

## Kirkintilloch High Quality Review

Almost all findings shared within this report are based on the direct observations during our visit on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February until the 29<sup>th</sup> of February. The visiting team consisted of:

- Kevin Kelly Quality Improvement Manager - Secondary
- Mary Kerr Quality Improvement Officer – Secondary
- Eileen Kennedy Headteacher at Turnbull High
- Ian Donaghey Headteacher at Bishopbriggs Academy
- Peter Liddle Depute Headteacher at Bearsden Academy
- Joan Docherty Depute Headteacher at Douglas Academy
- Suzanne Boyle Depute Headteacher at St. Ninian's High
- Gordon McClune Depute Headteacher at Lenzie Academy
- Ruth Nairn Attainment Advisor at Education Scotland

Evaluative language will be used within this report. The following terms are used to describe numbers and proportions:

<b>Almost all</b>	Over 90%
<b>Most</b>	75% to 90%
<b>Majority</b>	50% to 74%
<b>Less than half</b>	15% to 49%
<b>Few</b>	Up to 15%

The six-point scale is a tool for grading the quality indicators. It is mainly used by Education Scotland, local authorities, and other governing bodies for the purpose of national and/or local benchmarking across a number of establishments. More information regarding the six-point scale can be accessed [here](#).

Here are our Review Team's evaluations for Kirkintilloch High

<b>Quality Indicators</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Leadership of Change	Very Good
Learning, Teaching & Assessment	Good
Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion	Very Good
Raising Attainment & Achievement	Good

The team would like to thank all staff and young people who were part of our observations, focus groups and discussions. A huge thank you to all cleaners, janitors, catering staff, office staff and support for learning staff who were very welcoming and supportive throughout our visit. We also cannot forget our wonderful tour guides. We got a real feel for Kirkintilloch High school and what it meant for staff and young people to be part of the school community.

**Strengths**

- The headteacher sets an aspirational vision for the school community. Along with her depute headteachers, she provides strong leadership in taking forward their strategic remits. The headteacher is considered by staff and pupils to be driven to make a difference to the lives of pupils at Kirkintilloch High School. Pupils and teachers speak highly of the ability and commitment of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Pupil Support Team, particularly around their focus on delivering for pupils. They work effectively with staff and young people to ensure that the vision and values are underpinned by positive relationships, effective school improvement, and purposeful partnerships across the school community. The school vision and values were developed in close consultation with staff, children and young people, and partners. Central to the ethos of the school are the values of Dream Big, Work Hard and Show Kindness. Almost all teachers are confident that these values inform practice in the school, including relationships policy. The work of the school is informed by a strong shared understanding of the socio-economic context of the school by all practitioners.
- The SLT have developed opportunities for engagement in school improvement in line with the needs of staff, through utilising the Working Time Agreement and providing opportunities for School Improvement Plan (SIP) groups to meet regularly in this planned time. Areas of priority have been developed and are led by staff across all levels of the school. Some SIP groups include BGE review, Positive Relationships Policy, Learning and Teaching, Cost of the School Day, Trauma Informed Practice, Raising Attainment, Rights Respecting School, and Homework Strategy, which are aligned with SIP priorities. Almost all staff feel involved in the improvement priorities for the school. There is a strong rationale for the pace of change with the focus of SIP Groups evolving each session. Collegiate group meetings ensure that school priorities and the impact of initiatives are disseminated with all staff.
- Professional learning is mapped across inset days and through a Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) calendar. Teachers reported that the CLPL opportunities were relevant to the vision, values and aims of the school, such as learning about nurture, Trauma Informed Practice and building relationships with learners. Staff also have the opportunity to lead inset and twilight sessions as part of the in-house CLPL programme. Principal Teachers spoke highly of the opportunity to be involved in PT Conferences to support their own development. The school continue to build capacity of leadership across the school. This includes an extended leadership model, where staff are able to share responsibility for roles including DHT, Middle Leader and Guidance, which has proved successful at supporting staff secure promoted posts.
- Pupil relationships are at the heart of the work of the school. Pupils believe that teachers care about them and want the best for them. Almost all pupils have a strong sense of belonging within the school, including an understanding of their voice within class, and feeding back to departments. Pupil Voice is visible across the school through “You said, we did” posters in almost all departments showing changes made

to practice based on pupil feedback. All stakeholders are asked their view through regular surveying, and teachers engage in professional dialogue in their areas of improvement. There are links between recent surveys and adaptations to the improvement plan based on feedback. Feedback is followed up on an individual level to support staff and parents with any concerns.

