

Summarised inspection findings

Speyside High School

Moray Council

24 February 2026

Key contextual information

School Name: Speyside High School
Council: Moray Council
SEED number: 5208939
Roll (Dec 2025): 357

Speyside High School is a non-denominational secondary school located in Aberlour, Moray. The headteacher has been in post for nine years and is supported by three full-time equivalent deputy headteachers and a Business Support Officer. Almost all young people live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles five to eight.

Attendance is generally above the national average. Exclusions have been decreasing since 2022/23. In September 2024, the school reported that 57.7% of young people had an additional support need. Senior leaders acknowledge that further work is ongoing to ensure the accuracy of this figure. In September 2024, 10.1% of pupils were registered for free school meals, significantly below the national average.

1.3 Leadership of change

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

- Senior leaders and staff work together well to ensure the school vision for young people to be happy, healthy and high-achieving is well-embedded across the school. In 2024, staff and stakeholders created the shared Speyside values for young people to be ambitious, respectful, responsible and creative (ARRC). Senior leaders link school improvement planning to the values well and this helps to promote consistency of purpose across the school community. Staff recognise and reward young people who demonstrate the values in a variety of ways. For example, in messages to parents, certificates and through social media posts and assemblies. Young people appreciate this recognition and speak enthusiastically about the ways that staff celebrate their successes.
- The headteacher demonstrates a relentless commitment to seeking the best outcomes for young people and staff. Her ambition for the school is helping to drive recent improvements. She has empowered staff to lead aspects of the school's improvement priorities. As a result, a majority of staff are leading changes linked to these priorities effectively. Middle leaders join the senior leadership team on a rotational basis. This is helping to build leadership capacity through the school. Senior leaders carry out their roles effectively and together they provide a positive, strong and coherent approach to all aspects of school improvement.
- Senior leaders consult effectively with teachers to identify key priorities for the School Improvement Plan (SIP) under six overarching priorities. Development of the SIP occurs through self-evaluation and collegiate discussion on identifying priorities for the school community. Staff feel involved in influencing the direction of school improvement. Senior leaders should however consider the pace of change carefully. The SIP is currently overly detailed and would benefit from senior leaders reviewing the number of priority areas and actions contained within it. Senior leaders should streamline the SIP and focus on priorities that would impact most positively on young people's outcomes and learning experiences.
- Most middle leaders work closely and effectively with other staff to identify areas of Department Improvement Plans (DIPs) that align with the SIP. Most DIPs reflect key whole-school priorities well whilst also effectively supporting departmental improvement. DIPs could be even more impactful in helping to drive whole-school priority areas for improvement. They need to reflect more clearly and consistently how every subject area is contributing to the SIP. For example, in raising attainment and improving presentation levels in curriculum areas across the school.

- Almost all teachers at all levels are involved in taking forward focused areas of the school's improvement work to improve outcomes for young people. They achieve this through working groups and teacher learning communities (TLCs) focused on practitioner enquiry. These are improving learning experiences and create a wider variety of opportunities for young people to develop key skills. A school improvement group has effectively planned well-targeted and streamlined professional learning activities focused on key aspects of classroom practice. All teachers engage in regular classroom observations. They receive well-structured feedback from their peers that assists them in reflecting on their practice. A significant majority of staff lead a wide variety of clubs and activities that support young people to develop their confidence, skills and interests. Young people speak positively about the willingness of teachers to offer activities tailored to their individual interests.
- A majority of young people contribute well to identifying and leading improvement priorities. They have meaningful opportunities to lead in a variety of roles and school improvement groups. These include the pupil senate and mentor supports. Young people at different stages across the school also actively seek and take part in volunteering opportunities to benefit the local community. For example, a few young people gained accreditation for work developing a local primary school's garden. A few young people enjoy working well with local authority Active Schools staff to take up leadership opportunities in different sports. These young people are developing confidence and organisational skills through the sporting opportunities they offer to children across local primary schools.
- Senior leaders and almost all staff understand well the social, economic and cultural context of the school and families. Senior leaders have developed a clear plan for the spend of their allocated Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Senior leaders share plans for PEF with parents and should continue to seek further ways to involve parents in more meaningful consultation for identifying priorities. Teaching staff work and plan well to help mitigate any potential socio-economic barriers to participation. As a result, staff in the school are supporting more young people to engage fully with all aspects of their learning.
- All teachers engage fully with professional review and development, linked to the General Teaching Council for Scotland professional standards. Staff identify areas that will support improving provision for young people. The majority of these identified priorities link well to department improvements and reflect clearly the SIP priorities. Senior leaders and teachers work well with external organisations, for example higher education institutions, to provide effective and useful whole staff training opportunities. Across the school, leaders at all levels engage in professional dialogue, learning and professional enquiry to ensure continuous improvement. This includes a number of staff working towards postgraduate level accreditation for their improvement work through various TLCs.
- Senior leaders are aware of the priorities of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and employability in the curriculum and have developed appropriate plans. Both the broad general education (BGE) and senior phase have an essential focus on plans to develop employability and meta-skills. Almost all subject departments engage well with external partners to support citizenship and employability activities. These opportunities are affording young people meaningful opportunities to link skills to the world of work. The universal pupil support (UPS) and personal and social education (PSE) programmes are both clearly mapped to and underpinned by Career Education Standards. This is supporting teachers well to plan to meet young people's career education entitlements. Planned sessions on, for example, university applications are clear, effective and helpful. Staff have actively engaged young people well in

