

Summarised inspection findings

St Paul's RC Academy

Dundee City Council

31 March 2026

Key contextual information

The headteacher has been in post for three years. She is supported by a team of three deputy headteachers. One has been recently appointed to the role. The school serves the associated primary schools to the north of the city of Dundee, but through placing requests, young people come from across the city.

The school roll is currently 1050 young people. The roll has increased steadily over the past few years.

Attendance is generally below the national average.

Exclusions are currently in line with the national average.

In September 2024, 32% of pupils were registered for free school meals. This is significantly above the national average.

In September 2024, the majority of young people live in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2024, the school reported that 52% 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

- The headteacher is highly respected across the St Paul's community. She has provided effective leadership and has led the community with care and compassion since coming into post. Supported by senior leaders, the headteacher correctly prioritised the wellbeing of young people and staff. There have been recent changes to the senior leadership team. As a result, senior leaders are at the early stages of developing their skills and expertise within their new remits. The headteacher is now well placed to support senior leaders as they become more familiar with their remits. This will support them to prioritise school improvement and accelerate the pace of change.
- Senior leaders consulted well with the school community to create the current school vision and values firmly based on the Gospel values. The agreed values of fairness, ambition, inclusion and respect (FAIR) are recognised across the community and values-based language is used consistently by staff and young people. Almost all young people and staff model the values well in classes and around the school. The values are linked well to clear expectations of behaviour and engagement in school life. Young people who demonstrate the values have their efforts recognised at assemblies and through awards such as praise postcards.
- Senior leaders consult with stakeholders each session to evaluate progress, identify priorities and develop the school improvement plan (SIP). The SIP reflects local, national, and school priorities. Middle leaders create departmental improvement plans (DIPs) which reflect whole school priorities and priorities identified through department self-evaluation activities. The structure of the SIP and DIP mirror each other and this supports middle leaders to align DIP priorities well with those of the whole school. Senior leaders should review the quality of departmental improvement plans (DIPs) and provide more robust advice to middle leaders on how to create strategic, measurable priorities which drive improvement. Additional challenge in departmental planning in relation to attainment from senior leaders will help to increase the pace of change whilst improving experiences for young people.
- Senior leaders and staff plan carefully, the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to address barriers to learning, particularly for those young people facing socio economic disadvantage. The provision of uniform, resources to support learning and mitigating the costs of any curricular initiatives and events are a clear focus for the use of this funding. Additionally, staff are employed to support young people with attendance and attainment. This is having a positive impact on young people who require these supports. Senior leaders should ensure that they continue to consult with key stakeholders in planning the use of PEF.

- Senior and middle leaders evaluate the progress made to overtake priorities at key points across the school year. This supports staff to keep a focus on school improvement and ensure progress is being made. Staff would benefit from more detailed guidance and additional support from senior leaders on self-evaluation and how this informs next steps. Senior and middle leaders should ensure that the steps to be taken to overtake priorities are manageable, progressive and measurable.
- Teachers across the school engage in regular, planned self-evaluation activities. They work collaboratively to evaluate their own and each other's practice. Middle leaders have proactively made connections with staff in other local authority schools to identify effective practice and share their findings with department colleagues. There is some variability in the quality of these self-evaluation activities. Senior leaders should consider how to share examples of best practice and how this will lead to more robust self-evaluation activities. This should support senior and middle leaders to track how progress in completion of improvement activities positively impacts on the experiences of young people.
- Staff at all levels contribute to leading activities linked to school improvement priorities, such as embedding meta-skills across the curriculum. Most teachers participate in a number of teacher enquiry groups with the focus of each group linked to school improvement priorities. This approach encourages teachers to have ownership of school priorities and develops a collaborative approach to whole school development. The majority of staff benefit from learning from each other and engendering a supportive ethos across the school. These groups should now be further strengthened and developed to ensure that they have clearer, focussed outcomes linked closely with school improvement and change. This will further support the collective drive for improvement.
- Almost all teaching staff participate in annual professional review and development discussions. They identify areas of school and department improvement priorities that link well with their own identified development areas. Teachers reflect on the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), professional standards during these discussions. Staff find it helpful and supportive to have regular reviews of how they are progressing with development activities. Senior and middle leaders should now consider the most impactful point in the school improvement cycle for professional reviews to take place. This should ensure that the focus of professional reviews support more effectively, future school improvement priorities.
- Senior leaders support all staff well to engage in whole-school professional development activities such as training related to trauma sensitive and nurture informed practice. These well-chosen activities have a positive impact on the experiences of young people and the wider life of the school.
- There are a few opportunities for young people to lead on areas for improvement across the school. A few young people in the senior phase have leadership roles in the pupil council. They have worked well with senior leaders to identify areas of the school that could be improved. This includes the availability of period products to support young people's dignity. Younger pupils are aware of the pupil council but not clear on how they can share their concerns with council members. A minority of young people feel that their views are taken into account. Senior leaders should ensure that the work of the pupil council is more visible and is developed in partnership with senior leaders. They should consider developing a more systematic approach to ensure that young people's views are shared with senior leaders. A partnership