- The school has shown bold leadership on implementing a diverse curriculum. Pupils are aware of, and appreciate, the extensive opportunities to access new experiences, particularly in the senior phase. This includes in-house partnership learning with bespoke environments such as Hair and Beauty and Construction. Foundation Apprenticeships are embedded into the curriculum in Business and Social Services Children and Young People and delivered by a partner provider. The leadership team has a well-informed understanding of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) priorities. The SLT share their purposeful vision with partners, parents, and young people through informative publications and career events. Parents are provided with appropriate information on pathways. This, together with personal conversations and online resources, effectively supports almost all young people in making well-informed career choices.
- Young people have many opportunities to be involved in leadership within the curriculum and within the wider school. They undertake leadership opportunities, where pupils are elected as House Captains from S1-S6. Pupils have the opportunity to complete awards such as the SQA Leadership Award to demonstrate their leadership and involvement with SIP groups such as SCQF ambassadors. Most departments have assigned pupil subject ambassadors. Pupils have formed and led numerous leadership committees including the Cultural Equality Team and Pupil Voice Committee, which evolved from work undertaken by the external agency, Hidden Giants. Parents and pupils engage in improvement planning. A parent and pupil improvement plan have been produced based on self-evaluation exercises, highlighting actions that feature in the SIP. There is related work to support this through a recently developed Pupil Parliament and ongoing consultation with Parent Council.

### **Points for Consideration**

- Evidence of a consistency of approach around values-led policies such as the positive relationships policy is not always clear – for example, the interpretation of how high expectations look between classes and departments. Leadership at all levels is required to ensure a collaborative and consistent approach, particularly at class teacher and Curricular Principal teacher levels, to ensure all staff have consistently high expectations of all young people.
- Processes for collaborative self-evaluation and validation of self-evaluation evidence were not always clear at department level. Middle leaders and teaching staff engaged in continuous improvement, but the tracking and evaluation of this was not easily accessible.

- Young people benefit from the strongly positive and inclusive ethos across the school, where diversity is valued and celebrated. Relationships are built on the school values of Dream Big, Work Hard and Show Kindness which enable young people to benefit from very positive and nurturing relationships with almost all staff. Staff know their pupils well and have a clear understanding of their learning needs. The majority of young people are motivated to learn and are courteous, respectful, and well-behaved. Staff and young people achieved a Bronze Rights Respecting Schools Award and are working towards the Silver Award as they develop their rights-based approach. Young people are proud to be part of the Kirkintilloch High school community.
- Almost all young people are polite and reflect the expectations within the Positive Relationship Policy. When required, most staff respond quietly, appropriately, and calmly to address the few young people who are not focused during learning and who can cause low level disruption at times. Staff should continue to build on their positive relationships with young people by reinforcing consistently ambitious standards and expectations to all young people. Middle leaders and staff should continue to work with all young people to ensure these expectations and routines support positive learning environments in all subject areas.
- Most lessons in the BGE would benefit from appropriate pace and challenge to meet the needs of individual learners. A few lessons in the BGE were overly teacher led. This resulted in a minority of young people being passive in their learning. Staff should continue to consider how the learning environment and approaches can be used to ensure young people can be more actively engaged in their learning. Young people describe active learning techniques as a key feature of a high-quality lesson.
- In a few lessons, staff use questioning very effectively to extend and deepen young people's thinking. A few teachers used digital applications to promote young people's thinking and engagement. This practice not yet consistent. In some lessons within BGE, questions are low level, with limited wait time. Some teachers should focus on questioning techniques to promote higher order thinking skills.
- In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning. Across the school there are examples of very good practice in learning and teaching. Where these are observed, young people engage in learning that is creative, active, challenging, and well-paced. Most teachers support learning effectively through the provision of feedback to young people, such as comments about learners' work and discussion in lessons. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not sufficiently link the learning intentions and success criteria to evaluate success in learning. Teachers should make more effective use of plenaries to support young people to reflect on their learning.
- Young people undertake a range of assessments. Opportunities for self and peer assessment supported highly effective learning in some departments. Teachers should continue to develop opportunities for young people to take part more regularly