entrepreneurship, local charitable work and boosted the awareness and development of their meta-skills through the effective UPS programme. Staff in the local college offer a well-supported provision.

- Senior staff work well with the local authority DYW coordinator to ensure that young people have useful opportunities to learn about the world of work and, in a few instances have individualised work placement opportunities. Currently, the rate of young people taking up work placements beyond Foundation Apprenticeship is relatively low. As a next step, staff should ensure that they continue to promote relevant work placement opportunities more widely.

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

- Teachers promote appropriate learning expectations of young people through their application of the school's 'Lesson Charter'. This sets out how teachers and young people should contribute to effective, engaging and productive lessons. Almost all young people arrive at class ready to learn, with most motivated to engage in their lessons. Relationships overall are highly positive and young people learn in a calm and supportive environment. In almost all classes young people behave responsibly and demonstrate a respect for learning. Staff respond sensitively and positively in response to any young people showing dysregulated behaviour. They confirm expectations of behaviour linked to the school values and support young people to re-engage with their learning. The recently implemented school policy which prohibits mobile phones has reduced low-level distractions in classrooms.
- In a few lessons young people demonstrate high levels of independence and lead aspects of their learning successfully. For example, when they make decisions about how to present their work, participate in debates or when they reflect and comment on their own progress. Additionally, young people respond positively when they work in peer groups, in pairs and when supporting other learners in their classes. A few lessons are overly teacher-led. This results in young people being too passive in their learning. Senior and middle leaders should continue to identify and share examples of effective practice across the school. This will promote further the development of young people's independent learning skills.
- Almost all young people feel that their teachers know them well. Teachers have access to information about young people in a detailed online tool. This information includes suggested strategies to help staff in reducing barriers to learning. In most lessons, teachers implement these strategies effectively along with advice included in the school's recently published approach to adaptive teaching. Most teachers plan tasks and activities that are well-matched to the abilities of young people. In a few lessons, particularly in the BGE, these activities do not have sufficient challenge, and as a result learning lacks ambition. Senior and middle leaders should now continue, as planned, to support staff in embedding adaptive approaches.
- Staff have recently refreshed 'The Speyside Way'. This clear learning and teaching framework underpins the expectations of teachers regarding the structure and content of lessons. This is beginning to promote a consistency of experience for young people across the school. In almost all lessons, teachers illustrate the purpose of learning, share what successful learning looks like and support reflections on learning through plenary activities. A few young people feel that there is too much focus on the introduction to lessons as opposed to new learning. As

planned, staff should continue to refine how they apply learning and teaching strategies to deepen engagement in learning throughout lessons.

