

Summarised inspection findings

St Ninian's High School

East Renfrewshire Council

4 June 2019

School Name: St Ninian's High School
Council: East Renfrewshire Council
SEED number: 8602433
Roll (Sep 2017): 1799

Attendance is generally above the national average.

In February 2018, 3.1 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2017, 4.4 per cent of pupils live in the 20 per cent most deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2017, the school reported that 22 per cent of pupils had additional support needs (ASN).

Key contextual information

St Ninian's High School is a six-year co-educational Catholic school. The school serves the communities of Clarkston, Giffnock, Newton Mearns, Eaglesham and Busby in East Renfrewshire. Young people from out with the catchment area also attend the school as a result of placing requests.

1.3 Leadership of change

excellent

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

- The school's vision and values are summarised by their mission statement, 'Floreat Iuventus' (Let Youth Flourish). Staff demonstrate the vision very well by placing learners at the centre of everything they do. School leaders, staff and young people are rightly proud of the highly positive ethos within the school. Based on strong gospel values, staff and learners treat each other very well on an ongoing basis. The school has a strong reputation for very high attainment and achievement. Staff and learners work very hard to sustain and improve consistently very high standards by the senior phase.
- Leadership, particularly of the headteacher (HT), is a significant strength of the school. The HT has been in post for fourteen years. Over time, his leadership has led to a school in which there are aspects of the very best practice. He has driven change to enable sustained, outstanding outcomes for young people. The HT is very well respected by staff, parents, young people, the church and wider community. Together with his senior leadership team, the HT provides very supportive direction. This is characterised by openness, empowerment, consultation and strong collaboration. The six deputies (DHTs) demonstrate clear impact in their roles and responsibilities.
- Faculty heads and principal teachers lead their teams very well. Senior leaders, middle leaders and staff benefit from strong, collegiate working. This ensures a clear flow of intelligence to and from faculties. Senior leaders support and challenge staff very well. Staff exhibit a very strong sense of shared purpose, and a constant drive to continue to improve learning and teaching. The leadership and empowerment of every member of staff to make a significant contribution to the holistic development of all young people is a very strong feature of the school's work. Examples of this include developments to take forward science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
- Senior leaders and staff employ a range of self-evaluation activities very well to plan for continuous improvement. These include rigorous analysis of data, focused school reviews and systematic observation of learning. Self-evaluation results in an honest and accurate statement of the school's strengths and areas to improve. The HT strongly advocates that there is no room for complacency. Middle leaders recognise their role in giving more targeted feedback in the pursuit of further consistency in learning and teaching. The school is now at an appropriate juncture to continue considering what excellence looks like across all of the learning settings.
- The HT's strategic planning and vision for improvement is excellent. Planning for improvement links with the National Improvement Framework, and local authority and school priorities. The current school improvement plan reflects well staff's vision for improvement. A noteworthy feature of strategic planning is the focus on working with the cluster primary schools to assist with transition and continuity. There are clear links between the school improvement plans and department improvement plans. Identified priorities are the result of highly effective

engagement with staff, pupils, partners, the church and parents. East Renfrewshire Council provides strong support, as well as acting as a critical friend. Planning for improvement has a strong focus on raising attainment, learning and teaching, the development of the curriculum and the continued development of young people's spirituality within a strong Catholic ethos. There is very strong impact from planning for improvement. The success of year-on-year improvements reflect staff's detailed knowledge and understanding of young people, as well as their strong commitment to raise aspirations. The completion of well-crafted school Standards and Quality Reports (school and pupil versions) provides very useful summaries of outcomes and impact achieved throughout the year. The HT is streamlining improvement plans for the next three-year cycle to assist with reducing bureaucracy.