approach to young people's involvement in all aspects of school improvement should lead to them feeling their opinions are more valued.

- A few young people in the senior phase have leadership roles linked to their pastoral group. For example, they lead assemblies and support lunchtime clubs. They are developing their communication and leadership skills through working with younger pupils in their pastoral groups and by leading assemblies. This is impacting positively on the ways that information is shared with young people and on the range of clubs available for young people. Young people are increasingly taking on leadership roles within departments, including supporting events and initiatives. Senior and middle leaders should continue with plans to develop more robust and meaningful opportunities for all young people to take on leadership roles across all areas of school improvement.
- Senior leaders and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) staff have identified several actions in the School Partnership Agreement which include further strengthening their partnership to co-ordinate the effective delivery of the SDS service offer. Senior leaders are planning to review partnership working, data sharing and service delivery to enhance the overall impact of career guidance and support to improve outcomes for all learners.
- School leaders have a clear understanding of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) priorities. They have identified progression pathways as an area for development in the SIP. They should ensure that DYW priorities are implemented consistently across all departments within the school and aligned to the curricular offer. It is now timely for senior leaders to have a fully coherent strategy for designing the curriculum to raise attainment and progress across all stages and improve outcomes for all young people.

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

- Across the school, staff and young people enjoy warm, caring, nurturing and productive relationships. The school's values of fairness, ambition, inclusion and respect are very well embedded and understood across the school community and help to develop a very supportive and positive climate for learning. These values, an increasing focus on classroom routines, such as staff greeting young people at the door and using starter activities, support almost all young people's readiness to learn. Young people are polite and courteous and talk very positively about the way teachers understand them as learners and as individuals.
- The 'St Paul's RC Academy Way' and 'St Paul's RC Academy Standards for Learning, Teaching and Assessment' have been important in helping staff to build a shared understanding of the structure and content of high-quality lessons. In almost all classrooms, teachers implement a majority of the key elements of the Standards. This is supporting an increasingly consistent classroom experience for young people across the school. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to revisit the Standards to support staff to increase this consistency further. There is scope for senior leaders to consult and collaborate with staff and young people to revise the school's Relationships for Learning Policy to explore how positive reinforcement can be used more systematically to help to build even deeper engagement in young people.
- In all classes almost all young people focus well on their learning and remain motivated as they complete their work. In a minority of classes a few young people show low-level, off-task behaviour, such as talking to classmates when the teacher is giving instructions or by losing concentration on their tasks. Where this occurs, it is almost always handled effectively and sensitively by the teacher and young people's learning is not adversely affected.
- In almost all lessons, teachers use starter activities effective to help young people settle to work and connect with their previous learning. Teachers should consider how to ensure that starters are completed briskly so that appropriate pace is maintained in this early phase of the lesson. At the beginning of almost all lessons, teachers share with young people the purpose of learning and what successful learning looks like. In the majority of lessons, this supports young people well to understand what they need to do and how to measure progress in their learning. However, learning intentions and success criteria too often focus on the completion of tasks. An important next step is for teachers across the school to focus on clarity about the purpose of learning and young people's understanding of how to make progress. Teachers should consider how to increase their use of high-quality plenary sessions to support young people reflect on and understand their learning during lessons.