- In most lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. Most teachers use questioning well to support learning and to check young people's understanding. Where this is most effective, teachers ask a range of open and well-considered questions that encourage the development of young people's higher-order thinking. Senior and middle leaders should identify and share best practice to ensure that the quality of questioning is consistently and appropriately challenging. In a few classes, teachers use imaginative approaches to learning in digital contexts. A few learners use digital platforms to continue their learning remotely when they cannot attend school. There is scope for senior leaders and teachers to plan how to widen opportunities for creative learning using digital resources.
- Across all curriculum areas, most teachers use an appropriate range of formative and summative assessments effectively to confirm the progress young people are making. Teachers in all curriculum areas have engaged in moderation and verification of young people's work within the school. In the senior phase, there are teachers across all curriculum areas that have experience of working as Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) appointees. These teachers support colleagues to gain a sound understanding of standards associated with National Qualifications (NQs). Almost all teachers in the BGE show confidence in their use of National Benchmarks to plan assessment activities. Structured moderation activities within literacy and numeracy include a minority of teachers working collaboratively with primary colleagues. This work is increasing the accuracy and validity of teacher professional judgements. Senior and middle leaders should support teachers to develop moderation activities further in the BGE to improve the validity and consistency of teacher judgements across all curriculum areas.
- In both the BGE and the senior phase, across almost all subjects, young people benefit from teachers providing relevant ongoing feedback on their progress. Teachers in a minority of lessons use self- and peer-assessment activities to help young people reflect on their own progress. This also helps young people develop their understanding of assessment standards. Teachers across all subjects should indicate more clearly to young people the next steps they should take to accelerate their progress.
- Teachers use a variety of methods effectively to track and monitor young people's progress. In the senior phase there is an established and consistent approach to whole-school tracking and monitoring. Leaders in the school are implementing a similar school-wide system for the BGE. Middle leaders maintain a clear overview of learners' attainment and work with teachers well to support individuals' progress. Teachers are increasingly extending the use of tracking information from summative assessments to inform their classroom planning and identify young people who may be underperforming. A minority of teachers adapt their planning effectively in response to formative assessment. This includes modifying lessons to consolidate or extend understanding. Leaders at all levels should continue to support teachers to use all forms of assessment data effectively to plan relevant learning and targeted interventions. This should help to promote ambition and increase levels of attainment.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders in the school have established effective transition arrangements for young people. This ensures that staff share accurate attainment information for literacy and numeracy with colleagues. For example, English and mathematics teachers have worked with primary colleagues on a successful transition project based around consistent tasks and assessments through P7 and S1. This practice is supporting continuity and progression. Senior leaders should now extend this approach to other curriculum areas to ensure that all young people benefit from consistently well-planned pathways across the curriculum.
- Young people have access to all curriculum areas until the end of S3. In S2, they make choices across each of the eight areas, enabling them to deepen their learning while maintaining breadth. Young people access a second additional language during the BGE either continuously or within blocks through the year. This is in line with national recommendations.
- Staff deliver a UPS component within the BGE. Course content links to the 3–18 Career Education Standard. Young people experience a range of activities such as enterprise-based competitions in S1 and S2, and the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative in S3. These provide engaging opportunities for young people to develop skills for learning, life and work. A well-considered programme linked to sustainability in S1 and S2 further promotes understanding and importance of global issues.
- In most departments, teachers focus on young people in the BGE developing key literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing skills as relevant to their own subjects. Staff recognise the need to continue to develop a clear and shared strategy to ensure that they are embedding literacy and numeracy as a responsibility for all across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders have introduced a meta-skills progression framework across the school. While this is at an early stage of implementation, it provides a clear structure for developing skills across learning. Senior leaders should continue to work with staff, pupils and partners to embed this framework fully into curriculum planning.
- A majority of young people feel well supported in making subject choices in the senior phase. Guidance and subject staff provide advice which enables young people to understand the pathways available to them. The senior phase includes a range of vocational programmes, including Foundation Apprenticeships, which provide pathways into further learning and employment. Senior leaders review regularly the breadth of courses available to young people in the senior phase. They should continue to do so to ensure courses remain relevant and progressive.
- Young people in S4 receive their entitlement to physical education (PE) and religious and moral education (RME) in line with national guidance. Senior leaders should continue to explore ways in which they can ensure there is a meaningful continuing element of RME for all young people in S5 and S6.
- Staff from a few departments use outdoor learning effectively as a context to support and enhance learning. For example, the dark skies project, the S1 and S2 sustainability course and involvement with initiatives in the Cairngorm National Park. Senior and middle leaders should

build further on these approaches to extend outdoor learning opportunities for all young people.

