the progress of other groups of young people, such as those who are young carers and implement effective interventions. The quality of support offered is resulting in positive outcomes in terms of attendance, attainment and progress for these groups of young people.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. Senior leaders identify improving attendance as a strategic priority. Senior leaders have in place effective procedures to monitor young people's attendance. Pastoral staff review data routinely to identify young people needing support to improve their attendance. They also maintain a clear focus on improving the attendance of identified young people, including those who are care experienced. Staff use targeted interventions, such as mentoring and small group work to support improvements. Senior leaders use themed assemblies to highlight the importance of regular attendance and its importance in raising attainment. There are improvements in the attendance of targeted young people as a result of these approaches. Senior leaders are sensitive to the importance of managing exclusions appropriately and deal with these on an individual basis. They should continue to develop their approaches to supporting young people who are at risk of exclusion.
- Staff deal promptly and effectively with bullying incidents. Most young people and parents believe bullying is dealt with well or have never experienced bullying. Staff should, as planned, continue to develop approaches to counteract bullying through ongoing work on equalities and updated 'Respect for All' national guidance. This will ensure all young people feel respected across the school. Young people in S6 already make an important contribution to this work.
- Staff and young people promote and celebrate equality and diversity across many aspects of school life. A few staff and young people lead this work passionately and are increasing its profile due to their enthusiasm. They lead and support effectively a wide range of groups and activities that focus on different protected characteristics. These focus on diversity, equality, sexual orientation and children's rights. Staff consider how to embed opportunities to exemplify aspects of equalities well through the curriculum. For example, young people have influenced the texts selected in English to reflect their desire to promote learning that celebrates diversity and challenges racism. Young people and staff secured funding from the Parent Council for an equality project. They engaged guest speakers to explore role models for young people who seldom see themselves represented in media positively. This resulted in young people developing greater knowledge and understanding of the importance and relevance of the protected characteristics.
- 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. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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

#### Broad General Education (BGE)

- Young people attain very well at CfE third level in literacy and numeracy and are sustaining these high standards over time. In 2023/24, most young people attained CfE third level in literacy, and almost all young people attained CfE third level in numeracy, by the end of S3. The assessment evidence underpinning these professional judgements is reliable and valid.
- In 2023/24, a minority of young people attained CfE fourth level in reading and a majority attained at this level in writing, and in listening and talking. The principal teacher of English sought to improve the consistency of teacher judgements in relation to CfE fourth level, particularly in reading. Staff worked together and with primary colleagues well, to improve the evidence used to assess young people's literacy skills. Staff now use exemplars of literacy work routinely at all CfE levels to inform discussions about standards. They also moderate literacy work for young people across curricular areas to gain a fuller picture of young people's progress. As a result, data predictions for 2024/25 are reliable, as teachers apply standards more rigorously. This data indicates improvements in young people's attainment.
- Most young people attained CfE fourth level in numeracy over the last three years, above local authority and national averages consistently. Senior and middle leaders show through detailed data comparison and analysis that judgements are robust.

### Senior Phase

#### Literacy and numeracy (leavers)

- The school has maintained strong levels of performance in literacy over time. Most leavers achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in 2021/22 and 2022/23. This is in line with the virtual comparator (VC). A majority of leavers achieved SCQF level 6 from 2018/19 to 2022/23. This is in line with the VC.
- Most leavers achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy from 2020/21 to 2022/23, with a clear pattern of improvement. This is in line with the VC, apart from 2022/23 when it was significantly higher. A minority of leavers achieved SCQF level 6 from 2018/19 to 2022/23, which is in line with the VC. There is a declining pattern of attainment to this measure.
- There are improvements in the percentage of young people with additional support needs (ASN) leaving school with literacy and numeracy qualifications over time, particularly at SCQF level 5. In 2022/23, most leavers with ASN achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. A majority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 in 2022/23, which is above the VC. Almost all

leavers with ASN achieve SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy in 2022/23. This is above the VC. A minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy in 2022/23.

