

# **Summarised Inspection Findings**

**St. Kentigern's Academy**

**West Lothian Council**

**SEED No: 5509939**

**29 August 2017**

**School Name**            **St. Kentigern's Academy**

**Council:**                **West Lothian Council**

**SEED number:**        **5509939**

**Roll (Sep 2016):**      **1,188**

**Attendance in 2014/15 of 91 per cent is in line with the national average of 92 per cent.**

**In February 2016 18 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals, above the national average of 14 per cent.**

**In September 2016, 20 - <25 per cent of the pupils lived in the 20 per cent most deprived datazones in Scotland<sup>2</sup>**

**In September 2016, 10 - <20 per cent of the pupils were from minority ethnic groups**

**In September 2016, the school reported that 25 per cent of pupils had additional support needs**

**The school is located in 'Other Urban Areas'<sup>1</sup>.**

1. Location is grouped into eight categories based on the size of the population the school is in. These categories are:

- Large urban areas (population >125K)
- Other urban (population >10K)
- Accessible small town (population 3-10K but within 30 minutes of 10K)
- Remote small town (population 3-10K and more than 30 minutes from 10K)
- Very remote small town (population 3-10K and more than 60 minutes from 10K)
- Accessible rural (population <3K but within 30 minutes of 10K)
- Remote rural (population <3K and more than 30 minutes from 10K)
- Very remote rural (population <3K and more than 60 minutes from 10K)

2. Data is based on SIMD 2012. Pupils whose address cannot be matched to an SIMD data zone have not been included in the calculation.

### 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*
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- The vision, values and aims have been formulated and agreed by the school community in recent years. These together with the Catholic values are central to the ethos of the school. The achievements from the work carried out for the Rights Respecting Schools Level 2 Award, provide a strong foundation for shaping improvement. Although the vision, values and aims have a high profile across the school there is scope for them to underpin development work and therefore have greater impact in the life and work of the school. As planned, the school community should work together to refresh the vision, values and aims to ensure full ownership.
  - The staff in the school demonstrate a commitment to ensuring equity. Recent work has included the production of an 'Interventions for Equity' booklet which is raising awareness of equity as well as outlining practice. There are plans to use this as a tool for teachers to audit their practice. There is an understanding of the school social and economic context and this is reflected in school planning. The senior team are committed to having a constant focus on closing any gap in attainment between young people living in disadvantage and their peers and this focus has been strengthened by their work in the Scottish Attainment Challenge. They interrogated and analysed a range of both quantitative and qualitative evidence to identify where the gap currently exists. Staff have a collective understanding of what this gap is. There is now a need to move to planning effective strategies leading to evidence of closing the gap.
  - The priorities in the current school improvement plan (SIP) are ambitious and have been formulated from the results of self-evaluation activity as well as local and national priorities. Staff are involved in identifying and agreeing the school priorities for improvement and this enables them to feel a sense of ownership. Faculty Improvement Plans reflect the SIP. There is scope to improve the consistency in quality of these across the school and the collegiate nature of the principal teacher curriculum (PTC) group places the school in a favorable position to take this forward. Significant numbers of staff willingly participating in short-life development groups, taking on responsibility for leading a key project, and undertaking a wide range of professional learning. The priorities in the ambitious SIP could be streamlined further to provide an even clearer focus around areas for improvement. There is scope for parents, school partners and young people to become further engaged in identifying and agreeing priorities for improvement. In this way, they would become more involved in shaping school improvement.