- Tracking and monitoring in the broad general education (BGE) and the senior phase is strong. It provides staff with clear information on which they act to support improvements for learners.
- The school has set out clear and cohesive plans for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). These plans address any gaps for young people who face additional challenges in life. Of particular note is how PEF has been used to improve access to opportunities for achievements. There also has been a strong focus on literacy and numeracy.
- The curriculum has a clear design. It supports the school's vision and values to produce learners who demonstrate the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. In the BGE, senior leaders continue to build opportunities to widen young people's learning. In the senior phase, senior and middle leaders continue to build in new opportunities for accreditation. The success of curriculum pathways is confirmed by young people's very strong outcomes for attainment and achievement.
- There is a clear and useful five-year plan for the implementation of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). For this, there are close links with the local authority and Skills Development Scotland (SDS). Senior and middle leaders direct the implementation of DYW exceptionally well. They ensure appropriate partnership contributions from employers, SDS, alumni, and the primary schools within the cluster. Training and resources have been developed in conjunction with the primary cluster to ensure early exposure to consideration of future careers. The Career Education Standards (CES) are woven into the compulsory Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) weekly sessions for every year group. Management and development of this work is distributed. It includes contributions from senior staff, middle managers, teaching and support staff, as well as 52 My World of Work (MyWoW) Ambassadors. This has supported positive destinations for almost all young people in the last five years.
- The school is rightly proud of its sector-leading programme of career-long professional learning (CLPL). Senior and middle leaders use Professional Review and Development to agree CLPL needs, linked to improvement planning. There is an extensive programme of in-house CLPL available to staff. This includes opportunities to shadow in preparation for positions of responsibility, in-house training sessions led by staff, access to educational research materials and encouragement to participate in developing enquiry skills. This very strong commitment to professional learning supports school improvement very well. Staff are also motivated from such opportunities, which builds their sense of identity with the school.
- Teachers undertake relevant out-of-school CLPL. A few have successfully achieved headship qualifications. The projects undertaken by participants in pursuit of headship qualifications have been of value to the school. One example of this is the approach taken to monitoring and tracking of young people's participation and engagement with achievements. Staff benefit from holding a range of remits with the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA).

- A very wide range of opportunities are on offer to develop the leadership of young people. This includes leading or supporting various curricular activities at all levels, acting as part of the pupil leadership team, pupil council members, sports ambassadors and involvement in charity work and mentoring. This supports young people to develop strong resilience and confidence as they learn. Young people's involvement is strengthened further through the recent use of the self-evaluation framework, How good is OUR school? Teachers are creating opportunities for young people themselves to influence improvements in the learning process. In several curricular areas, their views have provoked changes in how lessons are taught.
- The Parent Council (PC) is active in supporting the school. As a PC they engage well together. A few parents have a good understanding of the day-to-day work of the school through observing learning and teaching. The acting Chair of the PC sits on a national parent group and, as a result, provides strong representation on behalf of all parents. He also is a member of a national curriculum group and is able to assist the school in effecting system-wide improvement. Parents and staff also participate in the 'Friends of St Ninian's', which provides helpful financial support to enhance the wider learning provision.
- The school has strong partnerships with community organisations, including vocational partners. They extend and enrich the school's curriculum offer to young people. Partners have had notable impact in supporting young people with bespoke and enhanced pathways. This has entailed providing young people with an extensive range of vocational courses, personalised support programmes, sporting opportunities and charity leadership programmes.
- Staff already play a strong role in sharing their very effective practice with other colleagues. Middle leaders lead cluster primary meetings for their subject specialism. While there is already sharing of practice more locally, the school is very well positioned to share its excellent practice in leadership of change at national level.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- St Ninian's High School is very much a community of faith and learning. The school's mission statement 'Let Youth Flourish' is thoroughly reflected by all associated with the school. The gospel values support and encourage a very positive ethos and caring environment. Young people are highly motivated and have a great respect for learning. They display determination and commitment to succeed in a wide range of contexts. All within the school community benefit from highly positive relationships. Staff have a clear commitment to value all learners as individuals.
- Young people assume a wide range of roles in learning across the school. They make strong contributions to the life of the school and the wider community. The learning experiences of many young people are enhanced through their peers working with them. This assists in the development of their confidence, resilience and their sense of being valued. Increasingly, young people benefit from opportunities to lead aspects of their learning in classrooms. There is scope for this approach to learning to become more widely established across the school. When given responsibility for aspects of their own learning, young people respond with enthusiasm to deepen learning. A few lessons are overly teacher-led and the learning experience is too passive.
- Young people are well supported by teachers' clear explanations of key concepts and expected outcomes from learning. When working on their own, or in pairs and in groups, young people demonstrate high levels of engagement. Learners' understanding is enhanced by almost all teachers selecting well-planned tasks and activities. For almost all of the time, these tasks are appropriately tailored to meet the needs of learners. The progress of some young people would be further assisted with more extensive differentiation. At times, even more challenge is required by learners.
- The use of digital technologies to support learning is a strength across the school. Recently, the school has gained the Digital Schools Award Scotland. Teachers use a variety of digitally-based applications and approaches to enhance the learning experience of young people. This is increasing opportunities for interactive and flexible learning. Young people may bring their own devices to school, which is extending the use of digital technology.
- Senior leaders are aware that a few further improvements can be secured in achieving even more consistency of high-quality learning and teaching. The school's learning and teaching framework provides a suitable reference point on which to base this improvement.
- Young people report that teachers' feedback on how to improve their learning is helpful. All teachers should continue to discuss the best practice in the school on sharing feedback. This is with a view to supporting a few young people with specific next steps. Across the school, teachers support young people's learning in a wide range of ways. This includes mentoring,

additional one-to-one and small group learning opportunities. This supplements learning conversations with young people.

