

# Summarised inspection findings

**Grange Academy**

East Ayrshire Council

10 June 2025

## Key contextual information

School Name: Grange Academy  
Council: East Ayrshire Council  
SEED number: 8224234  
Roll March 2025: 1232 young people

Grange Academy is co-located on Grange campus with Annanhill Primary school and Park School (S1-3). It serves the communities of Kilmarnock West and Crosshouse. The associated primaries are Crosshouse Primary, Annanhill Primary, Hillhead Primary, Gargieston Primary and Shortlees Primary. It is a Scottish Football Association Performance School. Grange Academy Hearing Impairment Unit is also located on the Grange campus. The headteacher has been in post for three years. He is supported by five depute headteachers.

Attendance is generally below the national average.

Exclusions are generally in line with the national average, decreasing from previously above the national average.

In September 2023, 17% of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2023, 31% of pupils lived in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2023, the school reported that 35% of pupils 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
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- Staff and young people have a very strong understanding of the school values of respect, responsibility and resilience. These values drive the work of senior leaders and staff to improve young people's experiences. Positive relationships across the school are underpinned by a clear and shared understanding of the values, with a commitment to improve outcomes for all young people. Almost all young people are aware of the values and understand how to put them into practice. Teachers regularly refer to the values during lessons. These positive relationships, based on mutual respect, have also led to improved behaviour and a reduction in exclusions among young people.
  - Almost all staff know young people very well as individuals. Senior leaders ensure that all staff are familiar with the context of the school through the effective use of data related to deprivation, health and employment. All staff have a very good understanding of the socio-economic contexts of the young people and any barriers to learning that they may face. Senior leaders consult with young people, partners and parents on the identification of improvement priorities. They contribute well to their delivery, including on the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Pupil Equity Fund has been used to fund interventions which are improving the literacy levels of young people, as well as improving attendance rates and the wellbeing of targeted young people.
  - The headteacher is very highly regarded across the school community and has created a well understood climate for change. He has clarified the strategic direction of the school, managing the pace of change carefully and thoughtfully. His approach to leadership, built on trust, openness and effective communication is a major strength. Staff, parents and young people welcome his focus on improving the culture and ethos. Young people recognise that senior leaders are visible, approachable and focus on developing strong relationships across the school, creating a culture of trust. Senior leaders support staff well by developing a positive culture of collegiality.
  - Curriculum leaders use data and other information systematically, including the views of young people and parents, to inform their strategic planning for improvement. Middle and senior leaders have identified the need for increased opportunities to collaborate, share practice and improve consistency in taking forward school, departmental and support improvement priorities. As a next step, it would be helpful to develop an enquiry-based approach to leading strategic change and supporting professional learning. There are effective processes for young people to contribute to and inform school improvement, which is a strength of the school. Young people are leading important changes within the school through the range of leadership and volunteering roles. This is contributing to a strong sense of empowerment and ownership of their school.

- Almost all staff are clear about the rationale for change. Most staff work collaboratively and effectively on school improvement priorities. They have a clear understanding of the areas for improvement and how they are connected. Senior leaders have consulted with staff and the Parent Council in agreeing improvement priorities. They work closely with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) staff to plan and review these for the delivery of Career Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) services. The school improvement plan (SIP) reflects local and national priorities very well. Senior leaders have streamlined the SIP to identify appropriate key priorities. Current SIP priorities focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching, improving the resilience of young people, improving leadership capacity of staff and improving specific aspects of senior phase attainment.
- Senior leaders ensure that the SIP is well informed by highly effective approaches to self-evaluation. This includes analysis of a range of data, regular observations of learning and teaching and taking account of the views of young people, staff and parents. Commendably, a few young people have been involved in contributing to improvement priorities by producing their own improvement plans on areas such as mental health and wellbeing. Senior leaders should continue to encourage young people to become involved in leading change.
- Most departmental improvement plans are well aligned to the SIP. Well established approaches to self-evaluation ensure that priorities in most departments are well-defined. Most middle leaders now plan and review their departments effectively in line with the school's quality assurance calendar.
- Senior leaders guide the direction and pace of change carefully and efficiently. Almost all staff demonstrate a desire to be involved in professional learning to improve their practice. For example, there has been a recent focus on improving pace and challenge in lessons as part of the school's improvement priorities. A considerable strength of the school is the commitment of staff to developing their leadership capacity through programmes designed to support aspiring middle and senior leaders. Staff are also involved in leading school improvement groups and many teachers act as appointees of the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The expertise gained by teachers on these groups helps other staff to develop their practice.
- Young people across the school benefit from a wide range of leadership opportunities. These include captaincy, sports leadership and charity work. Staff regularly seek the views of young people and act upon these views. Young people are highly positive about the support they receive and how they have effected change in the school. This includes in areas such as the school's approach to dealing with bullying and the range of clubs for young people at lunchtime and after school. The school's annual school and house captains' leadership day provides an opportunity for all young people involved in leadership positions to reflect on their leadership and to plan activities for the year ahead. Commendably, a number of departments have involved young people in discussions about how learning and teaching could be improved.
- Staff have very strong links with a range of community partners, who identify with the school values. They contribute helpfully to the life and work of the school and provide a range of active learning opportunities targeted for example to those experiencing barriers in their learning. Senior staff responsible for curriculum have a clear understanding of developing the curriculum in line with regional labour market intelligence, the Ayrshire Growth Deal and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) priorities. They work closely with SDS staff to plan and review the strategic priorities within the School Partnership Agreement for the delivery of CIAG services. These align with the SIP. A next step will be to work collectively to plan and evaluate the input of partners in line with the school's vision, values and aims.