- The headteacher, now in his third year in this post, has provided strong leadership in building on strengths of the school, recognising key priorities for improvement and driving forward important positive changes. He has a clear vision for school improvement and has shared this with the school community. The headteacher is supported by two deputy headteachers and a Business Manager and together the senior leadership team promote this vision consistently and well. Staff, parents and partners are positive about the sense of direction.
- The school has continued to build on its 'open door' approach to engaging parents and partners further. There is scope to jointly evaluate with partners outcomes for continuous improvement, as well as meeting together on a more regular basis. Staff have worked hard to make a number of important improvements such as broadening the curriculum at the senior phase, widening opportunities for achievement and raising the attainment of young people. Senior leaders are well informed about Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). They provide clear leadership in developing the DYW agenda. The school has fostered a range of productive links with partners (such as community police, Vine Trust, French twinned school) including business partners who are supporting young people in developing skills for life and work and into positive destinations.
- The staff, working with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) colleagues take account of the locality Skills Investment Plan, and raise awareness of this with young people. They provide clear leadership and work collaboratively with a range of partners to provide opportunities for young people to recognise and develop skills for employability. Most partners are not invited to contribute systematically to evaluation or planning for improvement and this is a missed opportunity to include wider views to support improvement planning. Through carefully planned professional learning staff are aware of the 3-18 Careers Standard and are making progress towards implementation.
- The headteacher leads by example in professional reflection and has an outward looking approach. He is a role model in promoting lifelong learning. He is committed to building capacity across staff, facilitating professional development and supporting staff through change. He has high standards and expectations of himself and staff. Within the school's management structure, a range of leadership development opportunities are offered for staff to take forward the school's improvement agenda. The PTCs have a key role to play in moving forward the SIP and achieving the aspirational vision across the school. There is scope to develop further the consistency of high quality leadership across the school. Professional enquiry and professional learning are increasing features of school life. The hub arrangement with local secondary schools and liaison with cluster primary schools is facilitating an outward looking approach and sharing of good practice. Career-long Professional Learning is carefully planned. A blend of work with outside agencies and speakers and local authority provision serves teachers well. Next steps would be to inform school improvement further from research and evidence-based learning.

### **Multistudy**

- The multistudy (one of three local authority autism resources) has a clearly set out vision and purpose to support young people to access mainstream education.

Managers and staff ensure that the right strategies are in place to allow young people placed there to fulfill their potential. The school has commendably developed the multistudy as part of a continuum of support to ensure flexible and prompt responses to meet the needs of other vulnerable young people including those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within the school. The multistudy has successfully established a calm, positive nurturing ethos and positive relationships, particularly for those who need a quiet space.

- Staff in the resource have made significant improvements to the quality of enhanced transition arrangements for young people with autism. Early intervention and support is helping young people with autism to make a successful transition to the school and participate in mainstream classes.
- Managers are planning to further improve self-evaluation processes strategically within the multistudy through planned peer evaluation and lesson observations. Their next steps would be to identify and evaluate the impact of changes and ensure consistency in learning, teaching and assessment.

## 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.*
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- In most classes, relationships are positive and respectful. The school achieved Rights Respecting status level 2 in 2014 and this was driven by a group of students. As the school reviews its work in this area, senior leaders should again ensure young people's voice and involvement is strong. There is generally a calm and supportive ethos across the school. Most young people are motivated by a good variety of learning experiences in classes and in the wider school. Learners respond well to opportunities to work in pairs or groups, valuing opportunities to become cooperative as well as independent learners. Although most learners are challenged well and there is an appropriate pace of learning in most classes, a few teachers could provide greater challenge by varying activities which would encourage higher order thinking skills.
  - Young people have good opportunities to lead and contribute effectively to the wider life of the school and community. Their ideas are sought and acted upon by most staff across the school. They develop very well their confidence in a range of leadership, sporting and cultural activities. The school is now in a position where they should gather more systematically the wider achievement of young people. This will help to target opportunities to young people who otherwise might miss out.
  - Young people's learning is enhanced by the effective use of digital technologies in many areas across the school. This includes laptops for research and presenting findings, electronic reading tablets and video analysis of performance. When given the chance, young people are using these with confidence.
  - Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Most staff create a positive learning environment, underpinned by the school's vision and aims. They intervene skilfully to maximise the learning experiences of young people. Although most teachers give clear explanations to assist learners and use questioning well to challenge young people's learning, there is room for this practice to be developed more consistently. Learning intentions are used effectively in the majority of lessons. There is scope to improve the quality of learning intentions shared with young people. In a few classes, young people are able to help shape the learning intentions and this helps them to develop and test out their thinking. Teachers could also develop further their use of success criteria in order to have a greater impact on young people's learning. Most teachers provide effective oral feedback to learners and the school has identified as a target the need to ensure all staff engage fully in learning conversations. In a few lessons, teachers use plenary activities which are helpful to learners in summarising and consolidating their knowledge and understanding. It would be helpful for this good practice to be

extended across the school.

