

Summarised inspection findings

Broughton High School

The City of Edinburgh Council

31 March 2026

Key contextual information

School Name: Broughton High School
Council: The City of Edinburgh Council
SEED number: 5531632
Roll: 1306

Broughton High School is a non-denominational secondary school serving an area of north Edinburgh. It has four associated primary schools: Ferryhill, Flora Stevenson, Granton and Stockbridge. Broughton High School fully integrates three specialist provisions into the life and work of the school: The City of Edinburgh Music School, the Scottish Football Association (SFA) Performance School and The City of Edinburgh Dance School. The headteacher has been in post since August 2024. She is supported by four depute headteachers and a business manager. The director of The City of Edinburgh Music School is also a member of the school's senior leadership team.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average. Exclusions are generally in line with the national average. There was an increase in the number of exclusions during 2021/22. This has declined in subsequent academic years.

In September 2024, 15.8% of pupils were registered for free school meals, in line with the national average.

In September 2024, 49% of pupils lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles one to four, and 25.1% of pupils lived in SIMD decile 10.

In September 2024, the school reported that 58.5% of pupils 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

- Staff and young people foster positive and nurturing relationships that reflect well the school values of inclusion, integrity and respect. In almost all lessons, these mutually respectful relationships between staff and young people are evident. As a result of this positive ethos, almost all young people are well behaved and engage with their learning in a calm environment. Almost all young people feel confident to approach staff to provide help or support if they find elements of their learning challenging. Almost all staff demonstrate care and compassion for young people.
- Staff worked collaboratively to develop a helpful positive relationships policy. They undertook meaningful professional learning relating to restorative practice which is supporting a respectful and purposeful culture for learning. A few young people, on occasion, disengage from their learning and exhibit low-level disruptive behaviours. Most teachers address this positively and appropriately.
- In almost all lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning routinely. This ensures young people understand the relevance of their learning. A majority of teachers place learning in context and share measures of success at the beginning of a lesson. A few refer back to these measures to review progress effectively with young people throughout their learning. Staff recognise that success criteria should focus on learning and not the completion of tasks. Positively, young people access learning resources and materials via digital platforms in and outwith the classroom. This offers them greater ownership of their learning and opportunities to review their own progress. A few teachers provide young people with meaningful opportunities to co-create their measures of success. Senior and middle leaders should share this practice more widely.
- There is a well-established process for sharing relevant information about young people, including any additional support needs they may have. Almost all teachers demonstrate an awareness of the needs of young people and strategies required to support them. However, in a majority of lessons, learning is overly teacher-led which impacts on the pace of the lesson and the level of challenge for a minority of young people. Young people are most engaged in lessons that contain a variety of activities including group, paired and independent learning. Teachers should plan learning that meets the needs of all young people, including appropriately differentiated learning activities. This will help to accelerate progress for all young people.