## 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

- Almost all young people learn purposefully in a calm, positive and nurturing environment. Staff know learners well and almost all young people feel able to approach staff when help is needed with their learning. Almost all young people behave well. Teachers deal calmly and sensitively with the few instances of low-level behaviour or disengagement. Almost all young people feel respected and listened to. They feel that they can influence change regarding their learning and appreciate the feedback that they receive through the 'You said, we did' process in most departments.
- Senior leaders and staff worked collaboratively to create the 'Grange' strategic vision for effective learning and teaching. As a result, young people experience strong routines and a consistent structure in almost all lessons. This consistency of approach supports increased pace and challenge in learning. A programme of learning rounds enables staff to share strategies and develop their classroom practice.
- Almost all teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. In almost all lessons, teachers use starter questions effectively to help young people retrieve information and connect to prior learning. In almost all lessons, teachers explain the purpose of the day's learning and how young people can measure their success. This helps deepen their understanding of their learning. Teachers should continue to focus on how they share the outcomes from planned learning so that young people can more fully understand what successful learning looks like. Most teachers use plenaries effectively to recap young people's learning. In most lessons, the plenaries helpfully refer back to the lesson's purpose.
- In most lessons, teachers use effectively a range of approaches and activities to engage and motivate young people. This includes well-structured group activities, paired work and discussions. All staff have access to information about young people's learning needs. This supports young people who may require additional support to participate in their learning. In most lessons, young people undertake the same tasks and activities at the same time. Teachers should continue to develop their approaches to differentiation to ensure that all young people receive appropriate levels of support and challenge. In a few lessons, young people respond well to opportunities to lead their own learning.
- In all lessons, digital technology is used well by teachers to support the delivery of learning. Examples include creative use of electronic tablets, visualisers, laptops and digital recordings. All young people have access to a digital platform where resources are available to support learning in school and at home. Young people appreciate this resource and report that this impacts positively on their learning as it helps them review and re-visit previous learning or catch up on any learning they may have missed. Staff should continue to develop the use of digital technology in the classroom to enhance learning for all learners.