- Within the BGE, almost all teachers use an appropriate range of approaches to assess and support the progress of learners. The reliability and validity of assessments have been strengthened through well-planned professional learning. This has included an extensive focus on moderation activities within departments and with cluster primary schools. Commendably, approaches to moderation have considered the wider holistic learning and teaching context, as well as data that emerges from assessment events. Staff working groups consider the use of data. Teachers should continue to deepen their understanding of the National Benchmarks. This will ensure that assessment data continues to be integral to learning and produces effective reporting in the BGE.
- Within the senior phase, there is a rigorous approach to using assessment outcomes for improvements in attainment. Amongst staff, there is a widespread understanding of the standards required in SQA qualifications. This assists them in planning appropriate interventions when potential under-achievement is identified. Interventions include liaison with parents, provision of additional teacher contact and establishing mentoring programmes. Persistence in responding to assessment data exemplifies the school's ambition and commitment to ensuring positive outcomes for all learners.
- Within the BGE, departments' tracking and monitoring systems assist staff to monitor young people's progress. This includes providing information on attainment and potential under-achievement. There are clear processes in place that see analysis of emerging data leading directly to interventions by staff. This is assisting with improvements in learning and progress. Learners identified as being at risk of under-achieving are being supported. Additionally, information from tracking and monitoring is used well in reports to parents.
- The school has also developed very effective approaches to track and monitor participation levels in opportunities for wider achievement. This very impressive context is linked to the development of skills.
- Within the senior phase, there are well-established systems that track and monitor the progress of young people. Learners value the discussions they have with teachers and pastoral staff, and the advice they receive following analysis of data at key tracking points. The PSHE profile affords a context to formally record responses to information gleaned from tracking, monitoring and reporting. Additionally, information extracted from analysis of attainment assists teachers in evaluating their courses and planning necessary revisions.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Learning pathways lead to positive and sustained destinations for almost all young people. Teachers plan with colleagues in primary schools (cluster planning). As a result, very effective curricular links are in place to ensure young people make appropriate progress in their learning as they move from P7 to S1. Young people experience coherent and progressive learning pathways in literacy and numeracy, and such subjects as English, mathematics, languages and science. Young people are able to continue their study of French from primary school. They may learn Spanish and Mandarin as additional languages. A few young people need to be encouraged further to persevere with languages so they receive their full entitlement.
- During S1, young people experience learning in all curricular areas. Skills are developed through interdisciplinary learning (IDL) involving a range of subjects across the school. The Rapid Response IDL is one example of this. Internet safety is addressed through PSHE, work with the school's librarian and in identified subject areas. Following a general introduction in science, young people experience discrete science subject pathways in biology, physics and chemistry. Rotations are organised in other curricular areas, for example, social subjects, design and technology, and home economics. In planning rotations, it is important that the school supports continuity of learning. As young people move through the rotations in a curriculum area, teachers should ensure that planning reflects prior learning and builds on skills and knowledge already developed.
- The development of the curriculum is an ongoing key priority on the school improvement plan. There is a particular focus on ensuring that the curriculum is appropriate to the needs and aspirations of all young people. From the primary stages into S1, tracking and monitoring processes are in place which indicate how well young people are progressing in their learning. A range of assessment information is used to organise learners into broad banded groups to support pace and challenge in learning. The school's assessment judgements have determined that almost all learners have achieved third level in the experiences and outcomes by the end of S1.
- As young people specialise within curriculum areas in S2, senior leaders should continue to monitor that all young people receive their entitlement to breadth across all curriculum areas and subjects. Young people's learning should reflect fully the principles and entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence. Staff are not consistent in their articulation of how the fourth level outcomes are used to provide depth and challenge which enables progression to course qualifications in the senior phase. In the BGE at S3 and at the senior phase in S4, young people study eight subjects and a few study nine, should they wish to study physical education as a National Qualification. At the end of S3, senior leaders should ensure that there is scope for young people to refocus their curriculum and that support is available to address any gaps in learning as a result of course choices in the BGE. The school should now review the curriculum to ensure that it reflects national guidance.
- The school's very extensive wider programme for achievements promotes skills for learning, life and work. Opportunities to enhance and deepen learning are also offered. The opportunities for achievements include sports, expressive arts, science, digital learning and leadership. Young people are able to reflect on their developing skills in PSHE. This includes the use of 'I can statements' relating to the CES.
- Pathways into and from the senior phase are very well planned. There is a significant range of course options available to young people. Planning with partners ensures that pathways with college, university and third sector partners are extensive and appropriate. Strong links with

college and university partners are used to give young people taster sessions, and inform good quality applications. Arrangements for work placements are strong, and help young people enter the world of work.