- In almost all classes, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and lessons are well resourced and planned. All teachers use questioning well to check young people's knowledge and recall. In a minority of classes, teachers use highly effective questioning to challenge young people and develop higher order thinking skills. In a few classrooms, teachers make creative use of digital technology to enhance young people's learning, for example using visualisers and online media texts. Teachers should continue to consider how expertise in using digital resources in learning can be shared more widely across the school. In a few classes, young people complete tasks that would be better presented in digital formats. For example, in a minority of classes learners complete lengthy work booklets or copy material down from the board. Senior leaders should work with the local authority to explore how digital resources and improved connectivity can be used to remove constraints on young people's ability to learn and increase personalisation and choice for learners.
- There is scope for senior leaders and staff to use data drawn from classroom support visits to identify aspects of high-quality teaching that can be shared more systematically across the school.
- Middle leaders and teachers regularly gather young people's views on their learning experiences. Learners appreciate the many opportunities they have to work collaboratively, though they would benefit from a more explicit discussion about the skills they are developing when working together in this way. In a minority of classes learners benefit from opportunities to engage in high-quality self- and peer-assessment. At present, in most lessons tasks are directed to the whole class with the pace of learning controlled by the teacher. Teachers should now consider how to provide young people with more opportunities to lead their own learning in creative, innovative and stimulating activities.
- Teachers across all departments make increasingly effective use of an online digital platform to share resources, tasks and revision materials with learners outside the classroom. Young people find this very helpful, especially when they have missed learning due to absence. A few teachers make very effective use of this online interface to provide young people with feedback about their learning. Staff should consider how this strong practice could be extended across classrooms. Young people would benefit from more consistent approaches to feedback on their learning, and further advice about how to record the feedback they receive so that it can be easily referenced during future learning activities. The quality and frequency of written feedback provided by teachers in jotters and folders is variable.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers make explicit reference to real-life contexts. This enhances young people's learning experiences and enables them to develop skills for learning, life and work and to make meaningful connections across their learning. For example, in music young people develop analytical skills through performance in front of peers, and in English young people evaluate the potentially dangerous impact of social media through studying a media text. Senior leaders should continue, as planned, to work with staff to develop approaches to the implementation of the school's meta-skills framework across all classrooms. This should include consideration of how young people track their skills development as they progress through their time at school.
- All teachers understand well the needs of individual young people, drawing on helpful transition information from feeder primaries and other information shared by support for learning staff. In most lessons, teachers support young people with adaptations to enable them to engage

with their learning. For example, teachers provide coloured overlays for young people facing specific barriers to reading. Staff from the support for learning department work very effectively in classes and with small groups to help young people who require additional support in reading to access their learning. There is scope for greater use to be made of digital resources, including assistive technology, to support young people in class, especially as they approach senior phase examinations. Staff should now consider how best to plan learning that ensures all young people's needs are met, including the highest attaining young people.

- The St Paul's RC Academy Standards for Learning, Teaching and Assessment contains advice for staff about using a range of approaches to assessment. Across all faculties, staff approaches to assessment enable young people to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills appropriately. Staff should continue to develop their use of formative assessment during learning activities to help to ensure young people are overtaking success criteria. Young people do not yet feel they have much choice in how they present evidence of their learning.
- Teachers are becoming increasingly confident in making assessment judgements in the broad general education (BGE) about learners' progress through and achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. They have opportunities to moderate their judgements with faculty colleagues and increasingly with subject specialists in neighbouring schools. This mainly focuses at present on verifying assessment judgments. Teachers should continue to develop their understanding of how to use the learning and teaching cycle, for example to inform their planning of creative approaches to assessment.
- In the senior phase, teachers across the school have a rigorous approach to verifying their assessment judgements. This helps them to have a strong understanding of assessment and moderation. Teachers across most departments also undertake additional responsibilities with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). This helps them and their departmental colleagues to have a better understanding of standards and is strengthening the accuracy of their professional judgments on young people's progress and estimates of their examination attainment.
- In the BGE, teachers plan lessons which are well structured and are aligned well with CfE experiences and outcomes. In the senior phase, young people are supported well in their learning and understand the level at which they are working and the expectations required to achieve their SQA goals. Teachers work well collaboratively to plan courses and programmes and provide appropriate, well-planned lessons in the senior phase. Young people would benefit from further opportunities to plan aspects of their learning.
- St Paul's RC Academy is in the very early stages of implementing a new approach to tracking and monitoring learners' progress. Staff are confident that this new system will deliver many benefits and will make it easier for them to have an overview of young people's progress in individual subjects and across the whole curriculum. Teachers across all faculties have a strong understanding of young people's progress and next steps. Teachers use this understanding to put in place support for young people who are at risk of not making appropriate progress. At present, however, young people are not always clear about the meaning of assessment coding used on reports for parents. The new tracking system will help learners and their families to be clearer about how young people are progressing through CfE levels. The existing system of tracking in the senior phase is very closely linked to SQA assessment standards and young