- Most teachers use questioning well to check for understanding. In a few lessons, teachers use effective questioning techniques to help young people think more deeply and use higher order thinking skills. Staff should continue to develop their questioning so that all young people are challenged to have a deeper understanding of what they are learning.
- Most teachers use a range of effective approaches to provide feedback, such as learner conversations, online, written and verbal feedback. This supports young people to understand their learning and how to improve. In a majority of departments, staff skilfully support young people in the senior phase to evaluate their progress in assessments, identify areas for improvements and next steps. Young people in the senior phase speak confidently about their progress and how they can further improve their learning. This practice is less evident in the broad general education (BGE). As planned, staff should continue to support young people to evaluate their progress to better understand the level they are working within and what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers use regular summative assessments to check young people's progress in learning in all departments. Young people appreciate the routine 'low stakes' assessments used. They feel that these help them improve through regular practice of retrieval techniques. The use of these types of assessment reduces young people's anxieties around assessments. Most teachers check understanding and progress through formative assessment activities, such as 'show me' boards, and ongoing dialogue with learners throughout lessons. In a minority of lessons, teachers adjust their planning to better meet the needs of all learners. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to develop and grow approaches to assessment and planning of learning in the BGE. All teachers engage in useful moderation activities with colleagues in school and within the local authority.
- Staff who have Scottish Qualification Authority roles work with colleagues in school and across the local authority to share their expertise and develop a shared understanding of national standards. This has led to improved reliability in assessment judgements for National Qualifications (NQ)s.
- A newly introduced whole-school approach to tracking and monitoring young people's progress is in place in both the BGE and senior phase. This is supporting staff to develop a more consistent approach to monitoring the progress that young people are making over time. Senior and middle leaders should now focus on a consistent approach to departmental tracking and monitoring. This will help to ensure that analysis of data supports understanding of achievement of a level in the BGE. Reports to young people and parents show a consistent standard around progress and next steps in learning. Young people speak positively about the range of interventions used by their class teachers to support them to achieve their target levels or grades. Teachers should now develop further how they use this tracking information to inform better their planning for progression. They should also measure whether the interventions are having a positive impact on learner outcomes.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Transitions to secondary school are well-supported by staff and senior leaders. They visit associated primaries regularly to build relationships with children and develop children's knowledge of the secondary school. Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) literacy and numeracy levels are shared from primary to secondary. There is scope to extend this approach to ensure all courses in S1 build on what children have learned and achieved in primary school across all curriculum areas.
- Learning pathways in the BGE focus on delivering common courses across the eight curriculum areas. Middle leaders need to review how well they are planning for progression through third and fourth levels. This should allow learners to progress in different ways at different rates. The newly introduced BGE tracking tool is beginning to support discussions about planning for progression. Across the BGE, all young people receive their entitlements in respect of 1+2 Languages, high-quality physical education (PE) and religious and moral education (RME).
- Towards the end of S2, young people personalise their curriculum while continuing to learn across all curriculum areas. Further opportunity to personalise their curriculum is offered in S3 when young people are supported to select seven courses for progression into the senior phase in S4. Course choices in the senior phase are extensive and are informed by labour market information. Staff support young people in S5 and S6 to select courses that closely align with their career aspirations. Young people are informed through learner conversations, events for parents, careers interviews and careers fairs. Young people do not receive their entitlement to RME in the senior phase.
- Staff are committed to improving the curriculum to raise attainment. This includes developing the senior phase curriculum by increasing the range of Scottish Credit Qualification Framework (SCQF) courses and awards. Senior leaders should now monitor the impact of these courses on the learner journey with a particular focus on planning for progression and meeting the needs of all learners.
- The school has created a skills framework, identifying the meta skills that they will support young people to develop. Staff have undertaken limited work on how these skills should be developed or promoted throughout the school.
- Senior leaders are at the early stages of developing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as a responsibility of all. Senior leaders should now focus on embedding these areas, as a responsibility of all, across the school in order to raise attainment.
- The school library is a valued and well-used resource. Young people read, study and socialise in the library at break and lunchtimes. They also appreciate the range of clubs and activities that take place in the library for them. The library is well used by staff across the school to support and enhance learning through access to a wide range of resources.
- All faculties have broadened their curriculum offer to include an increased number of vocational qualifications, such as National Progression Awards (NPAs) and Skills for Work (SfW) to help meet pupil needs. For example, based on the high numbers of young people who identified engineering as a preferred destination, the school has recently introduced an S3 engineering programme in 2024/25 to help support young people progress onto the S4 SfW engineering course. This will be introduced in 2025/26. Staff work effectively with the regional college to provide an appropriate range of vocational options in the senior phase from SCQF Level 4-7

and cover a broad range of subject areas. Young people are attaining well through this school college partnership.