- Staff across the school are developing their approaches to assessing the progress of young people from S1 to S3. In most departments, staff are beginning to discuss and explore how the recently published benchmarks can support their assessment approaches. Departments are more confident in their use of assessments in the senior phase. Teachers gather a range of information at key points in young peoples' learning. The school is beginning to make better use of data to identify individual and groups of learners. They now need to work further to plan appropriate interventions, meeting the needs of all learners. Although the school encourages young people to develop their online profiles, there is currently no whole school overview of these. More consistent use of student profiling would enable young people to set personal learning targets and have a better understanding of the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers are developing their confidence in understanding standards through a whole school approach to moderation. Working with teachers in the cluster primary schools, teachers in the mathematics, science and English departments are collaborating in planning and assessing learning activities and learners' work. This is improving teachers' understanding, supporting their judgements and resulting in improved progression in learning. Working with three other secondary schools in the Hub, staff in all curricular areas have worked with subject specialists to discuss and moderate samples of work. This has the potential to bring further benefits as teachers extend their knowledge and gain further confidence in assessing through the broad general education.
- In the current session (2016/17), staff have further developed their approaches to tracking and monitoring student progress across the Broad General Education (BGE) and senior phase. At the BGE, class teachers currently enter progress updates (including working levels and current progress), three times during the session. This will be extended to four times from 2017/18. Staff have worked with colleagues in neighbouring schools to moderate assessments and consequently improve confidence and reliability in the data entered.
- Arrangements for tracking at the BGE include standardised assessment data and an overall end of BGE (S3) target is agreed in S1. Staff should consider setting shorter term and more specific targets, involving learners in the process and involving them in regular discussions about their progress. Students in the BGE are not sufficiently aware of their targets or progress across subjects. As the tracking arrangements continue to be developed, staff should ensure that a progressive learner journey is clear and comprehensive. Staff do not yet track young people's achievements more widely across all the contexts of their learning.
- At the senior phase, staff have recently introduced helpful monthly progress updates for parents as part of revised monitoring and tracking arrangements. Staff evaluate and provide regular progress information as part of this approach, noting where students are on course to achieve a pass in their given subject. Staff should consider enhancing this procedure to include young people in negotiating more aspirational targets where this is appropriate.
- Monitoring and tracking arrangements provide the potential for staff across the school to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of young people. Building

on approaches for the analysis of data for whole year cohorts, staff should consider monitoring the progress of vulnerable groups of young people more consistently to ensure support is targeted and progress is appropriate.

### **Multistudy**

- Almost all learners who access the multistudy facility are engaged, motivated and making appropriate progress. A few are making exceptional progress in their learning and achievements, in attending school regularly and in their personal relationships with staff and other young people. Almost all young people attend a range of mainstream classes combined with specialist support within the multistudy facility. They have good access to digital technologies. Staff and managers in the multistudy demonstrate strong commitment to young people's wellbeing and development. They are sensitive to young people's anxieties and identify and address concerns promptly. Learning support workers provide well-judged support which is developing most young people's confidence and resilience in order to prepare them for learning.
- Most mainstream teachers are aware of appropriate support strategies through learning profiles which enable young people to maintain attendance in mainstream classes. Where clear learning intentions were shared with pupils attending mainstream classes, this has a positive impact and assists their understanding of tasks and new ideas. Teachers in the multistudy have made notable progress in taking account of young people's achievements and providing them with age appropriate opportunities to develop knowledge and skills for life and work. Multistudy learners have good opportunities to play an active role in the school and community through enterprising projects and volunteering activities. The school is developing approaches to tracking learners' progress across the curriculum and targets are set for most young people within plans which are structured around wellbeing indicators. Young people in the multistudy would further benefit from long and short term targets which are more directly related to learning. Parents and young people were unclear about their learning targets.

