

Summarised inspection findings

Bellahouston Academy

Glasgow City Council

16 June 2026

Key contextual information

School Name: Bellahouston Academy
Council: Glasgow City Council
SEED number: 8432031
Roll: 1052

Bellahouston Academy is a non-denominational, comprehensive secondary school located in south-west Glasgow. The headteacher has been in post for five years. He is supported by four deputy headteachers.

Attendance and exclusions are generally in line with the national average.

In September 2024, 40.1% of young people were registered for free school meals.

In September 2024, 35.2% of young people lived in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2024, the school reported that 58.3% of young people had additional support needs.

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 teachers foster positive, respectful relationships with young people successfully and know them well as individuals. The headteacher has focused appropriately on the importance of creating a strong sense of community across the school, which prioritises well young people's sense of wellbeing. This caring and nurturing approach from staff supports a calm, purposeful learning environment. Most young people participate actively in lessons, demonstrating enthusiasm and strong commitment to their learning. They answer questions confidently, engage well with tasks, and value opportunities to develop their understanding. Almost all young people behave very well in class. They are resilient, enthusiastic and speak with confidence and pride about their school and its values.
- Staff worked well collaboratively to develop a clear whole-school learning policy that sets clear expectations for classroom routines and learning and teaching. Almost all teachers structure their lessons according to the policy and this results in young people experiencing consistent approaches across the school. For example, the established 'opens' routine supports young people to settle quickly and prepare for learning. Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs) are supporting the sharing of effective practice and are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of learning and teaching. Senior leaders should continue to build on this work to deepen and extend high-quality pedagogy across the school.
- In most lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions which support young people's understanding effectively. Most teachers share the purpose of learning and outline what success looks like, often linking this appropriately to prior learning. In examples of best practice, success criteria are used well to help young people reflect on their progress and identify next steps in learning. There is scope for teachers to develop further the consistency and quality of success criteria and to involve young people more in their creation.
- Most teachers provide young people with group and paired tasks that promote collaboration. Young people speak with enthusiasm about activities that allow them to work with their peers. In lessons where learning is overly teacher-led, a few young people disengage from tasks. Staff should continue to seek opportunities for active tasks, personalisation and choice, and provide varied, relevant and rich contexts for learning.
- Most teachers use questioning effectively to check young people's understanding and knowledge. In the most effective practice, questioning is used skilfully to promote higher-order

thinking and deeper learning. Senior leaders should continue to identify and share this strong practice to ensure a consistently high level of challenge for all young people.

- Most lessons are well-structured with teachers providing appropriate tasks and resources. A minority of teachers plan very effective lessons which provide all young people in the class with purposeful pace and strong levels of support and challenge. Increasingly, staff are using information about young people's needs to inform their planning. Senior leaders should continue to strengthen approaches to sharing this information and build further consistency in differentiation, ensuring all learners experience appropriate pace and challenge.
- A majority of teachers use a range of formative assessment approaches effectively to check understanding and to measure progress in learning. These include strategies such as show-me boards and online quizzes. A few teachers are highly skilled in using self- and peer-assessments to help young people to reflect on their progress. These teachers adapt their planned lesson content in response to formative assessment evidence. This includes providing appropriate consolidation or extension work for a few young people during lessons.
- Positively, an increasing number of departments work effectively with local primaries to develop consistent approaches to planning and assessment across transition. They use attainment and standardised test data from the primary schools as a reference to compare their broad general education (BGE) attainment data to, and to reinforce its validity. For those departments, this is resulting in reliable data and effective arrangements which ensure learning is progressive at the point of transition.
- Most teachers use appropriate summative assessments in the senior phase to measure young people's progress through National Qualifications. A minority of teachers across the school undertake a range of roles with Qualifications Scotland. They share their experience with colleagues across the school, and this supports a deeper understanding and application of national standards. Staff across departments undertake helpful verification and cross-marking activities, particularly in the senior phase. Across a few departments in the BGE, the planning and quality of summative assessments to inform robust judgements of progression within a level is variable. Senior leaders should develop and implement a consistent, school-wide assessment strategy to improve the reliability of data, particularly in the BGE. Teachers should continue to develop their understanding of how to use the learning, teaching and assessment cycle to inform their planning.
- A majority of teachers provide helpful feedback which supports young people to understand their progress and identify next steps in learning. Learner conversations are particularly effective in the senior phase and young people value having clear targets and specific areas to develop. There is scope to extend this strong practice more consistently across the BGE.
- Middle leaders have developed a range of systems to track and monitor young people's progress. In most departments, use of these tracking systems supports teachers and middle leaders to identify learners who require additional support or challenge. Approaches such as a 'spotlight' technique are used to identify young people who would benefit from more targeted interventions. These supports are leading to improved outcomes for groups of young people, including those following bespoke pathways. Senior leaders should continue to strengthen consistency in the use of tracking information across all departments to ensure timely interventions and to measure their impact more effectively.