- Across the school, almost all teachers use questioning strategies effectively to check understanding and recall. A majority of teachers use interesting and creative open questioning techniques to encourage young people to think deeply about their learning and to prompt engagement. Senior leaders should continue to share highly effective practice in this area so that it is widely embedded across the school. This will help to increase the level of challenge for all young people.
- All young people access individual digital tablets confidently to support their learning. They use resources including useful online classes and group platforms to access and share work. Most teachers use these to support learning effectively through collaborative tasks, resource creation and easy access to digital resources. In most lessons, almost all learners use devices skilfully. A few teachers provide creative and innovative learning experiences using digital technology. As a result of well-planned approaches, almost all young people enhance and develop their digital literacy rapidly. Young people should play a key role in planning, implementing and evaluating the development of digital skills moving forward.
- Staff have developed a helpful assessment policy. This has extended staff confidence in the application of national standards and expectations. Staff in all faculties have developed effective assessment processes that align well with these expectations. Across all faculties teachers use a range of assessment techniques well to gather information on the progress of learners. Staff use this information effectively and sensitively to identify young people who may require additional support or interventions. A majority of teachers use formative assessment approaches successfully to check for understanding. These include peer- and self-assessment that helps young people understand better how they can progress in their learning. In almost all departments, teachers offer purposeful feedback to young people on their learning, including through the use of learner conversations. As a result, particularly in the senior phase, young people have a clear understanding of their current working level and target grades. A few teachers across the school also use digital tools creatively to provide effective feedback to young people.
- Teachers in a minority of faculties have well-established and positive partnerships with primary colleagues. These support well-shared approaches to assessment and understanding of levels for young people transitioning from primary to secondary. Across the senior phase, most teachers demonstrate strong understanding of the assessment standards required for National Qualifications. Teachers who have taken on Scottish Qualifications Authority responsibilities within their subject area support their colleagues further to understand and apply national standards. In most faculties, teachers engage constructively in regular moderation activities and demonstrate an increasing understanding of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle. Senior and middle leaders should continue with plans to develop moderation activities further in the broad general education (BGE). This will continue to improve the validity and consistency of teacher judgements across all curriculum areas.
- Teachers in all departments have effective systems and processes for tracking progress through the BGE and senior phase. The few most effective examples provide a robust and consistent approach involving young people in evaluating and tracking their progress and planning their learning. Senior and middle leaders should continue to embed their new monitoring and tracking system across the whole school and develop further their quality assurance of the data gathered. This will support areas where interventions would be beneficial, as well as providing useful information to parents through reports.

- In almost all departments, teachers plan learning appropriately in line with national expectations. Staff are developing confidence in using data to plan and support the needs of specific learners, including particular groups and cohorts. As new systems are embedded further, staff should continue to refine their approaches to measuring the impact of specific interventions. This will demonstrate the positive outcomes achieved over time.

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

very good

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

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

BGE

- Young people attain very well in literacy and numeracy in the BGE. Between 2021/22 and 2024/25, almost all young people achieved Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level or better in both literacy and numeracy by the end of S3. In 2024/25, a majority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in literacy by the end of S3, and most young people achieved CfE fourth level in numeracy.
- The literacy and numeracy school improvement groups (SIGs) each have representatives from a majority of school faculties. The SIGs produce helpful literacy and numeracy resources and advice for other teaching staff. This is helping to develop a consistency in teachers' understanding of literacy and numeracy skills in different learning contexts. Staff track the progress of young people effectively. This allows teachers to identify those who are not on track to attain their expected levels in literacy and numeracy. Staff use well-planned interventions and support to address barriers to learning. As a result, overall high levels of attainment in the BGE are being sustained over time.

Senior phase

- Overall, the attainment of young people in literacy and numeracy at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 4 and 5 is very strong.

Leavers (literacy)

- Most young people leaving school between 2020/21 and 2022/23 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. This was significantly higher than the virtual comparator (VC). This increased to almost all young people in 2023/24, significantly much higher than the VC. The majority of young people leaving school between 2020/21 and 2023/24 achieved SCQF level 6 in literacy. This was significantly much higher than the VC in 2023/24. At SCQF level 5 and 6, there have been positive increases over time.
- Almost all young people who have an additional support need (ASN) and who left school in 2023/24 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy. A majority achieved SCQF level 6. This was substantially above the VC.

Cohorts (literacy)

- At S4, and by S5 and S6, most young people achieved SCQF level 5 in literacy from 2020/21 to 2024/25. At S4, this was in line with the VC in 2023/24 and 2024/25. By S5 and S6, this was significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC between 2021/22 and 2024/25. By S5, a majority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 in three of the last five years, broadly in the line with the VC. By S6, a majority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 over the five-year period. This was significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Leavers (numeracy)

- The majority of young people leaving school between 2019/20 and 2021/22 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This was in line with the VC. This increased to most young people leaving school in 2022/23 and 2023/24 having achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This was significantly higher than the VC. A minority of young people leaving school achieved SCQF level 6 in numeracy, in line with the VC, between 2020/21 and 2023/24.
- Most young people who have an additional support need and who left school in 2023/24 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. A minority achieved SCQF level 6. These were substantially above the VC. At both measures, there are increases in attainment over time.