- The personal and social education (PSE) programme is underpinned by the Career Education Standard 3-18 and young people are having their entitlements delivered. Careers education is supported well by the provision of group engagement and one-to-one appointments as necessary. Young people can be referred by their guidance teacher or can self-refer for individual support with SDS careers advisors.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- A key strength at Grange Academy is the involvement of parents in shaping the work of the school. The Parent Council has worked in partnership with senior leaders to instigate the school's recent uniform consultation and develop approaches to delivering study skills. The wider parent body value the work of the Parent Council and appreciate the regular updates on social media.
- The majority of parents are positive about the strength of leadership and communication at Grange Academy. Parents appreciate the weekly headteacher update which is used to celebrate young people and their achievements. Senior leaders regularly seek and act upon the views of parents. The majority of parents report that the school takes their views into account when making changes. Almost all parents feel that any issues reported to the school are resolved quickly and discreetly.

## 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

- Positive, caring and respectful relationships are a key feature of the school community. This supports a calm and purposeful atmosphere across the school. Most young people feel safe and treated fairly and respectfully by staff. Most young people feel that staff ask for and listen to their views on a range of topics, including how to improve their school. This is strengthening young people's sense of belonging and leading to increased opportunities for wider achievement and leadership roles.
- The 'Ready to Learn' approach offers an early morning daily check-in with guidance staff and heads of house for all young people. This approach encompasses a wide range of supports such as pastoral advice, restorative conversations, school uniform check-ins and support, classroom equipment and breakfast snacks. This helps a minority of young people make a positive start to their school day and reduces lost learning time in classes. Senior staff should continue to monitor the impact of this approach for staff and young people.
- Most young people understand how they can keep themselves healthy and feel there are lots of opportunities for regular exercise in school. For example, in PE, they experience a wide range of purposeful physical activities which support their physical health. Staff offer a wide range of clubs and activities throughout and beyond the school day which further develop young people's understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- Young people are encouraged to develop positive relationships by their guidance teacher through the progressive and responsive PSE programme. The programme focuses on developing aspects of young people's mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Staff give careful consideration to seeking young people's views to ensure local, wellbeing and equality issues, such as racism or keeping safe online, are addressed. Young people play a key role in delivering well-planned PSE units for young people in the BGE. For example, Mentors in Violence Prevention in S4-6 and health and wellbeing (HWB) ambassadors in S1-3 deliver equalities and mental wellbeing inputs. Together, these approaches enable young people to explore and discuss a wide range of topical issues in a safe environment.
- Young people across the school take part in an annual wellbeing survey which helps them understand and reflect on their own resilience, self-esteem, motivation and confidence. Young people are then supported individually by guidance staff to consider how they can improve their wellbeing. Staff work with the HWB ambassadors to use this information to identify appropriate wellbeing priorities for school improvement. These include creating more safe spaces for young people at breaks and lunch and a 'Your Mind Matters' lunchtime drop-in led by the HWB ambassadors. Staff should continue to use the information from the survey, and other sources to strengthen staff's understanding of the collective responsibility to promote and support the wellbeing of all young people.

- Most staff have a good understanding of statutory duties relating to inclusion. Senior leaders reinvigorated the whole school approach to meeting young people's needs. This is leading to most teachers considering how they can improve their own classroom environments. Almost all staff recognise and practice the benefits of restorative approaches in resolving conflict. This, along with the emerging development of nurturing approaches across the school, is contributing to the calm, purposeful environment where young people feel included.
- Senior leaders recently developed specific areas of the school to provide enhanced, individualised short-term support. A few young people attend these supportive learning environments where they are taught in smaller group settings, or individually. As a result of these bespoke interventions, a few young people now attend school more regularly or have re-integrated into the mainstream environment. Staff should continue to review the impact of these interventions to ensure they are meeting the needs of all young people who benefit from them.
- Staff follow the local authority's approach to planning, action and review for young people who require additional support. This is based on a model of staged intervention. A link teacher from each department works with skilled support for learning staff and shares information and strategies relating to additional support needs (ASN). Teachers are informed about the specific needs of young people through a helpful pupil information spreadsheet. Updates are also shared at least monthly to ensure that staff are kept up to date with young people's needs, and strategies to support them in the classroom.
- Senior leaders have recently developed a helpful ASN policy which details specific roles and responsibilities of young people and adults. The policy also details a range of universal and targeted approaches to supporting young people who require additional support. In addition, senior leaders have recently created an overview of need to better track and monitor the progress of young people who require additional support. This is at the early stages of implementation. More young people are attending school more often and being supported appropriately. Senior leaders should continue to develop and use the overview to ensure they are able to identify the impact on outcomes for all young people. Senior leaders should also consider developing an overarching strategy and vision for improving further inclusive practices across the school.
- Key staff lead and develop individual planning documents for young people, following the local authority model for Child's Plans. Currently these are of variable quality. Senior leaders should continue to develop their approach to regularly reviewing all plans for young people. Teachers should ensure that targets set are consistently informed by the views of young people and their families, are short term and measurable.
- Attendance at school has been declining overall since 2018/19. Currently a minority of young people attend school for less than 90% of the time. A few attend between 0% and 20% of the time. Attendance is significantly lower for young people in S4 than for the rest of the school. Staff are currently undertaking a 'small test of change' with a group of young people in S3 in order to better understand the reasons for non-attendance at school and to address some of the barriers. Staff have introduced a variety of bespoke interventions designed to improve attendance at school. Currently these show small gains for a few young people. Senior leaders need to review the number of young people who attend school on a part-time basis to ensure that it is the right approach for young people, and that timetables are reviewed and amended timeously. Senior leaders have reduced the number of young people who leave class and truant in school by being more visible around the school throughout the day.