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, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 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

- The percentage of young people achieving Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3 increased overall from 2021/22 to 2024/25. Almost all young people achieved CfE third level or better in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3 in 2024/25. The percentage of young people attaining CfE fourth level in numeracy shows improvement over time, with a majority attaining at this level between 2021/22 and 2024/25. A minority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in literacy in 2024/25. Senior leaders should continue as planned to ensure that all young people are assessed appropriately at CfE fourth level in literacy through S3.

Senior phase

Leavers (literacy)

- Most young people leaving school between 2020/21 and 2023/24 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. This was in line with the virtual comparator (VC) between 2021/22 and 2023/24. A majority of young people leaving school between 2019/20 and 2023/24 achieved SCQF level 6 in literacy. This was in line with the VC.
- Most young people with ASN leaving school between 2020/21 and 2023/24 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. This was slightly below the VC, apart from in 2022/23 when it was slightly above. The percentage of young people with ASN leaving school with SCQF level 6 in literacy between 2019/20 and 2023/24 was above the VC in each of those years.

Leavers (numeracy)

- A majority of young people leaving school between 2019/20 and 2023/24 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This was significantly lower or significantly much lower than the VC in four of this five-year period. A minority of young people leaving school achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy between 2020/21 and 2023/24, in line with the VC. More young people have been leaving school before the end of the school year in recent sessions. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to recognise young people's attainment in numeracy before they leave school. They should continue with plans to ensure that young people have access to suitable assessments at appropriate points during courses. This will support them to track progress and attainment accurately and provide interventions when needed.

- A majority of young people with ASN leaving school between 2019/20 and 2022/23 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This decreased to just under half achieving this in 2023/24, below the VC. A minority of leavers with ASN achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy from 2019/20 to 2023/24. This is above the VC.

Cohorts (literacy)

- At S4, a majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy from 2020/21 to 2024/25. This was in line with the VC for four of the five years, and significantly higher than the VC in 2022/23.
- As young people move through S5 and S6, they have been sustaining positive attainment in literacy over the last five years. By S5, based on the S4 roll, the percentage of young people that achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy was significantly higher than the VC from 2021/22 to 2023/24. By S6, based on the S4 roll, a majority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 in literacy over the five-year period. This is significantly higher than the VC.

Cohorts (numeracy)

- At S4, a minority of young people achieved numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better from 2020/21 to 2024/25. This is significantly lower or significantly much lower than the VC. Senior leaders should continue with plans to course young people moving from the BGE to the senior phase appropriately in line with tracking data.
- By S5 and S6, based on the S4 roll, the percentage of young people achieving SCQF level 6 in numeracy from 2021/22 to 2024/25 was in line with the VC.
- Senior leaders and staff are aware of the need to ensure that all young people attain literacy and numeracy awards at a level appropriate to their ability before leaving the school. They are now targeting at an earlier stage young people at risk of not achieving literacy or numeracy awards. Interventions include young people working in small groups, and on a one-to-one basis with staff. These interventions help a few young people to make accelerated progress to achieving appropriate awards.