in peer and self-assessment using agreed criteria to evaluate success. This will help them to identify more easily their strengths and next steps in learning.

- Kirkintilloch High School's 'Employability Top 8 Skills Poster' is attractive and visible in all classrooms. Where Employability Skills are central to the success criteria, it supported the learning within the lesson. When this takes place, young people can clearly identify and articulate the application of these skills. This should be adopted more consistently across the school. The strategic focus this session is on differentiation and retrieval practice was visible in a few curricular areas. Where this was done well, higher order thinking skills and independent learning occurred naturally. Both employability skills and areas of strategic focus, could be adopted and applied more consistently across the school.
- The majority of young people participate and interact well during lessons, particularly in the Senior Phase. In the Senior Phase, most teachers have a strong understanding of young people's needs, abilities, and interests. They use this very well to set meaningful, and at times challenging, learning activities. Most teachers support individual learners sensitively and creatively, providing appropriate scaffolding and support. Staff emphasise to young people the importance of persistence and effort in their learning. As a result, most young people can grasp complex concepts, remember what they have to learn, and apply it to different situations.

### **Points for Consideration**

- **Pace and challenge are inconsistent in terms of BGE. Too many lessons pitch learning to the least able learners.** A few staff used a scatter gun approach of AifL techniques within their lesson without much depth of learning being witnessed. Lessons should be planned with progressive learning opportunities for all young people. Staff should Dream Big in regard to what pupils can achieve within their lesson by having high aspirations for all young people. Increased opportunity for higher order tasks/questions which are directed to learners, rather than opting for a hand up approach, may help.
- Attendance was highlighted as an issue by a few staff. The inconsistency in the number of young people in lessons is impacting on embedding class routines and the pace at which learning can be progressed.
- The GROW model for lesson plan template makes it difficult for the observer and possibly for the teacher being observed. The 'Reality' section was filled with too many negatives (in some of the examples that were shared with our Team). In discussion with the L&T staff group, the general feeling was that this is a reflective evaluative tool. We would recommend that an alternative lesson plan template is considered.
- We really like the Learning & Teaching the Kirkintilloch Way and Our Lessons in KHS Look Like sheets. We feel these would provide a clear lesson plan template as it would give the observer an overview of the strategies they would expect to see in the lesson. We would recommend a lesson planner is a on single sheet for staff to update in line with Our Lessons in KHS Look Like. To tackle bureaucracy, we would recommend a linked pro-forma to be incorporated to highlight strategies that would be used throughout a lesson (we do not need to know when they will happen). We

would also recommend including a section for the KHS 8 Employability Skills and Blooms Taxonomy to highlight learning objectives. No more than two employability skills (ideally one) should be the focus within almost all lessons.

- Basic classroom expectations are not consistently followed across the school. Outdoor jackets, mobile phones and pupils chewing gum were visible in most lessons (particularly the first two days).