- Young people use the Learning Resource Centre well as a library and research facility. The librarian provides a range of motivational activities, including literacy theme days, library skills sessions and research skills for young people in the senior phase. These are supporting young people to develop skills for independent learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- A majority of parents feel confident in approaching the school with concerns or suggestions. Most agree that staff treat their children fairly and with respect. A significant minority, however, report that feedback on their child's learning does not always provide the level and clarity of detail they would like around the progress of their child. Senior leaders should review how information about the progress of their child supports parents to understand their learning and next steps.
- A significant minority of parents recognise that the school considers their views when making changes within the school. Senior leaders should continue to employ a variety of approaches that involve a broader range of parents in decisions which affect young people's experiences.
- The Parent Council (PC) plays a valuable role in representing parental views. Recent examples include consultation on the mobile phone policy and curriculum planning. Senior leaders also engaged the PC in shaping the school improvement plan, which parents welcomed. Senior leaders should now provide further opportunities for the PC to contribute strategically to school development.

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

satisfactory

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

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Young people and staff share a strong sense of community. Most young people feel staff treat them fairly and with respect. The majority feel that their peers treat them with respect. Learning takes place in calm environments and young people are clearly proud of their school and its place in the wider community. Staff use values-based language well to support young people to feel cared for and respected.
- Senior leaders have facilitated meaningful professional learning focused on the principles of nurture. Staff have engaged well with this training and have reflected on how to plan learning and teaching activities that integrate such approaches. Staff have also reflected well and acted on training focused on creating more nurturing and supportive learning environments. Adaptations to common signage and displays in corridors and classrooms are providing more welcoming spaces for all young people. This is leading to young people feeling that staff in the school are considerate of their needs. Most young people feel confident that there is a member of staff who they would speak to if they were upset. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to embed approaches to nurture. They should ensure that there is greater consistency in the ways staff apply these strategies and the quality of such approaches.
- Staff with responsibility for health and wellbeing consult with young people regarding the types of activities that they would like to take part in. Young people feel more included by this consultation and encouraged to be physically active. A few young people lead clubs and are developing their confidence and leadership skills. The range of clubs and activities beyond classes are supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of most young people well. Most young people feel staff encourage them to be healthy and active.
- A few senior phase young people are trained Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP). They support younger peers well through the delivery of learning inserts that focus on strategies young people can use to keep themselves and others safe. These lessons are supporting younger pupils to understand issues such as online safety and consent. MVPs develop their communication and leadership skills through delivery of the programme.
- Principal Teachers of Guidance (PTsG) deliver most Personal and Social Education (PSE) courses to their house groups. The PSE programme develops young people's understanding and knowledge of topics such as online safety, healthy relationships, careers education and substance misuse. PTsG work effectively with partners such as the police and local charities to deliver key aspects of PSE courses. This is helping young people receive up to date advice from

expert speakers. Young people also benefit from expanding their knowledge of organisations that offer support for a variety of issues in their local area.