- Young people with a range of diverse needs are included well in the school. They are supported by, for example, signage around the school in British Sign Language (BSL). A few young people are enabled to celebrate particular aspects of their religion and belief sensitively. Others are encouraged to share their own personal journeys living with particular additional needs. A few young people confidently share their individual needs and how staff support them in class effectively. This encourages empathy and understanding of difference by others.
- Young people, supported well by staff, have recently led a successful awareness raising campaign relating to gender identity and sexual orientation. This inclusive group has also championed the inclusion of a wider range of texts and resources in the library and across the school. Senior leaders should continue to work with young people to develop a greater understanding of all protected characteristics in a planned and progressive way. This should lead to more young people being able not only to respect differences but to challenge discrimination in a respectful and supportive manner.
- A well-planned and established transition programme from P7 to S1 supports almost all young people to settle effectively into secondary school quickly. Young people and their parents, benefit from having spent time getting to know the building and a few staff and senior pupils before they begin S1. This helps young people begin to build effective relationships with others at an early stage.
- 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 (HN) Inspector discussed this information with relevant staff and young people. In addition, the HN Inspector 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. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food and health promotion in the school.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

##### BGE

- By the end of S3, most young people are making good progress in literacy and numeracy, including young people who require additional support.
- In 2023/24, most young people achieved CfE third level or better in reading and writing. Almost all young people achieved CfE third level in listening and talking and numeracy by the end of S3. A majority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in listening and talking and numeracy. A minority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in reading and writing in 2023/24 by the end of S3.
- In 2023/24, a majority of young people who require additional support achieved CfE third level in reading by the end of S3. Most young people who require additional support achieved CfE third level or better in listening and talking and writing and almost all achieved CfE third level in numeracy by the end of S3. A minority of young people who require additional support achieved CfE fourth level in literacy and numeracy in 2023/24 by the end of S3.

#### Senior Phase

##### Literacy

- Most young people who left school achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy from 2019/20 to 2023/24, improving from significantly lower than the virtual comparator (VC) in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to in line in 2022/23 and 2023/24. The school is sustaining consistent levels of attainment at SCQF level 6 in literacy, improving to significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24.
- There is a steadily improving picture for young people who require additional support who leave school in literacy at SCQF levels 5 or better and 6 from 2021/22 to 2023/24, improving to above the VC in 2023/24.

##### Numeracy

- Most young people who left school achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy in 2022/23 and 2023/24. This was significantly higher than the VC over the same period and an improvement on previous years. A minority of leavers achieved SCQF level 6 from 2019/20 to 2023/24. This has declined from significantly higher than the VC in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to in line with the VC in 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- Almost all young people requiring additional support left school with SCQF levels 3 and 4 or better, higher or significantly higher than the VC from 2021/22 to 2023/24. A majority of young people requiring additional support left in 2022/23 and 2023/24 with SCQF level 5 or better in

numeracy, an improvement from a minority in 2019/20 to 2021/22. A minority of young people requiring additional support left with SCQF level 6 or better, above the VC from 2020/21 to 2023/24.