- In S4, almost all young people are studying National 5 courses. As they move through the senior phase, they are provided with very good advice and guidance. Learning pathways from S4 include a range of courses leading to qualifications at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) 5 to 8. Courses are available at college as well as in school and include Foundation Apprenticeships. The well-constructed and clear 'Booklet for Senior Students' provides detailed information on pathways. For example, case studies of learning journeys help young people to consider next steps for their future destinations.
- There are planned strategies to promote literacy and numeracy across the school, led by the English and mathematics departments. The librarian is very effective in promoting literacy across the school through a range of motivating and engaging activities. The school has a very well-planned digital learning strategy.
- Religious education (RE) is planned in line with statutory requirements for the delivery of RE in Catholic Schools. The faith and learning programme provides opportunities to reflect on faith, liturgy and personal responsibilities. Young people in the BGE and senior phase are receiving physical education in line with national guidance.
- DYW is a high priority in the school's planning for improvement. Plans are linked to national, authority and school objectives. Shared and distributed leadership is utilised in planning DYW. Staff work in collaboration with the cluster primary schools to develop a DYW strategy, resources and materials for teachers and learners to use. SDS, colleges and the local authority make useful contributions to planning, course options on offer, and support provided to individual learners. This is well-coordinated through an effective monthly working group. There are extensive links in place with partners. Career Management Skills are central to the PSHE programme, with well-structured materials prompting useful discussions and reflection. Pastoral staff ensure appropriate and helpful advice on subject choice and preparation for next steps in learning or work. Young people are well informed. They can readily describe the career-related attributes and skills they have developed.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Staff are committed to fostering a spirit of partnership between home, school and the parish. This partnership is a strength of the school. It is based on the Catholic faith, mutual trust and respect. The school chaplains provide very strong support for all in the school community. Family members are regular attendees at Mass held within the school. Engagement and communication with parents is regular, structured, efficient and effective. The creative use of social media is welcomed by parents. It allows the school to share and celebrate the achievements of young people.
- Partnerships with parents are enhanced through regular workshops and information evenings. These enable parents to engage actively in learning with their children in a supportive and constructive way. Parents support the school in their capacity as employers. They offer valuable advice and support about the workplace.
- The school has a very committed and active PC. The Chair brings a national perspective to the PC. Most parents feel encouraged to be involved in the work of the PC. The PC embraces the school's vision, aim and commitments. They are exploring ways to engage more parents in their work.
- Almost all parents think the school is very well led and managed. Parents praise the dedication and professionalism of the HT and staff. Parents feel comfortable approaching the school. Almost all parents feel staff really know their child as an individual and that staff treat their child with respect. Parents of young people with ASN feel very well supported by the school.

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

very good

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

- At the core of the school's vision is the commitment to ensure the wellbeing of all young people. Young people are aspirational for themselves and each other. They are proud of their school and their achievements. Young people are encouraged and supported by staff to achieve their potential. Staff express the highest expectations of their pupils. This climate of aspiration is underpinned by gospel values, mutual respect and nurturing relationships across the school. It is resulting in almost all young people feeling they have extensive opportunities to achieve their potential. Almost all young people feel safe, secure and treated fairly and with respect.
- Staff are committed to the development of health and wellbeing (HWB) across learning. A clear strategy ensures that all members of the school community share an understanding of the importance of wellbeing and their respective responsibilities. Staff feel that this is supporting professional reflection and leading to improved outcomes for all young people.
- Across the school, the wellbeing indicators are publicised and modelled by staff. The needs of all young people are addressed by staff. They are supported by an extensive range of partners. Through personal contact, planned programmes of learning, focus group discussion and year group assemblies, young people are encouraged to reflect on and take responsibility for their personal wellbeing. In promoting HWB across the curriculum, posters have been developed and are displayed prominently across the school. In focus groups, young people evidenced and welcomed a range of contexts within their curriculum through which they are developing a better understanding of HWB. Young people are provided with extensive opportunities to support the ethos of the school. For example, through the pupil council, student sports council, S6 programme of service and S6 HWB committee.
- Young people value the relationship which they have with their pastoral support teacher. In consultation with young people and partners, a structured PSHE programme provides clear progression from S1-S6. Themes are reflective of and relevant to the needs of young people at all stages. Young people highlight that they appreciate the relevance of the topics being explored, for example the responsible use of social media. The programme reflects diversity, equity and inclusion in relation to protected characteristics and is supported by an extensive range of visiting speakers. Key themes of the programme are promoted through a weekly PSHE newsletter and 'Focus for the Week'. These are shared with young people in class, at assemblies and with families through the school's website and social media platforms. Mental health awareness is a key focus of the programme. Young people have evaluated this very positively, including the contribution of senior students who lead in this area. Young people at the senior stages are also making a valuable contribution as buddies, mentors and through in-class support. They are highly effective role models for younger learners. The PSHE programme is underpinned by a profiling booklet, which provides ongoing opportunities for