people's aspirational grades. Young people in the senior phase have a clear understanding of their progress towards target grades.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Young people are supported effectively as they move from primary to secondary school. Young people with identified additional support needs benefit significantly from activities such as one-to-one visits and small group sessions. Teachers in the majority of departments offer transition workshops to help young people settle into their first year of secondary school. There is further scope for middle leaders to use P7 transition information to inform curriculum planning in the BGE. Moving forward, middle leaders and teachers should collaborate with teachers in associated primaries to ensure appropriate progression in all curriculum areas for all learners.
- The current structure in the BGE does not support all young people to receive their full entitlement to learning across all the CfE experiences and outcomes up to the third level. At pace, senior leaders and middle leaders need to review the current structure of the BGE. They should plan the BGE curriculum across the four contexts, taking into account the views of young people.
- Young people in S3 make option choices. Subjects are offered across all curriculum areas, although course choices may be limited when insufficient numbers choose specific subjects. Senior and middle leaders and teachers should review the impact of courses that do not then run on the aspirations of young people.
- In S4 all young people study six subjects. Young people in S4 choose subjects across the curriculum areas for a balanced curriculum and can include subjects delivered at Dundee and Angus College. In S5 and S6, young people can study up to five subjects. The school offers a varied range of National Qualifications and National Progression Awards from SCQF level 4 to level 6 in subjects such as Bakery, Sports and Recreation, and Computer Games Development. These subjects raise awareness of potential careers and provide young people with alternative progression pathways. Where fewer than ten young people choose a subject, this will often be offered through a consortium arrangement with other local schools. As part of planning for appropriate progression through the senior phase, senior leaders should work with all staff to revisit their rationale for the number and level of subjects and courses studied in the senior phase.
- Literacy and numeracy as a responsibility of all requires improvement in departments and faculties. These responsibilities should be more clearly mapped and developed across the school. Senior leaders and middle leaders should work with relevant staff to support all teachers to make clearer and more explicit links to literacy and numeracy skills being developed in all lessons. Senior and middle leaders need to plan to ensure that these entitlements are embedded across the curriculum and improve outcomes for young people in literacy and numeracy.
- Young people do not receive their full entitlement to modern languages throughout the BGE. All young people experience high-quality physical education during the BGE and in S4, S5 and S6. In the BGE and senior phase all young people receive two periods of religious education classes per week, enriched by additional activities throughout the school year.

- In a few lessons, staff reference career management skills. In a minority of classes, teachers reference meta-skills to promote skills for learning, life and work in curriculum areas. Future employment opportunities and progression pathways for young people are highlighted in a few subjects.
- The majority of young people feel confident in seeking advice to support their decisions on their future learning and career aspirations, particularly through discussions with their teachers and guidance staff. Young people are supported well with their applications to college, employment and university.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents are positive about the ways in which the school communicates with them. Most parents say they know how well their child is progressing in their learning. A few parents would like more regular parents' evenings and greater clarity about assessment coding on pupil reports. Parents report that their views are sought regularly through surveys, although it is not always clear what improvements take place as a result.
- Most parents are satisfied with the school and think it is well-led and managed. Parents are positive about the leadership of the headteacher and feel that staff know the young people well.
- The Parent Council (PC) supports the work of the school through fundraising and other activities. However, a minority of parents feel they are not well informed about the work of the PC. The PC is keen to increase the numbers so that it is more representative of the parent body. Whilst parents and the PC are informed about the school improvement plan, this could be extended to ensure improved parental voice.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Young people benefit from a positive and nurturing climate for learning, underpinned by the school values. Staff take a nurturing approach in most classes and understand young people's needs well. As a result, most young people say they feel supported by teachers who know and care about them. Most young people feel safe in school and know that the school helps them to stay safe. They also say they have someone to speak to if they feel worried or upset. Most young people feel included in school life and have a strong sense of belonging to St Paul's. Most young people are respectful, well-mannered and interact positively with each other and with the adults who support them.
- Most young people understand the wellbeing indicators and know the steps the school takes to teach them about healthy lifestyles. They learn about strategies to improve their wellbeing through personal and social education (PSE) lessons, guidance from teachers, and regular assemblies. The school does not yet track young people's wellbeing. Senior leaders should continue with plans to introduce an online tool to measure wellbeing progress and identify where young people need extra support. This will help staff provide targeted interventions, such as counselling or support for physical, mental, or emotional wellbeing.
- Staff respond swiftly when they become aware of anything which negatively impacts on a young person's wellbeing, growth, or learning and inform guidance staff and senior leaders promptly when appropriate. Staff readily access plans for young people who need support and use agreed strategies in class and around the school. This helps meet young people's needs effectively.
- Senior leaders, guidance staff, and support for learning teachers work together very well in house teams. They meet regularly to discuss challenges that affect young people's lives and learning. These meetings lead to appropriate interventions, such as raising staff awareness of barriers to learning, creating Addressing Barriers to Learning (ABLE) plans, or providing targeted support through pupil support assistants in class. Additionally they may result in interventions to support aspects of learning or the offer of other internal and external support agencies. These meetings are an invaluable way to ensure that every young person is provided with the support they need at the right time, by the right people, in the right way.
- A progressive and engaging PSE programme focussed on the wellbeing indicators supports the health and wellbeing of almost all young people. Young people explore topics such as bullying, anti-racism, positive relationships and online safety. Young people enjoy these lessons and find