### **Literacy and numeracy (cohorts)**

- At S4, most young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in literacy over the last five years. This is in line with the VC. By S5, based on the S4 roll, a majority of young people attained SCQF level 6 over the five years, with an improving pattern over time. This is in line with the VC, apart from 2023/24 when it was significantly much higher. By S6, based on the S4 roll, a majority of young people attained SCQF level 6 over five years, in line with the VC.
- At S4, most young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy in three of the last five years. This was significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24. At S5 and S6, based on the S4 roll, a minority of young people attained SCQF level 6 over five years. This is generally in line with the VC. There is no clearly-identifiable pattern of improvement in the number of young people in S5 and S6 achieving SCQF level 6 over time.

### **National Qualifications (NQ)**

- Most young people in S4 attain success in N5 English, in line with national figures, with presentation levels above national figures. Most young people in S4 achieved a Grade A-C pass in N5 mathematics over the last three years. This is generally above national figures. Young people in S5 also perform well at Higher English and mathematics, generally in line with national data. There is an improving trend in both presentation levels and attainment of young people in S4 for N5 application of mathematics. The school presented young people in S5 and S6 for Higher application of mathematics for the first time in 2023/24. Staff should continue to support young people to achieve high quality passes in this course.

### **Attainment over time**

#### **BGE and Senior Phase**

- Senior leaders have developed very strong approaches to monitor and track young people's progress in the BGE and senior phase. As a result, these are being shared and adopted by secondary schools across the locality. Senior and middle leaders meet regularly to review tracking data in order to identify young people needing support. They put in place appropriate interventions for young people and review them regularly to measure success and plan next steps. Almost all staff are confident using data to help raise attainment. Staff's knowledge of young people is a key driver of young people's success in attainment. Senior and middle leaders produce detailed analysis of progress and attainment data to inform next steps. This analysis informs improvements to course delivery and content, as well as well-considered targeted interventions, such as mentoring. Pastoral staff use data well to guide young people to make appropriate option choices that maximise their chances of success in learning.

#### **BGE**

- By the end of S3, school data demonstrates young people are attaining very well in all curriculum areas and show clear improvements over time. In 2023/24, most young people attained CfE third level across curricular areas. Across all departments, teachers use detailed assessment matrices to help them to apply professional judgements consistently. Almost all teacher judgements in curriculum areas beyond literacy and numeracy are robust as a result of the assessment matrices and routine moderation activities.

#### **Senior Phase**

- When compared using average complementary tariff points, the attainment of leavers from 2018/19 to 2022/23 has been very strong over the period. The attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of school leavers has been in line with the VC over this period. The attainment of

the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of leavers is very strong, consistently significantly higher or much higher than the VC.

- At S4, the performance of the lowest attaining 20% of young people has improved from being in line with the VC to being significantly much higher in 2022/23 and significantly higher in 2023/24. The middle attaining 60% has been significantly higher than the VC over the past four years, apart from 2022/23 when it was significantly much higher. The highest attaining 20% of young people is in line with the VC for the five-year period. By S5, based on the S4 roll, the performance across all cohorts is in line with the VC for the five-year period, apart from the middle attaining 60% who were significantly higher than the VC for the last two years. By S6, attainment is very high. The lowest 20% is generally in line with the VC. The middle 60% was significantly higher than the VC for the last three years, and the highest 20% was significantly much higher than the VC for the last two years.