### 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing Equality and Inclusion

Very Good

#### Strengths

- The wellbeing and development of young people is at the heart of the school's vision for learners. The school's programme of professional learning is driven by a commitment to trauma informed practice and nurture principles. The impact of this was evident in almost all curricular activities including class lessons, support for learning and wellbeing groups.
- Caring and positive relationships are evident across the school community. Most young people feel safe, nurtured, and are treated fairly and with respect. Young people and their families feel well supported, cared for and are proud of their school.
- Almost all staff have a good knowledge and clear understanding of their learners, their socio-economic context, and their wellbeing needs. This is supported by effective communication methods, notably the weekly Sharing of Safeguarding memo created by the Pupil Support Team. This is valued by staff for providing succinct, accessible, and up to date information. The House system promotes close working between SLT and the Pupil Support Team and provides continuity in support for the young people throughout their time at Kirkintilloch High School.
- The school's proactive approach to developing and sustaining a wide range of positive interventions including partnership working ensures that the needs of individuals and groups of young people are well met. The introduction, by SLT, of a robust pupil referral tracking system allows allocation and monitoring of appropriate resources. The recently introduced QR code for pupil self-referral is a positive addition.
- The school delivers a wide range of targeted interventions through its Alternative Learning Environment and Wellbeing department, including social skills, LIAM Lite and Wellbeing groups. This is further enhanced by partnership working including enhanced primary transition, youth work provision, MCR Pathways, Young Carers, and counselling services.
- Senior Leaders and Pupil Support Team have a very good understanding of statutory duties and responsibilities. They have established comprehensive systems to ensure that all young people, especially those facing additional barriers, are included, and supported. Young people and their families participate in these processes and their views captured when creating action plans.
- The life and ethos of the school promotes inclusion, equality, and the rights of the child. They are a Rights Respecting School at bronze level and have achieved bronze LGBTQ+ charter status and are working towards silver in both.

## **Points for Consideration**

- Consideration should be given to the more effective use of recorded data to provide a clear impact statement on improved outcomes for young people relating to wellbeing, achievement, and attainment.
- SLT and Pupil Support Team should continue to ensure procedures for the monitoring of attendance are reviewed in line with authority procedure manuals and the recently launched EDC attendance policy.
- Continue to embed the use of the wellbeing wheel to track pupils mental health against the wellbeing indicators ensuring consistency of language and early intervention.
- Continue to embed UNCRC into all curricular areas more fully.



## 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

Good

- In 2022-23, in literacy almost all young people achieved Level 3 and the majority achieved Level 4 by the end of S3. In numeracy most young people achieve Level 3, and the majority achieve Level 4 by the end of S3. This is in line with the national average.
- Literacy and Numeracy classes in the BGE, staffed by the same teachers to ensure consistency, are supporting pupils well and enabling them to develop confidence to make progress across levels. The Alternative Learning Environment is a bespoke provision that supports young people in both the BGE and SP.

### Literacy

- For S4, Level 4 attainment has been above the VC over a five-year period and generally above the VC at Level 5, except in 2022.
- In S5 attainment at Level 4 and Level 5 has been generally above the VC, with a significant increase at Level 5 in 2023 (23%).
- In S6 at Level 4 attainment has been generally above the VC. Level 5 is above the VC, with a 5-year positive trend.

### Numeracy

- In S4 Level 4 attainment has been above the VC for 5 years. At Level 5 there is not a consistent pattern in attainment; this has been below the VC in 2 out of the last 5 years.
- In S5 at level 4 attainment has been above the VC over the last 5 years and significantly above the VC in 2023. Level 5 has generally been above the VC with the exception of 2023.
- In S6 at Levels 4 and 5 attainment has been above the VC over the last 5 years.

