

Summarised inspection findings

Bellshill Academy

North Lanarkshire Council

3 March 2026

Key contextual information

School Name: Bellshill Academy
Council: North Lanarkshire Council
SEED number: 8516634
Roll: 705

Bellshill Academy is a comprehensive school which serves the town of Bellshill. The headteacher was appointed in 2019. The school currently has a significant proportion of supply staff to cover staff maternity and absence.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average.

Exclusions are generally below the national average.

In September 2024, 20% of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2024, 44% of pupils live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2024, the school reported that 45% of pupils had additional support needs.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

The themes are:

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

- Staff and young people demonstrate the school's shared values of community, aspiration, respect and endeavour through positive daily interactions. As a result, learners feel safe, supported and ready to learn. Learning takes place in calm and respectful environments. Staff have worked collaboratively to implement the Bellshill Academy Learning Climate, resulting in increasingly consistent routines across almost all classes. Almost all teachers greet young people at classrooms and have a consistent approach to the start of a lesson. As a result, young people feel welcomed into classes and most engage well with learning activities. Respectful relationships are evident in classrooms and communal areas. On the few occasions where young people display dysregulated behaviour, staff respond promptly and sensitively, supporting learners to re-engage with learning.
- In most lessons, teachers clearly share the purpose of learning and explain what success looks like for young people. However, in the majority of lessons, success criteria focus too heavily on task completion rather than learning. Teachers should continue to develop the quality of success criteria to support young people to evaluate their progress more effectively. Almost all teachers provide clear instructions and explanations, which support young people's understanding. Teachers routinely use starter activities well to engage young people at the start of lessons. In a few classes, these activities effectively support retrieval practice and the consolidation of prior learning.
- In a few lessons, teachers set an appropriate pace and level of challenge. This enables young people to engage well and make meaningful progress in their learning. However, this practice is not yet consistent across the school. Teachers need to ensure that learning activities provide appropriate challenge for all learners. Most teachers use questioning effectively to check young people's understanding and recall of information. In the most effective examples, teachers use questioning skilfully to deepen understanding and support the development of higher-order thinking skills. As planned, senior leaders should continue to support teachers to share and extend best practice more consistently across the school.
- Almost all teachers know young people's learning needs well and have access to relevant information to help meet their needs. A few teachers use effective strategies to adapt learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers provide the same task for all learners at the same pace. This limits opportunities for appropriate challenge, support and personalised learning. Teachers should continue to develop and extend their use of differentiation strategies to meet

better the needs of all learners and to support improved progress, attainment and achievement.

- Most teachers use digital platforms regularly to support learning. Young people access class notes, assignments and revision materials both in class and at home. As a result, young people who miss learning through absence can re-engage with learning more easily. Positively, young people have worked with staff and played a key role in enhancing the effective use of digital technology to support learning in classrooms. Most teachers use plenary activities well. There is scope to develop more meaningful opportunities for young people to evaluate their learning against success criteria and to identify clear next steps.
- Almost all teachers make effective use of a range of summative assessment approaches across the broad general education (BGE) and the senior phase. A few teachers use formative assessment strategies well to check young people's understanding. This practice is stronger in the senior phase. Senior and middle leaders should continue with plans to identify and share effective assessment practice to build greater consistency across the school. Teachers work well with departmental colleagues on activities that support the confirmation of attainment judgements. In a few subject areas, these activities reflect the full moderation cycle. A minority of faculty staff engage with colleagues beyond the school, including partners within the local authority and outwith, to develop a shared understanding of standards. As planned, senior leaders should continue to support staff to embed effective moderation approaches consistently across all curricular areas.
- All teachers have access to helpful information regarding each young person's prior attainment and any potential barriers to learning. This information supports teachers well when planning for learning. Teachers make effective use of a variety of planning approaches, including an appropriate balance of long and short-term plans. These plans are often based on learning linked with summative assessments. There is scope for teachers to make more effective use of formative assessment strategies. This will support them to plan more responsively to meet the needs of young people.
- Teachers across all faculties take on a range of roles with Qualifications Scotland and use these opportunities to develop their understanding of national standards. They share relevant learning and knowledge with colleagues and young people. As a result, teachers are developing increased confidence in applying national standards, particularly in the senior phase. Teachers' approaches to assessment in the BGE is less well developed than in the senior phase. Teachers should continue to strengthen assessment approaches in the BGE to achieve greater consistency.
- Almost all teachers provide young people with regular feedback on their progress in learning. In the senior phase, young people use written learning logs to collate feedback from subject teachers, reflect on their progress, and set themselves targets for next steps in learning. In the strongest examples, written feedback supports young people well to set targets that are clear and measurable. Young people in the BGE are beginning to engage with similar approaches to tracking their progress. Almost all senior phase learners benefit from regular learner conversations about their progress. Teachers should consider how best to support all young people to use these tools effectively to ensure consistently high-quality feedback and clear identification of next steps.