young people to reflect using wellbeing indicators. This forms an element within learner conversations with pastoral support staff and discussions at parents' meetings.

- Learner focus groups confirm that young people are being encouraged to accept responsibility and seek solutions for themselves. Young people can offer a range of instances when they have received support in addressing a personal issue. Through well-planned and targeted partnership working, staff offer advice and support in responding to potential barriers to learning. Young people are supported further with a wide range of groups. These include Mindful Art, St Ninian's Achieve Team, Young Carers and Rainbows groups. Young people identified as requiring additional support are progressing well. Staff display a detailed knowledge of all young people.
- Senior and middle leaders are developing an electronic version of the existing tracking arrangements to capture young people's sense of wellbeing over time. Developing a whole-school picture of young people's sense of wellbeing in its broadest sense will support staff in informing development priorities. It will also form a basis for evaluating the impact of whole-school initiatives and targeted interventions.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in relation to statutory guidance. A range of school and local authority policy statements set the context. As staff reflect on existing practices, consideration should be given to ensuring that the views of young people are expressed in wellbeing plans to reflect fully the wellbeing indicators.
- For the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007, the current provision of food and drinks available through the catering service, needs to take account of all food, drink and nutritional standards which applies across the school day. Further work is required to ensure full compliance with all aspects of the Regulations. Staff should continue with their efforts in encouraging young people to access their entitlement to a free meal.
- Young people are receiving their entitlement to universal support. Within a supportive learning environment, young people feel that they can access teachers for advice and support. They benefit from named contacts: pastoral support and DHT. The school aims to provide continuity of contact throughout the young person's school career. A well-planned transition programme is in place with enhanced and, if necessary, bespoke arrangements to support identified young people, in their transfer to secondary school. The needs of young people requiring targeted support are identified well at the point of transition. Reviews are held to plan adjustments and additional support. Information is updated on a regular basis by pastoral and support for learning (SfL) staff and DHTs. More specialised support, often in liaison with partners, is available in response to particular concerns.
- Staff speak positively of the support and advice that they receive from SfL personnel in response to individual enquiries. In supporting young people in their learning, school staff liaise closely and promptly to address any identified issues. Information relating to meeting the personal and learning needs of young people is shared appropriately with staff in a way that respects privacy. Teachers' knowledge of young people and their needs is very strong.
- In addressing ASN, there is scope to build on current practice. This is to effect greater consistency in approaches to meeting needs in classrooms, and evaluating the strategies in use. At a strategic level, senior leaders should reflect on the arrangements surrounding the deployment of SfL personnel. Ensuring sufficient time for SfL specialists to work collaboratively in class will assist in building the capacity of teachers in developing their skills and expertise to address specific learning needs.

- Across stages, young people are supported in accessing information and presenting their ideas through the use of assisted digital technologies. Young people's entitlement to special arrangements in accessing SQA National Qualifications are planned well and are securing positive outcomes for learners.
- Arrangements are in place which respect the cultural and religious traditions of other faiths with, for example, prayer and washing facilities being available as required. Young people are being encouraged through the school's moral, religious and HWB programmes to recognise and respect diversity, and challenge discrimination in any form. Young people articulate clearly the importance of mutual respect. Year group assemblies, some of which carry an input from young people, reaffirm the faith dimension of school life. The school's values-based focus of the week, PSHE newsletter, and free-standing events complement areas explored within the curriculum. Senior leaders are confident in their ability to respond promptly and appropriately to any request from young people for particular advice and support. Similarly, for facilitating support groups in addressing a need should it arise.
- The extensive range of out-of-class experiences are promoting positive attitudes to HWB. The recognition of group and individual achievements is supporting the building of self-esteem.
- Staff are using the Leuven's Scale to gauge engagement and participation. This refines further the process to identify potential barriers to learning. Linking the information being gathered to the existing learner conversations will help young people to reflect on their participation and development as learners. In reporting to parents, the school recognises that they should continue to reference young people's sense of wellbeing.
- The school's attendance is above the national average. Exclusion figures are significantly below the national average. There are well-defined arrangements in place to address non-attendance and late-coming. This includes flexible provision to ease young people returning to full-time education.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