them valuable for their development in and beyond school. This is leading to them having a greater understanding of what they can do to stay healthy and provides them with strategies for dealing appropriately with the challenges of everyday life. Guidance staff deliver well-planned PSE lessons, giving young people consistent and empathetic support on sensitive topics. Guidance staff should continue to review the programme to address the growing challenges young people face in 21st-century Scotland.

- Strong partnership working supports aspects of wellbeing well across the school. Partners, including the Place2Be counselling service and a mentoring programme, provide effective support to identified young people on an individual basis. This includes care experienced young people, those experiencing bereavement, and young people at risk of disengaging from school. In addition, external speakers support and enhance the PSE curriculum including, for example, local police and NHS partners. Young people across all stages benefit from strong partnership work, providing them with appropriate support, expert knowledge and the perspectives of others from across their community.
- Staff participate in professional learning to improve their practice, understand the challenges faced by young people and enhance their relationships. This includes training on nurture principles and trauma-sensitive approaches. This results in all staff having a greater understanding of the context in which they work and are better able to provide the support that individuals require. Young people benefit greatly from staff who have a strong awareness of their wellbeing needs, the challenges they face, and their potential barriers to learning. Senior leaders should consider further appropriate training at whole school level, including behavioural interventions.
- The school has a robust 'relationships for learning' policy that sets out clear steps for staff and young people when the behaviour of young people becomes challenging. Young people understand of the importance of positive relationships and good behaviour and its impact on their learning and experiences in school. Senior leaders should continue to keep this policy under review to ensure positive relationships remain central to the work of the school and continue to provide a firm foundation for the well-established nurturing and supportive learning environments. This will help to ensure approaches to relationships and behaviour are more consistent and transparent across the school community.
- The school has a very welcoming and supportive Enhanced Support Area (ESA) where young people who require more intensive additional support for learning experience their learning. Key staff support them well to access mainstream lessons. An inclusion base provides appropriate interventions for young people who become dysregulated in class and those who are returning to school on a part time basis. Senior leaders and support staff should now consider ways to align this area more closely with the specific needs of young people who use it for learning and support. This should help staff to ensure that their needs are fully met.
- 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.

- Staff understand their statutory duties in relation to young people with additional support needs. They know their responsibilities in helping all young people achieve their potential and understand the challenges they face. Staff can access children's plans readily online and use agreed strategies to support learning and wellbeing.
- The Dundee Standard for Inclusive practice is a feature of classrooms across the school and has been a recent focus for professional learning. All staff have had training on how best to support young people through the development of an inclusive classroom. This includes, for example, careful consideration of the physical environment, clear routines and structures in classrooms and encouraging and supporting young people to develop independence. This framework is beginning to have a positive impact in classrooms across the school and is leading to a more consistent and focussed approach to inclusive practice. Senior and middle leaders should ensure, as part of robust evaluation processes, that inclusive classroom practice is monitored carefully to sustain a more consistent approach.
- Staff work well with young people and their families to address attendance issues which remain a challenge for a few young people. Attendance is below the national average. Staff work well to motivate, encourage and support young people to attend school by offering relevant and engaging experiences that meet their needs well. Strategies include outreach work, targeted support from guidance staff, and temporary part-time timetables where appropriate.
- Care experienced young people receive strong support. Staff take their responsibilities seriously in relation to this group of young people and raise concerns about their attendance, welfare, and wellbeing promptly. A mentoring programme helps these young people achieve and attain well. Young carers also receive good support through regular group meetings and close monitoring by guidance and support staff.
- Guidance staff and senior leaders record bullying incidents carefully using the SEEMiS system. The school has an anti-bullying policy to guide staff in recognising and reporting incidents. Senior leaders should now work with staff, young people, parents, and partners to further strengthen anti-bullying approaches. This could include developing the new anti-bullying group, running awareness events, and creating a young person friendly version of the policy. This will help to ensure a clear and shared approach across the school community. Recent staff training on Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) and the implementation of this programme will support this work.
- The school's growing and diverse pupil population brings a rich cultural profile. Almost all young people who are new to the school feel welcomed and quickly become members of the St Paul's community. Staff should now further develop their approach to embedding equality and inclusion into the curriculum and become more culturally responsive. This includes requesting more inclusive texts in the community library, situated within the school building, establishing an equalities group and ensuring lesson content promotes equality. These steps will support further the sense of belonging for all members of the school community.
- Staff and young people take pride in their work to promote children's rights, which has earned national accreditation at silver level. They continue to embed a rights-based approach through the 'Right of the Month' initiative, PSE lessons and assemblies. A well-established rights-respecting group is leading activities to gain further accreditation. This work helps young people respect others and build an inclusive school community. Senior leaders and staff