## **Cohorts**

### **Literacy**

- At S4, from 2019/20 to 2023/24, a majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. This has improved from being below the VC in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to being in line with the VC from 2022/23 to 2023/24.
- By S5, based on the S4 roll, a minority of young people attained SCQF level 6 over the last five years, which is in line with the VC.
- By S6, based on the S4 roll, a majority of young people attained SCQF level 6 in literacy from 2021/22 to 2023/24, in line with the VC.

### **Numeracy**

- At S4, a majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better between 2019/20 and 2022/23, improving to most in 2023/24. This was significantly higher than the VC in that year.
- By S5 and S6, based on the S4 roll, a minority of young people attained SCQF level 6 in numeracy from 2019/20 to 2023/24. This is generally in line with the VC.

### **English and mathematics**

- Attainment in English at N5 at S4 is lower than the national level in 'A-C' passes and 'A' passes in 2023/24. The percentage of 'no awards' at N5 at S4 is above the national level. By S5/6, 'A' passes at Higher are lower than national level in 2023/24. 'A-C' passes are in line with national level.
- At S4, the percentage of entries for N5 applications of mathematics is greater than the national picture, as are passes at both at 'A-C' and 'A'. At the same stage, the percentage of entries for N5 mathematics is above the national picture. Attainment at both at 'A-C' and 'A' at S4 in mathematics is generally in line with the national picture in 2023/24. By S5/6 at Higher level, attainment in mathematics is lower than the national level at 'A-C' passes and 'A' passes in 2023/24. The percentage of 'no awards' is above the national picture.
- Teachers should maintain a focus on the percentage and quality of passes in both English and mathematics.

### **Attainment over time**

#### **BGE**

- By the end of S3, most young people are achieving CfE third level or better in almost all subject areas. A minority of young people are achieving CfE fourth level in a minority of subjects. Senior leaders correctly have a strong focus on increasing aspiration and raising expectations in the BGE. They are working with curriculum leaders to ensure that young people are challenged appropriately to attain as highly as possible across all curriculum areas at CfE fourth level.

### **Senior phase**

- Based on average complementary tariff scores, the lowest attaining 20% of young people achieved higher outcomes than the VC as they left school in 2022/23 and 2023/24. The middle attaining 60% and the highest attaining 20% of young people performed in line with the VC

from 2021/22 to 2023/24. The attainment of young people with additional support needs is an improving picture.

### **Cohorts**

- Based on average complementary tariff scores, the lowest attaining 20% of young people in S4 attained significantly higher than the VC in 2022/23 to 2023/24, improving from being in line with the VC. The middle 60% and highest attaining 20% are in line with the VC.

### **Breadth and Depth**

- At S4, a majority of young people attain three or more passes at SCQF level 5C or better, in line with the VC. By S5 based on the S4 cohort, a minority of young people attain four or more passes at SCQF level 6C or better. The number of young people who attain two or more to five or more passes at SCQF level 6C or better is decreasing over time. By S6, a minority of young people attain five or more passes at SCQF level 6C or better, significantly lower than the VC for the past two years. By S6, a minority of young people achieve one or more passes at SCQF level 7C or better. Staff have recognised the need to further support young people to attain more high-quality passes at SCQF levels 5 and 6 or better.

### **All SCQF courses**

- In the senior phase, staff have increased the breadth of qualification from SCQF levels 3 to 6. These include the wide range of National Progression Awards and skills development awards now available to young people. These courses provide young people with more opportunities to achieve, as well as providing progression within subjects. They also support learners to develop a wider range of skills. Staff are focusing on ensuring that these courses add value effectively to the learning of young people as they progress through the school.

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

- Young people are increasing their skills for learning, life and work through participation in a wide range of achievement activities across the curriculum and within the wider community. Young people display confidence, responsibility and actively contribute to the life and ethos of the school and wider community. Young people succeed locally and nationally through these, particularly in sports and music. Each year, Grange Howard Community Council presents their Community Champion Awards to young people from Grange Academy. This recognises young people's enthusiasm, kindness, commitment and efforts in promoting community citizenship.
- Young people develop leadership skills through involvement as house captains, prefects and sport leaders. They contribute to initiatives that benefit the whole school, including the cost of the school day and period poverty. This helps young people and school staff to reduce stigma and discrimination and increases young people's sense of belonging. Young people receive valuable training which develops their understanding of mental health. Young people lead activities to provide support to young people and other children in the shared campus, which helps them to develop important team building and communication skills. Staff should now explore more programmes and activities that can be accredited. This will help to increase formal recognition of young people's volunteering and achievements across the school.
- Young people value highly their participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. A minority of young people across S3-S6 articulate their skills progression from bronze to gold awards. Young people talk confidently about the benefits of volunteering and their experiences developing leadership and organisational skills.
- Achievements are celebrated well through the school bulletin, the new approach to assemblies for S1, noticeboards, praise cards and social media, which are valued highly by young people.