excellent

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

- St Ninian's High School is very successfully sustaining high standards over time. Young people achieve outstanding outcomes. Underpinning the school's approach is the HT's relentless drive for improving and sustaining the highest standards for all young people. He is very proactive in ensuring that there are no limits on what can be achieved by young people. Senior leaders are very skilful in analysing data. They are committed to its use to effect improvements for all individuals in the pursuit of excellence and equity.
- The school reports to be improving the reliability of data submitted for literacy and numeracy on completion of Curriculum for Excellence levels, as part of the National Improvement Framework. Information on attainment and progress in literacy and numeracy is tracked across the BGE, which includes for some particular features that are associated with equity.

Attainment in literacy

Broad general education

- Over the past three years, the school reports that almost all young people achieved the third curriculum level or better in literacy. In the latest two years, the school reports that most young people achieved the fourth curricular level in literacy.

Senior phase

Leavers

- Over the last five years, the school is consistently performing significantly much higher than the virtual comparator (VC) for the percentage of young people leaving with literacy at SCQF level 6 or better. Over the past five years, most or almost all young people have left school with an SCQF level 6 award.
- As young people move through the senior phase, they are consistently sustaining very high standards in literacy. Over the past four years, almost all young people in S4 attained literacy at SCQF level 5 or better, which is significantly higher than the VC. By S5 and S6, most young people are attaining literacy at SCQF level 6 or better, which is significantly much higher than the VC.

Attainment in numeracy

Broad general education

- The school reports that in the latest year, all young people achieved the third curriculum level or better in numeracy. In the two years prior to that, staff report that almost all achieved the third curriculum level. Over a three-year period, the school reports that most young people achieved the fourth curricular level in numeracy. Staff have been using PEF to realise improvements in attainment.

Senior phase Leavers

- Over the period 2013-2017, the school is consistently performing significantly much higher than the VC for the percentage of young people leaving with numeracy at SCQF level 6. The percentage of young people leaving with numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better is significantly higher or much higher than the VC over the same five-year period. Generally, the majority of young people left St Ninian's High School having attained numeracy at SCQF level 6 or better.
- As young people move through the senior phase, they are consistently sustaining very high standards in numeracy. Generally over a five-year period, most young people in S4 are attaining numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better. By S5 and S6, the majority of young people are attaining numeracy at SCQF level 6 or better, which is consistently significantly much higher than the VC.

Attainment over time

- In the BGE, the school collates data for all subjects showing the percentages of young people achieving the third and fourth curriculum levels. This is over a three-year period. Staff are reviewing departmental approaches to tracking and monitoring across curricular areas and subjects, with a view to adopting a more consistent approach. Staff are building their confidence in making professional judgements. Senior leaders recognise that they need to continue to underpin professional judgements with robust evidence based on the National Benchmarks.
- The education authority conducts a rigorous review of attainment with senior leaders. Senior leaders have developed very robust tracking, monitoring and analysis of progress and attainment in the senior phase. Over time, there is a relentless focus on the use of data to get the very best outcomes for young people. The school's drive for improving attainment is based on knowing each young person as an individual, based on the school's values. Young people have ready access to specialist subject staff to assist them in taking forward actions from tracking and monitoring. This may be from their teachers, funding of additional subject specialists and through school-based mentoring schemes.
- Based on average total tariff scores, the school is sustaining very high standards for the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% as they leave the school. Broadly over the latest four years for all of these attainment groups, the school has sustained a significantly much higher performance than the VC.
- As young people move through S4-S6, based on complementary tariff scores, the school is broadly sustaining significantly much higher standards for the lowest attaining 20% and middle attaining 60% than its VC. For the young people who are the highest attaining 20% in S4, the school is in line with its VC. As the highest attaining 20% progress through the school, their performance is often significantly higher than the VC by the end of S5. By the end of S6, their performance is significantly higher than the VC over the past four years.
- In S4, there are very high standards of attainment being consistently sustained at SCQF level five or better over time. The percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level five or better for one or more to nine or more at grade A or better is significantly much higher than the VC. In 2018, in most of the 24 subjects in which the school presented young people for National 5, they attained significantly higher than the national average for grade A passes.
- The school is consistently sustaining an exceptionally high standard in S5 and S6 over time. The attainment of young people by S5 at SCQF level 6 grade A or better and grade C for one

or more to five or more courses is consistently significantly much higher than the VC. By S6, the attainment of young people at SCQF level 6 grade A and grade C for one or more to six or more courses or better is consistently significantly much higher than the VC. The attainment of young people by S6 at SCQF level 7 grade A and grade C for one or more and two or more courses or better is consistently significantly higher or much higher than the VC.