should work together to further sharpen the focus on children's rights across the life and work of the school, including integrating rights into lessons where appropriate.

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy S1 to S3

- Senior leaders should raise expectations of young people's progress in literacy and numeracy underpinned by thorough moderation of standards. This should include consistent approaches to enable young people to demonstrate their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. In 2023/24, most young people attained CfE third level or better in listening and talking, writing and numeracy. Attainment in reading declined, with a majority attaining CfE third level or better by the end of S3.
- In 2023/24, a minority of young people attained CfE fourth level in literacy. The majority of young people attained CfE fourth level in numeracy in 2023/24, which is an improvement from 2022/23. Senior leaders should prioritise having clearer plans to closing gaps in young people's reading skills at CfE fourth level.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy S4 to S6

- Between 2019/20 and 2023/24, almost all young people left school with awards in literacy and numeracy. A few young people each year do not leave school with a literacy or numeracy qualifications.

Literacy

- Between 2019/20 and 2023/24, the majority of young people left school with a literacy award at SCQF level 5 or better. This was in line with the virtual comparator (VC). A majority of young people requiring additional support with their learning, (ASN) left school with a literacy award at SCQF level 5 or better. Between 2019/20 and 2023/24, a minority of young people attained literacy at SCQF level 6. In four out of five of these years, the school was in line with the VC. In 2022/23, attainment declined to being significantly lower than the VC. A few young people with ASN attain literacy at SCQF level 6.
- Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, just over half of young people in S4 attained literacy at SCQF level 5 or better. This is significantly lower than the VC in four out of five of years. By S5, as a percentage of the S5 roll, during the same time period, a minority of young people attained SCQF level 6. In 2024/25, attainment by S5 in literacy declined at SCQF level 6 to be significantly much lower than the VC. By S6, as a percentage of the S6 roll, a majority of young people attain literacy at SCQF level 6. This is in line with the VC but is yet to show a sustained pattern of improvement.

- Over the last five years, young people's entries for National 5 in S4 and Higher in S5 in English are generally below national levels. Senior and middle leaders should continue to increase the percentage of young people presented for N5 English, as planned. In 2025, attainment at National 5 English, as a percentage of S4 young people presented, is slightly above national levels, having previously been below. At Higher English in S5, attainment as a percentage of S5 young people presented has been broadly in line with national levels between 2020/21 and 2024/25. However, attainment at a grade A pass in Higher English has been below national levels for the past five years.

Numeracy

- Between 2019/20 and 2023/24, the school's performance for leavers in numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better, through units, is in line with the VC for three out of five years. In 2019/20 and 2020/21, attainment at this level had been significantly higher than the VC. There has been an improvement in attainment in numeracy for leavers at Level 5 or better from 2021/22 till 2023/24. A majority of leavers attained numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better. For young people requiring additional support with their learning (ASN), attainment varies between just over or under a half of young people attaining at SCQF level 5 or better.
- Between 2019/20 and 2023/24, a minority of leavers attained a numeracy award at SCQF level 6. This is in line with the VC for four out of five years. The exception being in 2022/23, where attainment declined to being significantly lower than the VC with a few young people attaining at this level. A few young people requiring ASN, attained numeracy at SCQF level 6 between 2019/20 and 2023/24.
- Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, as young people move through the school, in S4 at SCQF level 5 or better and by S5 based on S5 and S6 based on S6 at SCQF level 6, the school performs in line with the VC for three out of five years in numeracy. For the other two years during this time period, the school attains significantly lower than the VC.
- In S4, the introduction of National 5 Applications of Mathematics has raised attainment. Attainment levels exceed the national average for grade A to C passes. Entries for Applications of Mathematics have remained below the national average for four out of five years between 2020/21 and 2024/25.
- In S4, National 5 Mathematics entries have remained below the national average for four out of five years between 2020/21 and 2024/25. Most young people presented attained a grade A to C pass, which is consistently above the national average between 2022/23 and 2024/25.
- The presentations for Higher Mathematics in S5 are lower than the national average. Between 2022/23 and 2024/25, most of those presented attained a grade A to C pass in Higher Mathematics. This is similar to the national average. Senior and middle leaders should continue to increase the percentage of young people presented for Mathematics and Applications of Mathematics.