Cohorts (numeracy)

- In S4, a majority of young people achieved numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better in four of the past five years. This is in line with the VC in 2024/25 but was significantly higher than the VC in 2020/21, 2022/23 and 2023/24, and significantly much higher than the VC in 2021/22.
- By S5 and S6, the percentage of young people achieving SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy was significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC each year between 2021/22 and 2024/25. A minority of young people achieved numeracy at SCQF level 6 or better over the same time period. This was in line with the VC.

National Qualifications

- Young people attain very well in both National 5 (N5) English and N5 Mathematics in S4, and Higher English and Higher Mathematics in S5. Attainment at these levels is generally 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 in the BGE. Senior leaders do not currently produce an overview of young people's achievement of a level in all curricular areas by the end of S3. Senior leaders recognise that further work is required to support staff in moderation of assessment standards across different faculties. This will develop confidence in professional judgements in the BGE. The recently introduced pupil tracking system will give senior and middle leaders a comprehensive and detailed overview of the progress of all young people across all curriculum areas.

Leavers

- When compared using average complementary tariff points, the attainment of leavers has been above the VC from 2019/20 to 2023/24. The attainment of the lowest 20% of young

people leaving school was in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2022/23. This increased to be significantly much higher than the VC in 2023/24.

- In 2023/24, the attainment of the middle attaining 60% of leavers increased to its highest level in the five-year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24. This was significantly much higher than the VC.
- The highest attaining 20% of leavers attained significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC each year between 2019/20 and 2023/24.
- The attainment of school leavers with ASN has been above the VC from 2019/20 to 2023/24, with continuing increases from 2020/21 to 2023/24.

Cohorts

- In S4, the attainment of lowest attaining 20% of young people has been significantly higher than the VC in three of the five-year period. However, it decreased slightly to be in line with the VC in 2023/24 and 2024/25. The middle attaining 60% and the highest attaining 20% of young people have sustained high levels of attainment over time, significantly much higher than the VC in three of the five-year period between 2020/21 and 2024/25.
- By S5, based on the S4 roll, attainment of the lowest attaining 20% was in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2024/25. Attainment of the middle attaining 60% decreased from being significantly much higher than the VC in 2023/24 to being in line in 2024/25. The highest attaining 20% consistently attained significantly much higher than the VC between 2021/22 and 2024/25.
- By S6, based on the S4 roll, the lowest attaining 20% of young people attained in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2024/25. Attainment for the middle attaining 20% and highest attaining 20% of young people has increased year on year between 2022/23 and 2024/25. Attainment for these cohorts was significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC in these years.
- Senior leaders and staff should continue to provide targeted support for the lowest attaining 20% of young people in order to raise their attainment further.

Breadth and depth

- Senior leaders have a clear focus on attainment as well as a detailed understanding of the context of the school. They have reviewed the curricular offer for senior phase learners and are in the process of introducing a wider range of courses. This will support all young people to make relevant and appropriate course choices in order to maximise their potential to achieve and attain well.
- In S4, a majority of young people achieved three or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better between 2020/21 and 2024/25. This was significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC in four of the past five years. A minority of young people achieved five or more awards at this level in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This was in line with the VC, and a decrease from 2021/22 and 2022/23 when attainment was significantly much higher than the VC. Young people in S4 sustain high levels of attainment at SCQF level 5A. The percentage of young people achieving

between one or more and five or more awards at SCQF level 5A has been significantly higher than the VC in three of the past four years.