- The attainment of young people requiring additional support is above the VC. In the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20%, average total tariff points, when using the ASN filter, they are above the VC.
- In the latest year, four young people were recognised for attaining the highest national performance in SQA National Qualifications.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Almost all young people participate in a very impressive range of opportunities for achievements. Senior and middle leaders effectively track young people's achievements, including their recognition at national and international levels. Young people are encouraged to engage in a range of opportunities to ensure a breadth of participation, both in and out of school. Active Schools staff work with the physical education department to target those young people who are less engaged.
- Young people articulate clearly how they apply their skills in a range of contexts. Increasingly, achievements in and out with the classroom are linked to the development of skills for life, learning and work. Staff provide very effective support for young people who are less likely to attend clubs and groups. This helps to improve participation levels and is valued by young people. Across the school, achievements are recognised and celebrated. Young people highly value the many awards and badges for achievement presented in curriculum areas and subjects. The achievements of talented athletes are celebrated and recognised, with the school recently gaining a Gold Sports Award. Incentives such as loyalty cards and rewards encourages young people to keep fit and be more active.
- Many young people contribute to the life and work of their community through their faith, for example through the Caritas award. In S2, all young people complete the Youth Philanthropy Initiative. This helps to embed the importance of giving back to the community through charity work. Leadership opportunities increasingly add value to young people's achievements. These include numerous volunteering opportunities being recognised through Saltire Awards, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, The Diana Award and Volunteering Skills Award.

Equity for all learners

- The school is making significant progress in raising the attainment of all of its young people. The majority of young people reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 9 and 10. As these young people leave the school, they are consistently performing significantly much higher and significantly higher than young people living in the same deciles across Scotland. This is also the case as these young people move through the school. For young people who reside in SIMD 1-8, the school is broadly significantly much higher than for young people living in the same deciles across Scotland. This is also the case as these young people move through the school in S5 and S6.
- Young people speak very enthusiastically of the wide range of opportunities available to them to develop interests during school time and after school. Senior leaders should continue to promote inclusion and equity for all through monitoring 'the cost of the school day'.

- The percentage of young people in S4 and S5 who stay on at school is very high. Only a small number of young people leave at the end of S4. Over the past five years, almost all young people have entered a positive destination on leaving school. Staff in pastoral care work closely with SDS to ensure a focused approach on each individual's transition. Partners report that young people are well-prepared for their post-school destination.

Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

This indicator focuses on the need for children and young people to be well supported as they move into school, through school and beyond school. Effective partnership working, tracking of progress and robust record keeping are essential to support continuity in learning at points of transition. That continuity is crucial to maximising children and young people's successes and ensuring the post appropriate post-school destination. The themes are:

- Arrangements to support learners and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

- Staff have developed high-quality transition arrangements from primary to secondary school. These incorporate curricular, pastoral and social programmes to ensure an effective transition. P7 learners spend one half-day over a four-week period engaging in coordinated and well-planned learning activities across literacy, numeracy, RE, science, design and technology, and art. P7 learners also visit for a 'Mini School Day' which is led by young people from St Ninian's High School. Secondary specialists in computing science, mathematics and technology deliver weekly lessons to children in P6-P7 of the associated primaries. This is assisting teachers to build on progression into S1. The transition programme is strengthened further by the young people who are sports leaders working in the primaries. A cèilidh for those in P7 allows children from all the associated primaries to meet socially and form new friendships. A P7 Parents' Evening, S1 Parents' handbook and the S1 Insight booklet provides young people, and their parents, with useful information as they embark upon the transition to secondary school. Young people with additional needs are supported with carefully planned activities as they move from primary to secondary.
- Senior leaders, pupil support staff and subject specialist teachers engage in extensive discussions with primary colleagues to assist with building on prior learning. A highly effective CLPL programme facilitates shared professional learning for primary and secondary colleagues. For example, a Scottish Schools Education Research Centre (SSERC) STEM cluster project is currently in progress to improve the curriculum pathway. There is effective tracking and monitoring of literacy and numeracy between the cluster primaries and St Ninian's High School. CLPL events and working groups ensure good practice is shared and moderation activities are undertaken.
- The pastoral team make settling-in telephone calls to all parents of young people in S1 as an early intervention to address any concern. A literacy and numeracy workshop is in place for parents of S1 learners to allow them to support their child's learning at home.
- Young people are well supported at key transition stages across the BGE into the senior phase. They have access to clear information booklets, staff-led events and advice, parents' evenings, and advice from SDS. Young people feel they are given very effective advice to make choices about pathways which are right for them. The school's well-established PSHE programme provides a useful framework for guidance and transitions. Across stages, young people profile academic and wider achievements in PSHE booklets. They also record next steps and identify how well skills for learning, life and work are being developed. Young people have regular opportunities to discuss their learning and achievements with their teacher of PSHE. The school intends to create a digital version of the PSHE books.
- The School Partnership Agreement with SDS outlines clear and useful activities to support young people in making decisions on their future careers. Colleges and universities work well with the school. They provide information, as well as supporting young people make