Attainment over time

S1-3

- As a high priority, senior leaders need to establish a clear, comprehensive and strategic overview of attainment across S1 to S3 into the senior phase. Some initial steps have been

made here. There is significant capacity to raise young people's attainment for the S1 to S3 school roll. Senior and middle leaders should ensure thorough and better use and analysis of data and quality moderation of learning, teaching and assessment. Patterns of improving progress and attainment across subjects are not yet demonstrated, with senior leaders not able to show standards over time well enough.

Senior Phase

- Between 2022/23 to 2024/25, the percentage of young people in S4 to S6 presented for the maximum number of qualifications by the curriculum model is increasing. Staff should be clearer on improving positive outcomes and accelerating progress from S3 into the senior phase.
- Senior leaders have taken positive steps to reduce the number of courses from which young people withdraw. While senior and middle leaders consistently review attainment and progress in subjects, current approaches should be clearer on actions to sustain improved progress and attainment. Going forward, senior leaders need to address emerging patterns of underperformance more briskly. It would be useful to establish a whole school aim that guides staff in evaluating how well they are raising attainment and achievement.

Improving attainment for all

- Attainment for the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60 % and highest attaining 20% of leavers is generally in line with the VC between 2019/20 and 2023/24. This is based on average complementary tariff scores. Young people requiring additional support with their learning do well. For all leavers, including those with ASN, there is not yet a steady pattern of improving attainment.
- Based on data for respective years, in S4 the lowest 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people's attainment is generally in line with the VC. In 2022/23, attainment for the highest attaining 20% of young people declined to significantly lower than the VC.
- By the end of S5 and S6, based on data for respective years, the lowest attaining 20% generally attain significantly higher or much higher than the VC. During the same time period, the middle attaining 60% attain significantly higher than the VC for two years within this time period by S5 and three years by S6. Young people who are the highest attaining 20% attained significantly lower by S5 in 2023/24 and significantly much lower than the VC by S6 in 2024/25.

Breadth and Depth

- Across all possible courses taken as qualifications in S4, by S5 and S6 senior and middle leaders should work together to maximise the total number of qualifications available to young people. This may include qualifications outwith the SQA offer. There are a few subjects, such as english, mathematics, modern languages and sciences where young people's uptake should be higher. Senior leaders should now prioritise strategies that extend attainment to ensure more young people attain qualifications at higher grades. While there is evidence of positive outcomes in some areas, young people are not consistently challenged to achieve their full potential. Senior leaders should ensure that curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment practices promote high aspirations and deeper learning across all stages.

- Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, generally the majority of young people at S4 attained one or two qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better. During the same time period, at SCQF level 5C and better and SCQF level 5A and better for six qualifications the school generally performs consistently significantly lower than the VC. A minority of young people attained SCQF level 5A or better for one or more to three or more qualifications. This is generally in line with the VC, but with no improving patterns.
- Overall, by S5 based on the respective year, between 2020/21 and 2024/25 generally the majority of young people attained SCQF level 6C or better for one or more qualifications. This is in line with the VC for three out of five years and significantly much higher for the other two years during this time period. There has, however, been an overall decline in the attainment of young people in S5 from 2021/22 till 2024/24.
- Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, at SCQF level 6C or better a minority of young people on S5 attained two or more qualifications to four or more qualifications. This is generally in line with the VC, with the exception of 2022/23 for two or more and three or more qualifications when the school performed significantly higher than the VC. In 2024/25, young people's attainment declined to being significantly lower than the VC for SCQF level 6C or better for three or more qualifications.
- By S5, between 2020/21 and 2024/25, based on the respective year, at SCQF level 6A or better a minority of young people attained one or more qualifications. This is significantly higher than the VC for three out of five of these years. There is not yet a sustained pattern of improving attainment.
- By S6, based on the respective year, almost all young people attain SCQF level 6C or better for one or more qualifications between 2020/21 and 2024/25 for three out of five years. In these years, the school performs significantly higher than the VC and then declines to in line for 2024/25.
- Generally, between 2020/21 and 2024/25, the majority of young people by S6 attained SCQF level 6C or better for three or more qualifications. This is in line with the VC for four out of five of these years, and significantly much higher for one year. A minority of young people attained SCQF level 6C or better for five or more qualifications. This is in line with the VC. Overall there is a declining pattern of attainment in S5 and S6.
- Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, the majority of young people by S6 attained SCQF level 6A or better for one or more qualifications. This is significantly much higher than the VC for three out of five years and significantly higher for one year. During the same time period, a few young people attained SCQF level 6A or better for five or more qualifications. This is in line with the VC.
- By S6, between 2020/21 and 2024/25, at SCQF level 7C or better and SCQF level 7A there is no consistent pattern of improving attainment. During this time period, at SCQF level 7C or better for one or more qualifications attainment is significantly lower than the VC for two out of five years and in line for the other three years.