### **Breadth and depth**

- At S4, a majority of young people attained six or more courses at SCQF level 5C or better over the five year period. This is generally significantly higher than the VC. A majority of young people attain two or more courses, and a minority attain five or more courses, at SCQF level 5A or better over five years. This has moved from being in line with the VC in selected years to being significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24.
- By S5, a majority of young people attained four or more qualifications at SCQF level 5A or better over the five-year period. This has moved from being in line with the VC to being significantly much higher than the VC in 2023/24. There are improvements in the number of young people achieving at SCQF level 6C or better. A majority of young people achieved three or more awards, and a minority achieved five or more awards, at this level or better over the five-year period. This is significantly higher or much higher than the VC in 2023/24. A minority of young people achieved two or more awards, and a few achieved five or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better over the last three years. This is generally in line with the VC. Staff continue to support young people to achieve high-quality awards at SCQF level 6A.
- By S6, a majority of young people achieved three or more awards at SCQF level 6C or above during the five-year period. This moved from being in line with the VC in selected years to being significantly higher than the VC in the last two years. A minority of young people attained four or more awards at SCQF level 6A over the five-year period. This is generally in line with the VC. A minority of young people achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 7A in four of the last five years. This was in line with the VC, but moved to significantly much higher in 2023/24.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- Staff recognise and celebrate the breadth of young people's achievements through a range of approaches, including merits, awards, social media and bulletins. Young people appreciate greatly the regular achievement assemblies, which are linked to the school's '8Cs'. They feel proud, valued, and have a sense of belonging due to their achievements being celebrated.
- Young people demonstrate important skills and knowledge from their participation in a wide range of achievements. These include clubs, activities, trips, competitions and targeted programmes. School events such as Remembrance Day, as well as the very popular annual school show, reaffirm the strong links between the school and wider community. As well as showcasing the talents of young people, a wide range of young people gain important skills. These include organisation, communication and technical skills. Young people are more confident and their self-esteem is improved as a result.



- Across the school, groups of young people benefit from accredited awards that result in positive outcomes. These include activities focusing on young people's improved fitness, motivation to progress in their learning, and skills development such as teamwork. For example, all young people in S3 select an elective course to develop important life skills, including baking and digital skills. Positively, all S3 electives now result in an accredited award that recognises young people's skills for learning, life and work.
- Importantly, staff monitor and track young people's achievements in and outwith school. Young people are encouraged to share their achievements regularly using a matrix barcode. Pastoral staff use the information gathered to target young people at risk of missing out. They identify cohorts of young people, such as those who are care experienced or receive free school meals, to ensure increased participation in achievements. This resulted in a group of young people developing their emotional resilience through a Dynamic Youth Award. Staff's use of achievement tracking has resulted in more young people achieving and being recognised for their achievements. Senior leaders should continue with plans to include further information from partners as part of the tracking system. This will ensure a complete picture of a young person's achievements is retained.
- Young people currently use the '8Cs' to discuss their skills development but would benefit from a framework that articulates more clearly with meta-skills and skills for learning, life and work. Senior leaders should now develop a skills framework to help young people articulate their skill progression clearly.

### **Equity for all learners**

- The headteacher is committed to ensuring the best outcomes for all young people. He has created a culture where staff know young people well and have a strong understanding of any barriers they face. Staff proactively reduce the costs of the school day. They provide school uniform, financial assistance for excursions and food and vouchers when families require this. These supports have eased financial pressures on families.
- Staff analyse attainment data systematically to identify cohorts requiring support. They demonstrate how they are closing the poverty related attainment gap for young people targeted for PEF interventions. There is a clear plan in place for PEF. Senior leaders mainly use PEF for staffing, such as a PEF lead, a project officer and an additional learning assistant. These staff use well-considered and appropriate interventions, such as mentoring, in-class support, parental engagement, and literacy and numeracy small group work to close attainment gaps. Staff demonstrate positive outcomes, such as improvements in young people's numeracy skills and enhanced reading ages, as a result of targeted support.
- Overall, interventions are leading to improved outcomes for young people, evidenced by the school's improving attainment. In 2022/23, the attainment of school leavers in most deciles was in line with that of young people in similar deciles across Scotland. Most young people attending the school live in SIMD 5 and 6. In SIMD 5, the attainment of school leavers was significantly much higher, and in SIMD 6 the attainment of schools leavers was significantly higher than national data.
- Almost all young people stayed on at school from S4 to S5 in three of the past five years, including 2022/23. A majority of young people left school to attend higher or further education and a minority to employment in 2022/23. Over the past five years, almost all young people move on to a positive destination on leaving school, which is in line with the VC.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

- Staff have highly effective and rigorous approaches to monitoring and tracking young people's attainment and progress, wellbeing, achievements and attendance. They identify young people who require support early and put in place well-considered and highly impactful strategies. As a result, young people are sustaining high levels of attainment across the school over time.
- Staff have a very well-developed understanding of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as a responsibility of all. Their collaborative approaches to developing young people's knowledge and abilities, as well as gathering evidence of young people's progress in these areas across the school is highly- effective practice worth sharing.

## 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.