- Middle leaders have developed tracking tools that are used regularly to monitor young people's progress across the BGE and senior phase. Senior leaders have identified key points during each term for whole-school tracking to be completed. Teachers, in the senior phase, use this information effectively to monitor progress within their classes and to compare learners' progress across subjects. The use of tracking information is stronger in the senior phase. Senior leaders should continue with planned approaches to extend this effective practice and strengthen the tracking and monitoring of progress across the BGE.
- Senior leaders should continue to use robust quality assurance processes to identify effective practice across all aspects of learning and teaching. They should share this practice through targeted professional learning to support greater consistency in the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

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

- Senior leaders and staff recognise that raising attainment across the school is an area for improvement. Senior leaders have established effective systems and processes to monitor young people's progress over time. As a result, teachers have developed more confidence in using and analysing attainment data, particularly in the senior phase. Staff recognise that further work is required to strengthen data-informed practice in the BGE. Class teachers analyse the attainment of their own classes, while middle leaders review departmental attainment, which supports a better understanding of performance. The key next step for teachers and middle leaders is to ensure that subject-specific strategies to raise attainment are clear, measurable and consistently implemented. The Raising Attainment Group has worked collaboratively to develop a whole-school strategy with a clear focus on improving the quality of attainment, including increasing higher-level passes and promoting a 'strive for five' culture. Senior leaders should now implement this strategy fully across the school, ensuring it is underpinned by high quality learning, teaching and assessment, high aspirations for all learners, and coherent curriculum planning.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

BGE

- Most young people achieved Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level literacy, and a majority achieved CfE fourth level by the end of S3 in 2023/24. Performance at both levels has declined from 2022/23 to 2023/24. It is now broadly in line with the local authority and national data at third level but remains above these measures at fourth level. Departmental staff work effectively with cluster primary colleagues on literacy moderation and are beginning to strengthen collaboration with other secondary schools. All learners in S1–S3 benefit from a dedicated literacy period and the Reading Schools initiative, which is supporting literacy attainment. Targeted literacy programmes support a few young people engage in learning and helps them access the curriculum.
- Most young people achieved CfE third level numeracy, with around a third achieving CfE fourth level in 2023/24. Over time, attainment shows variability at third level and a decline at fourth level. The mathematics department has revised courses to strengthen numeracy approaches and has engaged in internal and external moderation activities. This has resulted in staff being more confident in making reliable assessment judgements. As planned, departmental staff should now work more closely with primary colleagues on pedagogical approaches and moderation activities. This will strengthen further learning and teaching of numeracy and professional judgement of levels.

Senior phase

Leavers

- Most young people leaving school have achieved Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better in literacy between 2021/22 and 2023/24. Performance at this level has been improving over the last five years and has moved from being significantly lower than the Virtual Comparator (VC) in 2021/22 to being significantly higher in 2023/24. Just under half of young people who left school in 2023/24 achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy. Although this is in line with the VC, young people's attainment at SCQF level 6 is showing a pattern of decline since 2020/21.
- Most young people who left school in 2023/24, achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. The percentage of young people who achieve SCQF level 5 has been improving since 2021/22. This is now significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24 having been significantly lower in 2021/22. In 2023/24, a few young people achieved SCQF level 6 numeracy on leaving school. This has been declining since 2021/22 and is now significantly lower than the VC from previously being in line.
- There is a substantial difference between the young people who gain SCQF level 5 numeracy when compared to the full course qualification in mathematics. All young people achieving National 4 in mathematics have the opportunity to achieve SCQF level 5 numeracy. The department plan to extend this to allow young people achieving National 5 Mathematics to attain SCQF level 6 numeracy.
- Attainment of leavers who require additional support with their learning is above the VC in literacy and numeracy, with the exception of SCQF level 6 numeracy.