- Staff with responsibility for developing the PSE programme consult with young people on topics they would like to learn about in PSE. However, only a minority of young people feel that staff take their views into account. Young people also feel that the topics are often repeated. PTsG should consider ways that they could integrate young people's ideas into course plans and evaluate the delivery of some topics. PTsG should work with young people and partners to continue reviewing the PSE programme to ensure it reflects fully young people's needs and priorities. This will enable young people to experience more meaningful and relevant content.
- Young people regularly reflect on their wellbeing through questionnaires in PSE. Through these, senior leaders and PTsG identify young people who may need additional support. Staff receive regular updates on young people's wellbeing so that they are aware of concerns that may impact on the ability of any individual young person to fully engage in learning. There is now scope for senior leaders to use this overview to recognise key issues affecting larger groups of young people. This will enable PTsG to identify the most effective approaches and how to coordinate these to provide universal supports. This will allow more young people to feel included and valued. Most young people understand how they can support their own wellbeing.
- Senior leaders have an overview of all aspects of pupil support through comprehensive tracking and monitoring activities. Staff with responsibility for pupil support share key information with teachers regarding young people who may require additional support with their learning. Pupil support staff regularly update information and advice on strategies to support young people, and all teachers have access to this information. An important next step is for senior leaders to continue to consult on, and develop a robust, strategic approach to coordinating all aspects of pupil support. This should help pupil support staff work collaboratively and avoid duplication of information. A more streamlined and strategic approach should also support teachers to plan courses and lessons that best meet the needs of all young people.
- Senior leaders and PTsG staff monitor and track care experienced young people well. They consider all care experienced young people for a coordinated support plan. Key staff members create a plan where appropriate, and in consultation with each young person. Key staff members work well with other staff and partners to ensure that they are meeting the needs of care experienced young people. As a result, these young people are supported to achieve well.
- Attendance rates are above the national average. Senior leaders and pupil support staff have effective arrangements for monitoring and tracking young people's attendance. They work well with partners to support the few young people who are at risk of underachieving due to low attendance. Staff and partners work closely with parents and carers to develop joint strategies to encourage young people to attend. This is leading to improved attendance for an identified group of young people. Senior leaders should continue with plans to use a Home School Link Worker to support their focus on raising attendance.
- Staff are aware of their statutory duties effectively in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. The rate of exclusions was above the national rate in 2022/23. Senior leaders and PTsG track young people at risk of exclusion and put relevant supports in place. These include 'Reflect and Resolve' sessions that support a few young people to consider ways that they and staff can help to engage fully in learning. As a result of these proactive interventions, the

number of exclusions has decreased each year since 2022/23. Staff in the school use part-time timetables to support the needs of a few young people. Senior leaders should ensure that they follow closely national guidance around the use of these timetables. For example, regular review of the effectiveness of this approach should be in place with a focus on ensuring that staff in the school are supporting learners to return to school and learning on a full-time basis.

- Groups of young people and staff have worked well together to ensure all members of the community feel welcome and part of Speyside High School. Young people speak positively about the work of the anti-racism group and have shared their work at assemblies. Staff in the school have worked well to promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and how the school vision and values link to this. Staff have reviewed courses and resources to decolonise the curriculum effectively. In a few curriculum areas, subject content and informative wall displays help young people learn about diversity very well. This is increasing young people's awareness of different cultures. The librarian consults with young people on the types of texts they would like to see in the library. As a result, young people feel that staff and their peers across the school demonstrate respect for their life experiences. They feel valued and included in the school community.
- A minority of young people feel that staff in the school do not deal well with bullying. Senior leaders should continue to track incidences of bullying to monitor patterns and the effectiveness of any interventions. Senior leaders should work with young people to continue to develop values-based approaches to address bullying incidences. This will help them to refine their strategy to deal with bullying consistently and ensure all young people feel supported to address these types of behaviours.
- 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. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the catering service.

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

- In 2024/25, by the end of S3, almost all young people achieved Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level in reading and in listening and talking. Most young people achieved CfE third level in writing. There has been a consistent pattern of improvement in achievement of CfE fourth level in literacy, with most young people in 2024/25 reaching that level.
- Most young people achieved CfE third level in numeracy in 2022/23 and 2023/24, similar to national percentages. This increased to almost all achieving CfE third level in 2024/25.
- Teachers engage in appropriate moderation and verification both in and outwith the school. This is supporting improved confidence in and reliability of assessment judgements for literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders use tracking systems effectively to monitor the progress of cohorts of young people through the BGE. This helps senior leaders and teachers to identify where potential interventions could support young people in improving their literacy and numeracy. For example, a whole school focus on writing, led by the English department, to promote consistency and raise attainment.

Literacy (leavers)

- Most young people who left school between 2019/20 and 2023/24 achieved Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better in literacy. This was in line with the virtual comparator (VC) between 2019/20 and 2022/23 but moved to being significantly much higher than the VC in 2023/24. Staff targeted young people for a helpful intervention to ensure they achieved a positive result in literacy. This supported improvements in this measure. A minority of leavers attained literacy at SCQF level 6 from 2019/20 to 2023/24. This was significantly lower or significantly much lower than the VC between 2019/20 and 2022/23 but improved to being in line with the VC in 2023/24. Senior leaders should continue with targeted interventions to ensure no young people leave school without any qualification in literacy.
- Most leavers with ASN achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in 2023/24. This attainment is above the VC and was an increase from a majority of leavers in the years between 2019/20 and 2022/23. A minority of young people with ASN left school with literacy at level 6 from 2021/22 to 2023/24. This attainment is below the VC.