## 2.2 CURRICULUM: Theme 3, Learning Pathways

- The curriculum is kept under review and the current framework was agreed through consultation with staff, young people and parents. Discussions on the framework were focussed around sharing an understanding of the needs of different groups of young people in St Kentigern's Academy. The framework takes account of national and local advice and reflects the schools Catholic values of inclusion, equality and community.
- The curriculum framework provides young people with a progressive pathway through the broad general education from S1 to S3. Learning is provided, mostly at third curriculum level, across all eight curriculum areas during S1 and S2 with the 'U Choose' options providing an element of choice. At the end of S2, learners choose 'two from', in the following curriculum areas: science; social studies; technologies and one subject in the expressive arts. All young people continue with study in English language, mathematics, French, religious education, personal and social education (PSE) and physical education. They also undertake learning in Spanish and Italian. This maintains breadth but restricts the time for in-depth learning and specialisation in some areas.
- Although the chosen subjects in S3 are providing progression to learning at fourth curriculum level, the two periods per week in some subjects do not always provide sufficient time for all young people to achieve fourth level and thus make a smooth and successful progression to learning for National 5 in S4. Some young people require consolidation of learning at third curriculum level in aspects of their learning. Staff need to continue to review the learning pathways through S1 to S3 to ensure there are flexible progression routes which best meet the needs of different learners.
- The 'U-Choose' options are described as an interdisciplinary learning programme. This programme provides opportunities for young people to develop skills, including literacy, numeracy, thinking skills and employability skills, in different contexts. The range of options includes: games design; rocket science; events management; puppet making; debating and woodwork craft. The school needs to ensure that this programme is providing the most appropriate progression pathways for young people. Choices should be informed by reliable monitoring and tracking of progress so that the learning is a coherent part of the learning pathway.
- In S4 and in S5/S6, the school offers a range of learning pathways to meet the needs of young people. The school has appropriate curriculum arrangements to allow most young people to choose learning options that suit their needs and aspirations. There is a range of opportunities for young people to undertake courses leading to qualifications outwith the school, including virtual learning through links with other local schools, college-based learning and training provided by third-sector training providers. These include Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) and Higher National Certificates. The promotion and uptake of FAs is at an early stage with low numbers of young people involved in the current year. However, the local college (West Lothian College) is extending the range of FA opportunities in 2017/18 to seven frameworks. This will broaden the senior phase curriculum offer and introduce a wider range of vocational options.

- Teachers are continuing to review pathways in the senior phase and find innovative approaches to maximise opportunities for accreditation for young people. There is an increasing range of certification available at different SCQF levels, including National Qualifications and units, Awards, and Skills for Work. The school now needs to consider the senior phase holistically across S4 to S6 and whether two year courses leading to qualifications would better support some young people to achieve to a higher SCQF level.
- Young people are encouraged to explore opportunities for further learning and employment after leaving school. Many participate purposefully in a range of activities and events which help them gain useful information about the range of options available. These activities are increasingly helping young people to make informed choices about their future. The school has a clear focus on securing positive destinations for all and has engaged with a variety of partners to deliver programmes to meet the needs of young people. Working with partners, including SDS and West Lothian College, there is a good knowledge of the local labour market.
- The 16+ Hub is effective in identifying and supporting young people who would benefit from career advice and vocational learning opportunities. The Hub also demonstrates strong and effective partnership working with the school SDS Career Advisor, More Choices More Chances key worker and other relevant staff and agencies.
- Work experience is organised in a number of ways, often with bespoke arrangements for individual young people. The school makes good use of the *Work It* database to identify appropriate work experience for a number of young people. In addition, the Transitions to Work Coordinator works effectively with a range of partners to organise work experience for senior phase learners. The school works successfully with the West Lothian Schools Vocational Programme which organises vocational training opportunities for young people in their senior phase who are identified as being at risk of missing out.
- The school has established purposeful links with a range of employers. These include employers who are directly involved in industries which are pertinent to the local economy, including major multi-national companies and small and medium sized enterprises. The school uses these links productively to provide young people with experiences which promote current industry practices and priorities.
- There are effective relationships with SDS careers staff who provide helpful career advice to young people. This includes group work and individual consultations for young people and input at parents' evenings and career fairs. The detailed school partnership agreement with SDS is jointly negotiated, agreed and monitored regularly to review progress towards delivery. Almost all targets are being met and where targets are not achieved, explanatory commentary accompanies the target.
- Literacy: The curriculum leader for English and languages in partnership with the senior leader Quality Improvement led a recent curriculum area review (CAR) of literacy. This thematic review used the literacy benchmarks and *How good is our school?* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) to evaluate progress with literacy skills during the BGE and plan for improvement. Following the CAR, a report has been shared and the

school is taking forward a range of appropriate work including development of a literacy action plan in partnership with Scottish Attainment Challenge, appointment of a literacy coordinator, cluster work and plans for family learning.