- Young people are well supported and encouraged to gain appropriate additional qualifications which develop their employability skills and confidence. These include, for example awards in first aid, personal achievement, outward bound and skills for work programmes.
- By S6, between 2020/21 and 2024/25 attainment at SCQF level 7A or better for one or more qualifications is significantly higher than the VC for two out of five years. A few young people attained at this level in 2024/25.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- A minority of young people are developing skills, confidence and motivation through participating in a range of achievement activities. A few targeted activities are helping to increase engagement, such as a girls' 'Miss Fits' fitness group.
- A few young people, mainly in the senior phase, benefit from taking part in a developing range of pupil leadership and volunteering opportunities. Young people develop their confidence, leadership and management skills well as house captains and vice captains. Senior leaders and staff should continue increasing the range of leadership roles available to young people across the school, such as the recently introduced anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Across the school, a few young people develop skills and gaining recognised youth awards such as Saltire, Dynamic Youth and Caritas awards. The number of young people completing bronze and silver Duke of Edinburgh's Awards are increasing steadily. Young people should maintain a profile of their achievements to recognise and reflect on their successes as they progress across the school and beyond.
- Senior leaders and staff are at an early stage of tracking thoroughly how well young people participate in achievement opportunities. This should be part of a more strategic approach to developing skills and leadership capacities through wider achievement. Senior leaders and staff should support young people to identify and address any gaps and increase the number of young people who benefit.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders support young people very well in reducing barriers from poverty in their catchment area. In 2019/20 and 2023/24, the school's attainment for leavers, when compared using average complementary tariff scores at SIMD 1 is in line with the national average. There is not yet a consistent pattern of improvement. Leavers who reside in SIMD 2, performed significantly higher than the national average in 2023/24. There is not yet a consistent pattern of improvement, with attainment declining in 2021/22 to be lower than the national average.
- Almost all leavers are in an initial positive destination. This percentage has increased between 2021/22 and 2023/24. For young people leaving in S4, the school performed significantly much lower than the VC between 2019/20 and 2022/23. Performance improved in 2023/24 to be in line. Senior leaders are reviewing how the college offer can lead to improved outcomes. The percentage of young people in a positive destination following S5 and S6 is in line with the VC. Senior leaders should continue to support young people to sustain their destinations.

- Staff across the school make very effective use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to support learners. The outreach provision is improving outcomes for a range of young people, including those affected by emotionally based school non-attendance. Tracking of these learners' progress is thorough. Families receive strengthened support to maintain positive relationships with the school. Staffing is providing targeted support for learners working at CfE first and second levels, contributing to closing the poverty-related attainment gap. There is a number of young people for whom persistent low attendance is a barrier to attainment. Senior staff target staffing to support these young people to gain a minimum number of qualifications.
- Young people recognise the school values in the approaches that staff take to ensure equity in school. Young people are very aware of the value, fairness. This is influencing the day-to-day actions of staff to ensure that every young person is considered and provided with an equitable experience. Senior leaders should now involve young people in decision making around PEF and provide further leadership opportunities for young people.
- Senior leaders have established transparent approaches to empowering staff to implement interventions that promote equity across the curriculum. Funding supports targeted curriculum interventions, additional learning resources, and a wide range of opportunities such as excursions and trips. This is having a positive impact on young people and is contributing to the narrowing of attainment gaps.
- Further interventions include a well-attended breakfast club and an after-school food provision. The breakfast club offers young people a safe, supportive start to their day and helps foster positive relationships with peers and staff. The mentoring programme is also embedded and continues to support a range of young people.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE 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.

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.