Numeracy (leavers)

- Achievement at SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy was significantly much higher than the VC from 2019/20 to 2023/24. Most young people who left school between 2019/20 and 2022/23 achieved this level, increasing to almost all young people in 2023/24. A minority of leavers attained numeracy at SCQF level 6 between 2021/22 and 2023/24. This is in line with the VC. Senior leaders should continue with targeted interventions to ensure no young people leave school without any qualification in numeracy.
- Most young people with ASN who left school in 2022/23 and 2023/24 attained SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This is an increase from a majority between 2019/20 and 2021/22, and there has been an increase year-on-year. These percentages are above the VC.

Cohorts

Literacy

- At S4, almost all young people achieved SCQF level 4 or better in literacy in 2024/25, an increase from most young people from 2020/21 to 2023/24. A majority achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in 2024/25. This was significantly lower than the VC and showed a decrease from 2022/23.
- By S5, based on the S4 roll, most young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This is in line with the VC. Achievement at SCQF level 6 in S5 however has been significantly lower or significantly much lower than the VC in four of the five years from 2020/21 to 2024/25. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to support improvement in attainment in literacy in S5.
- By S6, based on the S4 roll, achievement at SCQF level 6 or better in S6 was significantly much lower than the VC between 2020/21 and 2023/24. As a result of targeted interventions for a few young people, this improved to being in line with the VC in 2024/25. For example, these interventions included using wider achievement lessons to focus on literacy support and assessment.

Numeracy

- At S4, almost all young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy in 2024/25. This was significantly much higher than the VC and an increase from being significantly higher than the VC in 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- By S5, based on the S4 roll, most young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy in 2024/25. This was in line with the VC but showed a decrease from being significantly higher than the VC in 2023/24. Achievement in numeracy at SCQF level 6 in S5 improved from a few young people in 2022/23 to a minority in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This was in line with the VC.
- By S6, based on the S4 roll, achievement at SCQF level 6 numeracy improved from being significantly lower than the VC in 2023/24, to be in line with the VC in 2024/25.

National Qualifications (NQs)

- Young people's attainment in NQs in mathematics at National 5 and Higher level is generally in line with national figures. The percentage of the S4 and S5 cohorts presented for these is generally lower than the national levels. Presentation percentages for National 5 and Higher Applications of Mathematics are substantially above the national levels. Most young people in S4 who were presented for N5 Applications of Mathematics between 2020/21 and 2024/25

passed the course with an A-C award. The school is above national figures for the proportion of young people in S4 who are presented for both National 5 Mathematics and National 5 Applications of Mathematics. Staff should review the proportions of young people presented for two courses in one subject area to ensure appropriate progress and workload for young people.

- In English, the percentage of the S4 cohort presented for National 5 dropped below the national level in 2025 having been above the national figure in 2023 and 2024. However, almost all of those presented attained a pass at National 5. The percentage of young people presented for Higher English in S5 has been below the national level in each of the last five years. Most young people who sat Higher English between 2023 and 2025 passed the course.

Attainment over time

BGE

- Senior leaders provided data for CfE levels across all departments for 2024/25. This showed inconsistency across subjects. Senior and middle leaders should continue with their work developing reliable teacher judgements of BGE levels across all curriculum areas. They should also continue with plans to strengthen challenge through all BGE subject courses to improve young people's attainment into and through the senior phase.