This extends to young people's achievements outside of school, for example sporting achievements. The school hosts high profile celebration events to recognise achievements.

- Staff record young people's involvement in the wide range of achievement opportunities available both in and beyond school. However, staff are not yet tracking participation in extra-curricular activities or achievement routinely. Senior leaders recognise that adapting this model of tracking would support staff efforts to target those young people who would benefit most from engaging in achievement opportunities. This would help them develop a comprehensive strategic oversight of achievement across the whole school. Senior leaders should develop clear processes with partners to record the collective impact of their achievement offer.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff have a strong understanding of the social, cultural and economic context of the school. Staff have a focus on equity through supporting young people and their families impacted by poverty. This is done in a sensitive manner with the wellbeing of the young person being paramount. Senior leaders work with young people, staff and parents to reduce the cost of the school day through for example, the 'Ready to Learn' approach. Resources, including uniforms, are available to all in order to reduce barriers to young people engaging in their learning when they come into school. The pupil-led Magic Breakfast club, supported by partners, operates daily to support young people's wellbeing and readiness to learn through this approach. Young people are engaged in leadership roles such as the 'Period Poverty' initiative to ensure equity of provision of products to the school community. Senior leaders work with individual pupils and families to remove barriers for access to school trips.
- As part of the equity strategy, senior leaders have developed programmes of targeted interventions for young people who require additional support. This involves young people who live in Scottish index of multiple deprivation (SIMD) deciles one and two. This is led by a team of staff employed through PEF. This includes improving access to the curriculum through small group nurturing approaches and is leading to a reduction in exclusions.
- As a result of targeted intervention programmes in the BGE and senior phase, the attainment of young people in S4 who reside in SIMD one and two for literacy and numeracy combined at SCQF level 4 or better is consistently above the VC.
- Staff work effectively with partners including SDS, colleges, employers and universities. As a result, almost all young people move to a positive destination on leaving school. The school's positive destinations have decreased from 2021/22 and are below the VC. Senior leaders should continue to support young people to a positive destination through tracking and monitoring, which leads to effective interventions.

### Context

Grange Academy Hearing Impairment Unit (HIU) supports a few young people from across East Ayrshire. At present, all young people currently attending the HIU use spoken language. The school also caters for learners who use British Sign Language (BSL). There are three teachers of deaf children and young people (ToDs), including a principal teacher. The headteacher and depute headteacher of Grange Academy have overall strategic responsibility. The link depute headteacher provides considerable support to staff in the HIU. Young people attend mainstream subject classes for most of their timetables with support from ToDs. They also receive additional timetabled classes in the HIU.

### Leadership of change

- Senior leaders and staff across the school are highly motivated and ensure that deaf learners are well integrated into the school community, in line with the school values of respect, resilience and responsibility. As a result, staff provide an inclusive learning environment which supports well the needs of learners. Deaf young people are proud of their school. They speak highly of the support they receive and how this enables them to make progress in developing their learning and social skills.
- Staff in the HIU have created a departmental improvement plan with suitable priorities which are closely aligned with those of the school improvement plan. Teachers now need to plan to provide more specific detail and be set within clearly defined timescales. Staff should continue with current plans to enhance leadership opportunities across the team. They could share responsibility for improvement priorities more broadly to improve the pace of change. This should support staff to monitor progress more effectively and consider more fully the expected impact of improvement activities on outcomes for young people.