Cohorts

- At S4, most young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in 2024/25. This has increased on the previous session's attainment and remains in line with the VC. By S5, based on the S5 roll, a majority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in 2023/24. This has improved from being in line with the VC to being significantly higher. By S6, based on the S6 roll, most young people achieve SCQF level 6 or better which remains in line with the VC.
- At S4, most young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy, significantly higher than the VC between 2022/23 and 2024/25. By S5, based on the S5 roll, almost all achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy in 2024/25. This is significantly much higher than the VC. A few young people achieve SCQF level 6 or better in numeracy. This is significantly lower or significantly much lower than the VC for three out of the last five years. By S6, based on the S6 roll, a minority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 or better in numeracy. Performance at this level is generally inconsistent and is significantly lower or much lower than the VC for 2023/24 and 2024/25. Staff have introduced Higher Application of Mathematics in session 2025/26, this provides more suitable pathways for some young people and has the potential to improve SCQF level 6 numeracy.
- Young people's attainment in National Qualifications (NQs) in English and mathematics is generally in line with national levels. Entries at National 5 (N5) English are in line with national levels. Higher English entries are in line with national levels. The percentage of passes and quality of passes is a declining pattern. The department have identified areas within learning and teaching and courses they are going to focus on in 2025/26 to improve the performance of

the top attaining 20%. Senior leaders recognise increasing the percentage of passes and the quality of passes is an area for improvement.

- Entries of young people in N5 Applications of Mathematics are in line with national levels with the quality of pass rates comparable to national levels. The A-C pass rate at N5 Applications of Mathematics is above national levels. Entries at N5 Mathematics are below national levels. The quality and percentage of pass rate fluctuates between 2020/21 and 2024/25. Higher Mathematics entries are declining with attainment generally below national levels. As planned departmental staff should improve the quality of passes in both N5 and Higher Mathematics.

Attainment over time

BGE attainment over time

- Senior leaders capture young people's overall attainment of CfE levels across all curricular areas. Pupil Support staff and senior leaders use this information to track the progress of young people over time and to put interventions in place. Middle leaders and class teachers are at the early stages of using the whole school tracker to support planning at department level. Senior leaders and staff recognise that moderation with other schools is an important next step across the school to strengthen teacher's confidence and skill in applying national standards more accurately.
- The school report most young people achieve CfE third level, and a majority achieve CfE fourth level or better by the end of S3 across all subject areas beyond literacy and numeracy.

Senior phase

- Senior leaders and teachers use data well to identify young people who are not on track to attain appropriately in line with their level of ability. Further development is required to monitor the impact of interventions on attainment.

Leavers

- Attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people, when using complimentary tariff scores, is broadly in line with the VC between 2019/20 and 2023/24. The middle attaining 60% of young people is in line with the VC for the last two years, previously being significantly lower of significantly much lower than the VC. The performance of the highest attaining 20% of young people requires improvement. This has been significantly much lower than the VC for five years.
- The attainment of leavers who require additional support with their learning for the lowest attaining 20% and middle 60% is generally below the VC from 2021/22. This improves to being broadly in line with the VC in the latest year, 2023/24. The performance of the highest attaining 20% of young people who require additional support is below the VC for five years. When the school is compared against itself there has been improvement over the last two years.

Cohorts

- At S4, when using complimentary tariff scores, attainment of the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people has been broadly in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2024/25. At S5, based on the S5 roll, the lowest attaining 20% and the middle attaining 60% is broadly in line with the VC over the latest five years. The highest attaining 20% is in line with the VC in 2024/25, after previously being significantly lower or

significantly much lower than the VC. By S6, based on the S6 roll, the highest attaining 20% continues to be the main area of improvement.

Breadth and depth

- Improving the quality of passes and percentage of passes at both N5 and Higher across almost all faculties is a main area for development. All teachers are aware of this improvement priority as a school and monitor closely the progress of the highest attaining 20% of learners. Senior leaders and staff need very clear strategies within department improvement plans on how this will be achieved.
- A few young people achieve qualifications beyond National Qualifications (NQs) through a partnership with college. This broadens young people's learning pathways in the senior phase. This includes skills for work courses at SCQF level 4-6 and Foundation Apprenticeships. In addition, departments across the school have introduced additional qualifications to their curricular pathways including SCQF level 6 Leadership and Personal Finance and National Progression Awards in Business and Information Technology (IT) and Professional Theatre. Senior leaders should continue to review courses being offered to ensure they are appropriate and aspirational for each cohort.
- At S4, most young people gain one or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better with the majority achieving three or more awards. The percentage of young people gaining one or more to seven or more qualifications at S4 between 2021/22 and 2024/25 is broadly in line with the VC. Performance at this level is generally stable. The percentage of young people attaining one or more and two or more qualifications at SCQF level 5A or better is generally declining. This is now significantly lower or significantly much lower than the VC in 2024/25. The percentage of young people who gain three or more to five or more SCQF level 5A or better awards has slightly increased in 2024/25 and continues to remain in line with the VC.
- By S5, based on the S5 roll, the percentage of young people who gain one or more to seven or more awards at both SCQF level 5C and 5A or better is in line with the VC. There is an improvement across almost all of these measures in 2024/25. A majority of young people gain one or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better and a minority achieve three or more over the last five years, broadly in line with the VC. Performance of young people at SCQF 6A or better for one or more and two or more is significantly lower than the VC.
- By S6, based on the S6 roll, most young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better with just under half attaining three or more awards at these levels. This has been in line with the VC from 2020/21 to 2024/25. The percentage of young people achieving SCQF level 6A or better for two, three and five or more awards is now in line with the VC, previously being significantly much lower. Performance is significantly lower than the VC for one or more awards. A few young people gain one or more awards at SCQF level 7C and 7A or better. This is broadly either significantly lower or significantly much lower than the VC between 2020/21 and 2024/25.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Young people build skills and confidence through participation in a wide range of clubs and activities in school and their local communities. They recognise the development of skills such as leadership, teamwork and communication. A few young people apply these skills effectively in