Senior phase

- When compared using average complementary tariff points, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of leavers is generally in line with the VC. However, complementary tariff scores for the middle attaining 60% of young people declined between 2021/22 and 2023/24. There was a notable decrease for the highest attaining 20% of young people which fell from being above the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23 to being below the VC in 2023/24. Senior leaders should now focus on addressing these declines.
- For young people with ASN, complementary tariff scores for the lowest attaining 20% and middle attaining 60% of young people are above the VC each year from 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Cohorts

- At S4, when compared using average complementary tariff points, attainment for the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people is generally in line with the VC.
- At S5 as a percentage of the S4 roll, all cohorts were generally in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2024/25. The middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people both showed a decline in complementary tariff scores from 2023/24 to 2024/25. Senior leaders should continue their work to increase levels of attainment in S5 by increasing aspirational and progressive course choices for those young people moving from S4 to S5.
- At S6 as a percentage of the S4 roll, all cohorts were generally in line with the VC between 2021/22 and 2024/25.

Breadth and depth

- At S4, a majority of young people achieved three or more courses at SCQF level 5C or better between 2022/23 and 2024/25. A minority of young people achieved five or more qualifications at SCQF level 5C or better in the same period. This is in line with the VC. The

number of young people achieving three or more or five or more qualifications at SCQF level 5A or better in these years is also in line with the VC.

- By S5, the percentages of young people achieving qualifications at SCQF levels 6C and 6A or better was mostly in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2024/25. In 2022/23 however, attainment for one or more, three or more and five or more qualifications was significantly much lower than the VC.
- By S6, the percentages of young people achieving three or more or five or more qualifications at SCQF level 6C or better or 6A or better were in line with the VC between 2021/22 and 2024/25, apart from 2023/24 when they were significantly lower or significantly much lower than the VC. A few young people in S6 achieved qualifications at SCQF level 7C or better between 2020/21 and 2024/25. Attainment at this level was in line with the VC.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- The majority of young people achieve very well through participation in a wide range of activities beyond the classroom and within the local community. These include projects with a local nursery and national park. Young people develop skills such as communication and teamwork and build social networks through these activities. Lunchtime and after-school groups provide them with opportunities to pursue personal interests, while school shows and concerts bring the community together.
- A significant minority of young people contribute positively to the wider school community and to the learning of others through volunteering. Sports Ambassadors and participants in the Active Schools Young Leader Programme support children in local primaries to try different sports. Young people also run clubs, provide classroom support to younger peers and deliver peer education. As a result of these activities, young people build their confidence, independence and presentation skills.
- Staff and partners celebrate achievement through newsletters, noticeboards and awards events. The annual ceremony recognises success in school subjects and, increasingly, non-academic achievements such as in sport. All S5 and S6 pupils benefit from wider achievement opportunities built into timetables, supporting their skills and in most cases leading to qualifications. Staff and partners aim to increase access to awards that recognise learning and volunteering. They should continue to identify appropriate qualifications and expand opportunities.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders have used PEF effectively to support a small group of targeted individuals. This has resulted in improvements in attendance and health and wellbeing, and a few young people gaining accreditation in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders have also funded participation in a local outdoor learning project. Staff in the school's 'Wellbeing Hub' provide a nurturing space to support physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing for a few young people. Young people in the senior phase deliver mentoring to a targeted group of a few S1 young people. This builds feelings of security, enhances self-esteem, promotes attendance and attainment and improves the health and wellbeing of those young people.
- A breakfast club ensures that all young people have access to food each morning. The school's Zero Waste Canteen offers unsold food at the end of the day. Staff and young people work in partnership with Moray School Bank to run a 'No Waste Wardrobe'. This facilitates the sharing

and recycling of school uniform and other clothing essentials. Young people value staff and their peers promoting a culture of sustainability.

- Senior leaders work effectively with a range of local partners to ensure that no young person is at risk of underperforming as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. For example, a few young people benefit from electronic devices provided by a local social enterprise organisation. Local businesses contribute to reducing the barrier of transport costs for young people. As a result, more young people are able to participate in theatre trips, football matches and BGE activity days. A funded bus service provides transport home from study support sessions in the run up to exams. Young people talk enthusiastically about the benefit of these provisions.
- Leaders in the school use a robust tracking system to evaluate the impact of PEF interventions. Senior leaders should continue to use and develop this to ensure that interventions are continuing to have a positive impact on attainment and attendance for targeted young people. This includes young people from SIMD deciles seven and eight whose attainment in 2023/24 was significantly lower than the VC.
- Almost all young people moved on to a positive destination in each of the last five years.

Explanation of terms of quantity

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

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

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

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