National Qualifications

- At S4, the percentage of young people entered for National 5 Applications of Mathematics is below the national average. However, attainment was at a higher level than national data between 2022 and 2025. Attainment at National 5 Mathematics for young people in S4 and S5 was below national averages each year between 2021 and 2025. There is a need to reduce the number of No Awards in National 5 Mathematics. Senior and middle leaders have introduced more rigorous and consistent experiences in mathematics classes in the senior phase. These include retrieval practice starter tasks and structured plenary recap activities. More robust discussions around appropriate coursing moving from the BGE to the senior phase have also been undertaken this session. It is too early to see the impact of these interventions on attainment in mathematics. Entries and performance in Higher Mathematics are generally in line with national figures.
- The percentage of young people entered for National 5 English in S4 is slightly lower than national figures. However, those young people attain well, with most young people from 2021 to 2024 achieving a pass at grade A–C. Entries for Higher English in S5 and S6 are generally slightly above national figures.

Attainment over time

BGE

- Staff use a range of assessment information to inform their judgements of achievement of a level in all curriculum areas. These are largely based on summative assessments, linked to national Benchmarks. Most young people make appropriate progress and attain appropriate CfE levels by the end of S3 in all curriculum areas. Senior leaders should continue to work with teachers to develop and use their tracking information to identify any gaps in learner progress through the BGE.

Senior phase

Leavers

- When compared using average complementary tariff points, the attainment of all groups of leavers generally shows patterns of decline over time from 2020/21 to 2023/24. The attainment of the lowest 20% of young people leaving school is significantly lower or much lower than the VC for four of the five years from 2019/20 to 2023/24. The attainment of the middle attaining 60% was significantly lower than the VC in 2023/24, having been in line with the VC in three of the four years previously. Attainment of the highest attaining 20% of leavers was in line with the VC from 2019/20 to 2022/23. It moved to being significantly lower than the VC in 2023/24. School leaders have correctly identified the need to develop more varied progression pathways focusing on improved outcomes. They are also increasing the use of tracking data to identify and support more effectively young people not on track to achieve at their full potential prior to leaving the school.

Cohorts

- At S4, and by S5 based on the S4 roll, the attainment of all cohorts has generally been in line with the VC from 2020/21 to 2024/25.
- By S6 based on the S4 roll, for the middle attaining 60% of young people, attainment was significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24 and 2024/25. For the highest attaining 20% of young people, average complementary tariff scores have declined from 2021/22 to 2024/25. However, attainment remains in line with the VC from 2020/21 to 2024/25.

Breadth and depth

- At S4, a majority of young people achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better, with the exception of 2021/22 and 2022/23 when most young people achieved this. This is in line with the VC. A minority achieved five or more awards at this level during the same period. This is in line with the VC. The percentage of young people achieving one or more, three or more or five or more awards at SCQF level 5A or better is generally in line with the VC.
- By S5, the percentage of young people achieving one or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better decreased from a majority between 2020/21 and 2022/23, to a minority in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This was significantly higher than the VC in 2022/23 and 2023/24 but decreased to in line with the VC in 2024/25. A few young people achieved five or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better between 2020/21 and 2024/25. This was in line with the VC. Staff should continue to support young people in S5 to attain more high-quality passes at SCQF level 6.
- By S6, a majority of young people achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better from 2020/21 to 2024/25. This was significantly higher than the VC. A minority of young people achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better. This was significantly higher

than the VC. A few young people achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 7C or better and SCQF level 7A in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This was in line with the VC.