- Numeracy: A recent numeracy week for S1 has helped raise awareness in young people of where they apply numeracy skills. Work is being taken forward to improve staff understanding of the numeracy benchmarks.
- The school is working with relevant partners to deliver specific aspects of the health and wellbeing programme to provide up-to-date information which takes account of the most recent evidence in public health. There are planned opportunities for young people to take responsibility for their own learning and to share this with their peers in an attempt to influence behaviour and choices.
- Across the school, staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to make links between relevant aspects of knowledge in health and wellbeing and the associated skills, across the curriculum and what that looks like in practice in their subject area.
- Opportunities for achievement beyond the classroom are enhancing young people's learning. There are a few opportunities for young people to learn outdoors. For example, a week long Outward Bound residential targeted at those in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1 and 2 or who have English for speakers of other languages needs. They are developing communication, team working and have made new friends.

### **Multistudy**

- Staff ensure that young people and their parents are involved in agreeing the timetabling of individual learning plans which ensure maximum access to mainstream classes taking account of their individual needs and interests. Specialist staff ensure that young people placed at the school by West Lothian Council and other young people with ASD have learning plans at BGE and senior phase which focus on learning in a range of contexts including within the community and outdoors. Young people now have the option to develop skills for life and work to higher level in Personal and Social Development. All young people are well prepared for transitions and changes to learning routines at all stages. Along with mainstream peers they participate in 'U Choose' taster sessions across subjects in S1 and S2 to enable them to develop some understanding of curriculum options available to them.

## **2.7 PARTNERSHIPS: Theme 3, Impact on learners and families – Parental Engagement**

- The school is committed to an ‘open door’ approach with the aim of enabling parents to feel comfortable in engaging with the school at all times. The range of activity offered for parents is age and stage appropriate and is tailored to the particular point of a child’s journey through school. For example, transition events support parents in helping their child make the transition from P7 to S1.
- A range of workshops in different subject areas such as literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing help parents to understand what and how subjects are taught and provides them with ideas of how they can support their child’s learning. A ‘Family Learning Festival’ enables parents to meet and raise awareness of the range of partners that can be accessed to support learning at St Kentigern’s Academy. Workshops in partnership with SDS are helping young people and parents to develop more knowledge of skills for learning, life and work and raise awareness of Skills for Work courses.
- An open evening for parents of young people at the senior phase is raising awareness of different learning pathways through the senior phase and the range of positive destinations which are possible following different routes. ‘Behind the scenes’ visits, initially for members of the Parent Council, have helped parents to better understand the work of the school beyond the classroom. This helps them support and challenge the school to improve outcomes for young people. All of the planned activity is contributing to positive outcomes such as uptake of skills for work courses, staying on rates and the level of positive destinations.
- The headteacher offers weekly drop in sessions for parents to visit the school and speak to him about anything they wish to raise. This has been positively received. Monthly tracking reports for young people in the senior phase have increased the number of parental contacts with the school to discuss their child’s progress.
- The majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are satisfied with the school. A few parents would like more advice on how to support their child’s learning at home.

### **Multistudy**

- The multistudy has well-established approaches to involving parents in their children’s learning through regular communication, enhanced transition arrangements for young people placed at the school and through regular reviews of their children’s progress and wellbeing plans. Annual reviews should include all young people placed at the school by the local authority. Staff share young people’s achievements and highlight national and local events raising awareness of best practice in supporting young people with autism through a dedicated newsletter. Young people regularly contribute articles about their own achievements and experiences for parents. The school is looking at ways to further increase the involvement of multistudy parents and carers in school life including reinstating a parents group.
- There is scope to extend opportunities for parents and carers of young people who

attend the multistudy to jointly agree and contribute learning strategies within learners' profiles. Parents of children with ASD reported that they are happy about the day to day welfare of their children in the multistudy. They spoke warmly of how hard staff work to ensure barriers to learning are overcome. A few would like to have more information about their children's learning targets and how these might be supported at home.