- By S5, a majority of young people in S5 achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better between 2020/21 and 2024/25. This was significantly higher or significantly much higher from 2021/22 to 2024/25. A minority of young people achieved three or more or five or more awards at this level in the same period. This was in line with the VC in 2024/25. A minority of young people achieved one or more to three or more awards at SCQF level 6A from 2020/21 to 2024/24. This was in line with the VC in the most recent year.
- By S6, the percentage of young people achieving one or more to three or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better was significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24, and significantly much higher in 2024/25. A majority of young people achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better in 2024/25. This was significantly much higher than the VC. A minority of young people achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 7A. This was significantly much higher than the VC in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people take part in a wide range of clubs, activities and programmes that support achievement beyond the classroom. For example, young people participate in a range of sporting activities including basketball, gymnastics and volleyball, and creative pursuits such as musical groups, an art club, dance and the youth theatre. Young people talk positively about the benefits of participating in a variety of activities. They develop independence, build confidence and enhance their wellbeing. Senior pupils are increasingly taking on leadership roles within these clubs and activities.
- Senior leaders and staff correctly identified the need to continue to develop a robust system to track young people's participation and achievement. Senior leaders should use this to analyse information about young people's participation and identify any who may not be accessing suitable opportunities. Senior leaders should also continue to gather the views of young people to ensure that achievement activities are informed by their needs, interests and ambitions.
- Staff and young people work well together to promote inclusion and a sense of community. For example, a few young people lead groups focused on equalities and environmental issues, or lead interhouse activities and events. Young people speak with enthusiasm regarding the valuable skills for learning, life and work they develop through these roles. This is helping young people to contribute to the school's continuing development as a rights respecting school.
- A range of important partners support young people well. These include local community sports clubs and colleges. Young people also benefit from programmes which support them with mentoring, internships and guidance from employers. Young people involved in these programmes talk confidently about the valuable knowledge and skills they are developing to prepare them for the world of work.
- Staff in the school recognise and celebrate well the achievements of young people, for example through noticeboards, social media, newsletters, assemblies and events. This contributes to young people feeling valued and part of the school community. The annual Celebration of Achievement and Sports Awards events acknowledge young people's wider achievement, progress, leadership and effort.

- A few young people gain SCQF recognition for wider achievement in the senior phase. Developments such as the Language Ambassadors programme, and the more focused role for Learner Improvement Groups in improvement planning, are providing opportunities for increased numbers of learners to achieve leadership awards.

Equity for all learners

- The Broughton UP programme, supported by pupil equity funding (PEF), targets cohorts of young people in S3 to S6 who reside in SIMD deciles one to three. The programme allocates mentors and provides a selection of talks and resources. As a result, young people increase their self-confidence, improve their attendance and develop a range of skills for work and life. Almost all young people completing the programme demonstrate increased aspiration and on leaving school gained a university place. Senior leaders have also used PEF to support two Pupil Support Officers. Their engagement with local families has helped to improve attendance for targeted young people.
- Senior leaders track and monitor the attainment of young people who face additional challenges in their learning as well as those affected by deprivation. A range of targeted interventions are applied when appropriate. These include mentoring and additional support with their learning. Within the programme of attainment reviews led by senior leaders there is a specific focus on the performance of young people residing in areas of significant deprivation. Young people residing in areas of SIMD deciles one and two perform strongly in comparison to young people with similar backgrounds nationally.
- Senior and middle leaders robustly monitor and track the attendance of young people. This includes analysing attendance against SIMD deciles. They use this data to apply a range of targeted interventions. During the last school session, the attendance of young people residing in SIMD deciles one and two increased in comparison to previous years.
- In 2023/24, when compared using average complementary tariff points, young people from almost all SIMD deciles who left the school attained more than young people living in the same deciles across Scotland. Attainment for young people in these deciles has been improving in recent years. In a majority of SIMD deciles in 2023/24, attainment was significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC.
- Staff have engaged effectively with partners that support targeted young people to move to and remain in aspirational post-school destinations. Almost all young people left school to positive initial post-school destinations from 2019/20 to 2023/24. This is in line with the VC, apart from 2022/23 when it was significantly much lower. Positively, there was significant improvement from 2022/23 to 2023/24.