- Senior and middle leaders continue to review carefully their curricular offer and progression pathways for senior phase learners. Young people benefit from new courses which reflect better their needs and interests. These courses and awards help young people to attain a greater breadth of skills and qualifications, enriching their curriculum. Senior leaders should continue to consider the added value of all courses and ensure that they are at suitably aspirational levels for young people.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Almost all young people benefit from an extensive range of clubs, excursions, committees and groups. These support their sense of achievement and reflect the caring, nurturing ethos in the school that allows them to grow and thrive. A minority of young people contribute to the school and local community effectively, such as through the sustainability club, Mentors in Violence Prevention or the study café. These young people demonstrate effective leadership and communication skills. Senior leaders should continue to develop and embed their recently introduced achievement tracker, including gathering information on young people's achievements out of school. They should continue to use this information to identify and support young people at risk of missing out on achievements.
- Staff offer a wide range of enrichment experiences. These are building increased confidence in young people and allowing them to develop and acquire new skills. A substantial number of young people across the school participate in the annual school show. They speak enthusiastically of the different roles they play and the skills of communication, team building and organisation which they develop. Young people are positive about the many opportunities to engage in excursions related to their learning at home and abroad. These provide young people with learning beyond their local community. A significant minority of young people have leadership roles in a range of sports, promoting active lifestyles in the school and local community. School ambassadors, for example in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Diversity, are contributing to school life effectively. They lead clubs, assemblies and learning for younger peers in the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme. These young people are positive role models and use their learning, knowledge and experiences proactively to respond to the needs of their school community.
- Staff have revised the school's skills framework and are actively promoting identified meta-skills linked to school values. Young people are developing the confidence to identify and talk about the skills they are developing over time. Staff are supporting this well through the use of pupil profiles to record skills development.
- A few young people are developing important skills for life, learning and work through vocational courses, such as barista, retail and leadership awards. They talk confidently about how these courses are providing them with skills they can apply at school and within the local community.
- An increasing number of young people gain accreditation for participation in a range of activities, such as Crest, Saltire and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Senior leaders should now develop their positive work in this area and put in place a clear achievement strategy. This would support them to analyse data and ensure there is a clear overview of young people's

engagement in clubs, enrichment experiences and accreditation. This should help them to maintain a clear overview of range of accreditation that young people achieve.

- A few young people access specialist sports coaching and training as part of Glasgow School of Sport (GSOS). Young people are selected for the school through demonstrating their high levels of ability and potential to excel in the chosen sport specialism. The facilities allow young people to extend their sporting talents in a nurturing and positive learning environment. Young people speak very positively about their learning experiences and value the high-quality support and encouragement provided by GSOS and school staff. GSOS staff use the significant sporting achievements of previous students to inspire and encourage their committed and highly motivated learners.

Equity for all learners

- Attendance is slightly below the national average. Senior leaders prioritise appropriately the need to increase attendance as an important area for improvement. They have worked effectively with their learning community to develop a consistent attendance policy used by both secondary and primary schools. Staff monitor attendance carefully, and the home-school support worker provides regular contact and home visits to help families. These actions are helping a few young people improve their attendance and engagement. Senior and middle leaders should develop further strategies and interventions to support targeted young people to improve their attendance and timekeeping. Senior leaders also recognise that extended trips abroad by a few families affect overall attendance and are strengthening messages about the link between regular attendance and achievement.
- Staff understand the school's social and economic context very well and work actively to remove financial barriers for families. They make good use of support from the local authority's Financial Inclusion Officer and regularly apply for grants so that all young people can take part in school activities without cost being a barrier. Staff know young people's wellbeing needs well. Key staff lead targeted interventions to support those who require additional help with their learning. These interventions are leading to improvements in key attainment measures such as literacy and numeracy for a few young people. Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding effectively to support young people with the greatest needs. This includes staffing The Hub, which provides a nurturing environment for those at risk of disengaging. Targeted programmes such as Urban Adventure also help young people develop confidence, improve attendance and gain new skills.
- Young people who live in the least affluent data zones achieve well. Over recent years, the attainment of school leavers living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1–3 has been in line with, or in some years significantly higher or much higher than national performance. In 2023/24, young people from SIMD 1 performed significantly higher than national figures.
- Young people value the advice they receive about careers and subject choices, including through PSHE and strong links with employers and training partners. They learn about options available to them when they leave school, including the world of work and the skills they need to succeed. Staff track post-16 destinations closely and act quickly to support young people who may be at risk of not finding a suitable pathway. A majority of young people stayed on at school from S4 to S6 from 2019/20 to 2023/24. All or almost all young people moved on to an

initial positive destination on leaving school for the same period. Most young people left school to higher or further education from 2021/22 to 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. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.
- Young people receive their entitlement to religious and moral education in the school. Young people also experience high quality physical education in line with national expectations. Senior leaders should ensure they meet the expectations set out in the Scottish Government's Language Learning in Scotland: a 1+2 Approach policy.

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.