applications of a good standard for higher and further education. Some specialised support activities are also in place for learners who would benefit from additional help. A range of employer partners make valuable contributions. This includes inputs into the curriculum, mentoring young people in completing applications, assisting with work placements and supporting role-play interviews.

- Staff work well with a range of partners to ensure that associated primaries, the local authority, colleges and university partners make a contribution to planning young people's transitions. The local authority plays an effective coordinating role to ensure that there is a wide range of vocational programmes and events. Colleges offer a wide range of appropriate link programmes. They attend careers fairs and parents' events. Universities also make helpful contributions to school events, as well as offering workshops and site visits to the campus. Commendably, the annual school Careers Convention involves almost 100 external partners, with 72 stands. This is one example of the school's breadth of partnership working.
- The school supports young people well in considering long-term career and employment opportunities. The DYW activities start with introductory work done in collaboration with associated primary schools. CES underpins aspects of the S1-S6 PSHE programme to encourage young people to reflect on skills and achievements, as well as academic progress. Extensive links with employers, and the use of alumni, helps to support an initial work experience placement in S4. Most young people have a more focussed and bespoke work experience placement in S5/6. Work placement is built on a useful model, consistent with national Work Placement Standards. Young people are encouraged to plan, experience and reflect on their work placement. They also reflect on the personal and professional skills needed in the workplace.
- Young people benefit from a valuable career-mentoring programme to support their transition to work. Local employers and former pupils provide one-to-one mentoring. This is useful for young people who have particular challenges, or have specialised areas of interest. An example of mentoring includes in veterinary surgery, where placement and industrial links are important for progression into this career.
- A wide range of curriculum options and choices are made available in the senior phase, which help to support good transitions in learning. The contact with, and use of college and university staff in delivering the curriculum, contributes well to very high levels of successful transitions. Additional elements of delivery, such as appropriate work experience and visits to careers fairs, colleges and universities helps ensure that young people make well-informed decisions.
- Young people are helpfully supported in making Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) applications. This includes young people and parents receiving a briefing on good practice. Mentors also work with young people applying for college. Specific arrangements have been made for learners on some college programmes to have a shortened and simpler application process. There are a number of S6 Career Information Evenings aimed at learners and their parents in targeted careers. These provide information on college and university applications, and answer any questions regarding career options. These evenings include group presentations, workshops and individual briefing sessions. Evaluations confirm that attendees find these very useful.

- In addition to these arrangements for all learners, some additional support is offered through the REACH and Top Up programmes with Glasgow University. These programmes are helpful in providing activities in school, or at university, to prepare young people for progression into higher education. In addition to school-wide arrangements, many subject areas also have specific projects aimed at motivating and informing learners. For example, in chemistry, the Schools Collaborative Crystal Chemistry Project (SCCCP), provided in conjunction with Glasgow University and linked to the CREST science award, encourages young people to engage with university level work.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- The arrangements to support young people with transitions from stage to stage.
- The range of curricular options available to young people in the senior phase.
- Creative and innovative curricular projects to maximise attainment, while enhancing young people's awareness of strategies to promote positive mental health.
- The strategic approach to the development of STEM across the school in partnership with associated primary schools.
- The school's approach to implementing DYW.
- The strong practice in place to provide the highest quality of CLPL for all staff.
- Young people's outstanding outcomes in attainment and achievement. The HT and staff are highly effective in sustaining these outcomes over time.
- Leadership, particularly of the HT, is a significant strength of the school. Over time, the HT's leadership has led to a school in which there are aspects of the very best practice. Together with his senior leadership team, the HT provides very supportive direction. This is characterised by openness, empowerment, consultation and strong collaboration.

Explanation of terms of quantity

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

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

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