### Learning, teaching and assessment

- All staff in the HIU create a supportive learning environment. Staff and young people enjoy relationships which are warm and nurturing. Mainstream and HIU teachers consider the needs of individual deaf young people well, and all learners benefit from compassionate and attentive support. Young people and their parents speak positively about the impact of this on their readiness to learn. Young people are motivated and engage well in learning on most occasions. Staff intervene appropriately to provide additional support for young people as required.
- Class teachers communicate well with ToDs. Together, they adopt suitable strategies to ensure that deaf young people access learning. This includes the use of radio aids, preferential seating and subtitles when digital media is used. All staff work collaboratively to ensure that learners experience appropriate support based on their individual learning profiles. Teachers of deaf children and young people provide in-class support. This positively reduces barriers to learning for young people. They note carefully the work undertaken in class and any areas of difficulty. They follow up on these areas during timetabled support sessions which take place in HIU classrooms.
- Staff in the HIU have yet to make progress in reviewing their approaches to ensuring high quality- learning and teaching. They are considering how to establish closer networks with colleagues in primary schools and other ToDs. This will allow them to share effective practice and provide a network of mutual support. Senior leaders should consider how to better support staff in the HIU to develop more systematic approaches to quality assuring learning and teaching.

- Teachers of deaf children and young people communicate closely with mainstream colleagues to check the progress that learners are making. They use this information to inform young people and their parents of strengths and next steps in learning. Hearing Impairment Unit staff communicate well with young people and parents when barriers to learning arise and plan agreed interventions.

### **Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**

- Staff have a well-developed understanding of the social, emotional and communication strengths and development needs of young people who attend the HIU. They know and meet the needs of deaf young people well. Staff use the wellbeing indicators to check the progress that most young people are making, and this is recorded in Child's Plans. Hearing Impairment Unit staff monitor the young people in their care closely and use their knowledge of learners' wellbeing to plan strategies to provide effective targeted interventions. They provide useful information and updates to mainstream colleagues. As a result, almost all deaf young people feel safe, respected and included in the wider school community.
- Hearing Impairment Unit staff meet their statutory duties well. They are developing further their approaches to ensure that they fully meet the needs of young people. Young people, parents and partners are involved in annual review meetings which consider their views appropriately. This promotes a shared understanding of the progress that young people are making and identifies next steps. Staff should now review the quality of learning and wellbeing targets in child's plans. Targets need a stronger focus on expected impact. Staff need to reflect more fully on the small steps that they are expecting learners to make during the session and review progress termly. This will support them to record and respond more readily to changes in young people's needs as a school session progresses.
- Staff in the HIU have undertaken significant additional training to enhance their understanding of the needs of deaf learners. Most are accredited ToDs. They have attended BSL courses to improve their communication with young people who may require sign. Teachers of deaf children and young people encourage awareness of the needs of learners well and are active in promoting deaf awareness and knowledge of BSL. They do this by sharing communication strategies in class with mainstream staff and learners. They also provide a BSL lunchtime club and have a 'Sign of the Week'. There is an inclusive environment where the culture of respecting deaf young people is well established.

### **Raising attainment and achievement**

- In literacy, almost all learners in S1-3 are making good progress and are working at an appropriate CfE level. Staff perform baseline language assessments to gain a clear understanding of the detailed language profiles of deaf young people. They use this information to provide additional targeted interventions to any identified literacy barriers which deaf young people may encounter. At the senior phase, young people are presented for appropriately challenging English NQs.
- In numeracy, almost all learners in S1-3 are making good progress from their starting point and are working at an appropriate CfE level. All learners access mainstream classes and receive additional support within the HIU. At the senior phase, young people experience success when presented for NQs in mathematics which are well-suited to their ability level.
- Staff are at the early stages of recording young people's attainment over time. Staff need to review how this information is collated and reviewed. Staff now need to use data more strategically to better identify improvements in young people's attainment as they move through the BGE and into the senior phase. At the senior phase, senior leaders and HIU staff should consider the breadth and level of qualifications for deaf learners to identify further opportunities to maximise attainment.

- Young people benefit from a few wider achievement activities in school and in the local community. A few young people participate in local deaf clubs. Recently young people were successful in the recent East Ayrshire Council Youth Awards, have taken on the role of House Captain and are involved in the Pupil Council. Young people are proud of these achievements. Staff should consider how to promote further achievements and accreditation. This will support learners to further develop their communication and social skills in different contexts.
- In recent years, according to data provided by the school, all deaf young people have moved into an initial positive post-school destination. Staff link well with partners to provide valuable opportunities for a few learners at the senior phase to develop their knowledge of skills for work.

## 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.