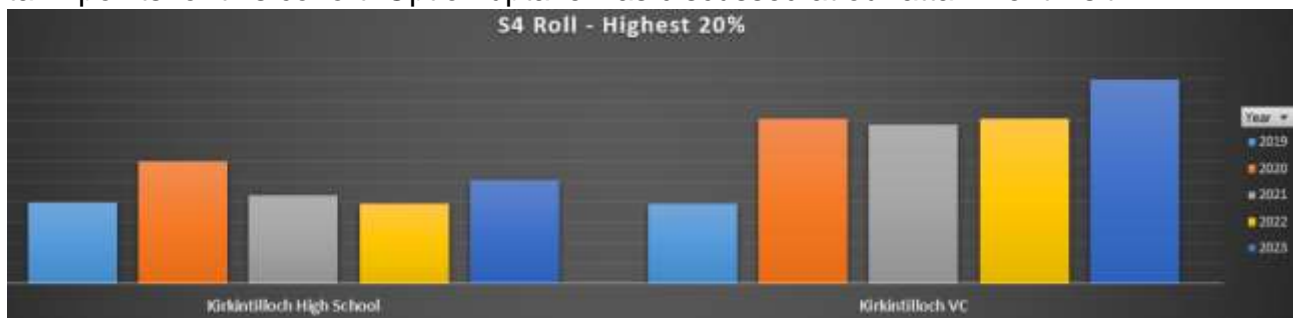
### Attainment Overall

- BGE tracking data from PROGRESS shows that by the end of S3, most young people achieve Level 3 in almost all curricular areas with a majority of young people achieving Level 4 in a majority of subject areas.
- To support professional judgements, regular moderation exercises using curricular benchmarks are a feature at departmental meetings. Staff use tracking data in the BGE as the basis for intervention approaches.
- In the Senior Phase attainment is improving for the percentage of young people in S4 gaining 5+ qualifications at Levels 3, 4 and 5 over the last five years.
- In S5 Level 6 attainment decreased from 2022 to 2023. In S6 there has been an increase in the percentage of young people attaining 3+ qualifications at Level 6.
- In S4, the attainment of the lowest 20% and middle 60% is broadly in line with the VC. The highest 20% are below the VC and have been so for the last five years.
- In S5 the lowest 20% and middle 60% are above the VC. For the highest 20% there has been a 5-year positive trend in attainment, well above the VC.
- In S6, based on the S4 roll, the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% are above the VC.

- The school has a strong culture of recognising and celebrating the achievements of young people. Staff regularly celebrate young people’s achievements in a range of ways, such as through social media, school newsletters, noticeboards, and awards ceremonies. Young people feel respected and that their achievements are valued.
- Young people develop skills such as teamwork and confidence through their participation in a wide variety of activities within and out with class. Extracurricular clubs include drama, debating, music, art, dance, and a range of sporting clubs. Young people can clearly articulate the eight employability skills that are referred to in class and can apply these to contexts in life and work.
- Young people across the school develop their leadership skills and contribute to the life of the school through the Pupil Parliament. YPI, MVP, Kirky Chronicle and work towards Rights Respecting Schools accreditation.
- All S6 demonstrate their skills supporting younger pupils and organising school events as part of their Leadership Award. These experiences prepare them well for life beyond school. Almost all young people leaving Kirkintilloch School in the last five years moved on to a positive and sustained destination. Leaver destinations are above the VC.
- In attainment versus deprivation, young people in S4 and S5 attain broadly in line with the VC, while in S6 attainment is above the VC in quintiles 1 and 2, The school have implemented measures to ensure that poverty is not a barrier to young people accessing and experiencing opportunities. This is helping young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve. Other school equity measures have been shared on the Child Poverty Action Group - Cost of the School Day Ideas Bank

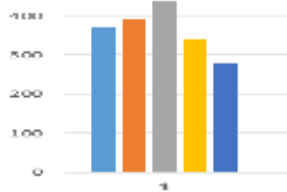
**Points for consideration**

- How can qualifications be banked for young people where attendance is an issue – this is something that be continued to be worked on.
- How are the highest 20% in S4 and S5 being tracked and supported to ensure they remain on track for 7 Level 5 qualifications in S4? S4 Highest 20% is below the VC for the previous 4 years. There is a similar pattern when looking at complimentary tariff points for this cohort. Option uptake was discussed at our attainment visit.

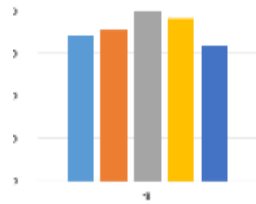


- Consider attainment of Q1 young people in S4 and S5. Two-year downward trend for both year groups in terms of total tariff points gained.

**S4**



**S5**



- Literacy and numeracy qualifications how do you ensure that attainment levels are consistently high?
- Wide curriculum offer – how do we add value in S4 and S5? SLT have identified pathways to ensure that S6 add more value to their attainment e.g., leadership award. Added value in S4 e.g., L6 First Aid at Work, personal development L6 within S5 PSE curriculum?