Quality of provision of Specialist Schools

- Broughton High School fully integrates three specialist provisions into the life and work of the school: The City of Edinburgh Music School, the SFA Performance School and The City of Edinburgh Dance School. There is a strong culture of positive interdependence between the specialist provisions and the main school. Young people in the provisions attend a variety of lessons within Broughton High School. They then have tailored timetables that support them to attend dedicated sessions within the specialist provisions. Young people and parents from across the wider Broughton High School community speak highly of the links between the different school provisions.
- The City of Edinburgh Music School supports young musicians from across Scotland, but particularly from the Edinburgh and Lothians area. The provision is funded entirely by the Scottish Government. Young people audition at the school and are awarded a place purely on merit and musical ability.
- In The City of Edinburgh Dance School, young people undertake a range of specialist classes including jazz, ballet and contemporary dance styles. In addition, they develop choreographic skills throughout their courses.
- The SFA Performance School caters for boys and girls from S1 to S4. The young people come from south-east Scotland and attend mainstream classes in Broughton High School as well as attending the SFA Performance School. Young people appreciate the high levels of coaching and tuition from the SFA coaches. This is linked to the SFA National Youth Player Identity.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- A range of specialist staff deliver teaching and coaching in each of the three provisions. Positive, respectful relationships are evident in all interactions within lessons. Staff organise well-planned lessons and one-to-one tuition which are well-structured and appropriately tailored to the needs and abilities of young people. Sessions for these young people are flexible and normally begin with a starter or warm up activity. In the main body of the lessons, teachers are responsive to young people and use ongoing assessment and evaluation to adapt their teaching. This ensures that all young people feel well supported and that they are making progress throughout. Young people speak positively about leading their own learning and development in a nurturing environment.
- Young people respond well to the high standards and expectations set for them in lessons and what they know they need to do to be successful. They remain focussed and engaged throughout the lessons and staff give ongoing feedback about their progress and next steps in learning. Teachers also use digital technology effectively to model techniques, support young people at home and to highlight where they can make improvements. Young people are clear about the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve further. They also appreciate the aspiration and ambition that staff have for them in attaining and achieving well.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Young people who attend The City of Edinburgh Music School and The City of Edinburgh Dance School attain and achieve very well. Young people in S1 to S3 experience the majority of the BGE alongside their peers in mainstream classes in Broughton High School. Their experiences in the specialist areas are largely by extraction. Young people in mainstream classes attain highly both in the BGE and in the senior phase.
- Young people from the specialist provisions have outstanding attainment in National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Music, and National 5 and Higher Dance. In both disciplines there are early presentations with young people in S3 undertaking National 5 and those in S4 undertaking Higher examinations. The pathway for those in The City of Edinburgh Dance School beyond Higher Dance is to move on to an HNC in S5 and an HND in S6. Broughton High School is the only school in Scotland to offer an HND to young people at this stage.
- The City of Edinburgh Music School organises concerts and ensembles as part of the courses and programmes on offer. Young people benefit from these as a way to build confidence and to develop performance skills and teamwork. Similarly, The City of Edinburgh Dance School offers regular opportunities for young people to perform for audiences. Young people in the senior phase support younger pupils to develop their dance skills. They lead transition arrangements for young people in P6 and P7 from across the city with a dance focus on Friday afternoons.
- Young people in the mainstream music classes, are able to join specific ensemble groups, for example in strings or in voice. A choir is available for all young people to join at lunchtime on a Monday afternoon. There is scope for the offer of specialist-led activity to be further extended to include more young people in the mainstream school.
- Young people in the SFA Performance School benefit from thorough tracking and monitoring including a comprehensive self-review process. They are highly motivated and understand their responsibility to be role models in the wider school and to reach their potential in the wider school curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on personal qualities and values in line with the school values which allows the young people to develop skills for life. The young people feel that they are making progress and understand clearly their next steps.
- The SFA coaches work closely with the wider school staff and parents and carers which means that the young people feel supported and are able to progress on a personal and sporting level. The SFA Coaches and school staff should continue with plans to introduce qualifications for the young people.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the local authority and school meals provider that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- For young people in Broughton High School the library is a welcoming learning and social area. The recently appointed school librarian liaises effectively with English faculty colleagues. Emerging from this is a refreshed approach to class visits to the library and the planning of how young people can develop their literacy skills. The librarian is successfully pursuing approaches that encourage young people to engage in reading for pleasure.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.