wider contexts, including supporting at school events, cluster primary activities and parents' evenings.

- All young people in S1 achieve a SuperStar Award through completing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) challenges. Almost all young people in S2 gain the Young STEM Leader Award at Level 2 from their sustainability initiative, while all young people in S3 participate in the Youth Philanthropy Award. A majority of young people in S1 and S2 are now registered for Saltire Awards, enabling the school to capture and recognise a wider range of achievements.
- Young people in the senior phase develop skills through a range of wider achievement programmes, including Sports Ambassadors, Science Technology Engineering leaders and youth awards. Over the last five years, a few young people have achieved a Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award, with an increasing number currently on track. Young people gain accredited awards at SCQF levels 5 and 6 through volunteering opportunities. Young people in S6 contribute positively to school life through a range of leadership roles. A few complete the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme and deliver learning to S1 pupils. As a result, young people further develop skills in communication, organisation and working with others.
- The Future Friday's programme provides a broad range of extracurricular opportunities, including sports, Makaton, citizenship and wellbeing activities. Participation has increased over the last three years. Senior phase learners can achieve accredited awards, such as Leadership, Sports Leadership and STEM Ambassador Awards, through this programme.
- Staff work effectively with a range of partners to provide targeted support for a minority of young people. Partnerships with North Lanarkshire College, youth work services, employers and employability teams support young people to build confidence and achieve more positively in school.
- The school celebrates young people's achievements regularly through assemblies, newsletters, daily communications and awards ceremonies. Annual awards events in both the BGE and senior phase recognise attainment and wider achievement effectively. Senior leaders now track young people's participation and achievements across school and beyond. They do not currently use this information consistently to evaluate participation or identify gaps. Senior leaders should now use this tracking information more effectively to support staff to identify young people at risk of missing out and to plan targeted opportunities.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff have a strong understanding of young people's and their families' socio-economic circumstances. They have developed a clear rationale for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Staff target this funding well to address attainment gaps, reduce barriers to learning, improve attendance and wellbeing, and strengthen engagement with learning and families. Senior leaders should now strengthen how they measure and evidence the impact of these strategies, particularly in demonstrating accelerated progress and improved attainment in national qualifications for young people supported through PEF.
- Additional staffing funded through PEF supports attendance and attainment for young people at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy awards in the senior phase. Collaborative working by staff has improved engagement for a few young people, and as a result, a majority

of learners who receive this support achieve literacy and numeracy awards. Staff are now developing targeted attainment plans to support learners to achieve national qualifications.

- Senior leaders have established clear and systematic approaches to monitoring and supporting attendance. These approaches have led to improved attendance and reduced in-school truancy. Staff engage effectively with parents and young people, including through home visits and support beyond the school environment. Staff recognise the need to sustain and build on these improvements, particularly for young people who require additional support. A few young people attend school on flexible timetables. Senior leaders should continue to review the plans for these young people to maximise their attendance at school.
- Staff work well with a range of partners to provide Developing the Young Workforce opportunities. Young people value experiences such as barista training and car valeting, which lead to accredited qualifications. These opportunities support engagement, inclusion and improved attendance for participating young people. Almost all young people who left school over the last five years and live in SIMD deciles 1 and 2, progressed to a positive destination. Almost all young people requiring additional support also moved on to a positive destination over this period. While the proportion of young people in receipt of free school meals entering a positive destination has declined over time, most achieved a positive destination in 2023/24.

Other relevant evidence

- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of young people through food in school. Several areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.
- Young people receive their full entitlement to religious and moral education and their entitlement to high quality physical education.
- Young people from S1 to S3 receive their entitlement to modern language learning as part of the Language Learning in Scotland 1+2 approach.
- Senior leaders should continue to engage parents in decisions on Pupil Equity Funding.

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.