## **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

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.*

- The school's strategic approach to wellbeing is underpinned by the strong commitment of young people, staff, parents and partners to the shared values of the school community (love, faith, equality, inclusiveness, hope and respect). The values sit at the heart of the school's Catholic ethos. All members of the school community are expected to take responsibility in establishing positive, supportive relationships, promoting a safe and secure learning environment, modelling health promoting behaviour and being sensitive and responsive to the needs and wellbeing of each individual member. Staff across the school articulate young people's learning, social, emotional and health needs well. A review of current approaches and practices related to the Rights Respecting School Level 2 Award could helpfully be undertaken to refresh levels of awareness and commitment across the entire school community.
- Staff–student relationships are strong. Staff knowledge and understanding of wellbeing, equality and inclusion is increasing through regular professional learning opportunities led by key staff. Staff are familiar with the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach. The use of the wellbeing indicators for planning and determining student needs are being embedded into all student support processes and approaches. Staff advice and guidance to support young people is regularly updated in line with current national and local advice and guidance. Staff are aware of who the 'looked after' young people are. Due consideration should be given to the anonymity rights of 'looked after' young people. Some staff would benefit from a greater understanding of equality to avoid unconscious bias.
- Most young people are polite and are considerate of their peers, however, a few do not demonstrate positive behaviour in class, corridors or social areas. S6 students demonstrate responsible citizenship through their participation in the Caritas Award and significant fundraising for charities. They are making a difference to their school, parish and local community through their service and volunteering. Several young people demonstrate they are effective leaders, for example in school through their roles and responsibilities within the new house structure and in the local community through their police cadet duties.
- In discussions with young people, they spoke with confidence about their understanding of key aspects of health and wellbeing. Most young people were aware and mindful of the impact particular choices could have on future outcomes. For example, being physically active on a regular basis and recognising the importance of assessing risk and taking appropriate action to keep themselves and

others safe. Young people agree to an internet safety protocol every time they log onto a school device. The school is aware that the negative impact of cyber-bullying is increasing. Not all young people are confident enough to tell an adult they feel unsafe, have been harmed and, or threatened. Some young people lack confidence that issues such as bullying will be dealt with effectively. The school has had a bullying log in place for several years. This could be improved further by ensuring class and year group are clearly identified, and it is split by session. This would allow a strategic overview and monitoring of interventions.

- The school has identified the need to improve their strategic approach to improving the mental health of all young people. A rigorous and robust Mental Health First Aid training programme has been put in place to up-skill key pupil support staff and pupil support workers in this area. Clear plans are in place to roll this training out to all staff in the course of next session. In the meantime, the support for learning team offer a very helpful menu of 'light bites' to enhance staff knowledge, understanding and skills in the wide range of student needs and how to provide effective universal support and entitlements.
- Young people enjoy a good range of opportunities to enhance their health and wellbeing across faculties/departments of the school. These are meeting the varied physical, social, emotional, behavioural and spiritual needs and interests of students. In some cases they are providing opportunities for accreditation while contributing to their portfolio of personal achievements and successes. Likewise, an extensive range of partner agencies is making a significant impact on the activities for young people within the community. For example, the wide range of sporting activities and competitions through West Lothian Active Schools programmes.
- A recent audit of wellbeing of groups of young people in S1 – S3 has been successful in helping them to identify and assess their own level of health and wellbeing. Interrogation of this data by pupil support staff is leading to the introduction of a range to actions and activities to target and support individual needs. The data is also providing a baseline against which progress and improvements in wellbeing can be assessed in the future. This auditing process could be expanded to the wider student population to ensure that the needs of all young people are understood and that their needs are being identified and met. In addition, the pupil support team is beginning to use the information that has been generated to plan interventions and to inform the development of the PSE programme.
- Approaches to the content and delivery of PSE including health and wellbeing is currently being reviewed and updated. As a result of the introduction of the new House structure, all pupil support staff teach PSE to their own cohort. This has helped them to get to know their pupils in S1 – S3. PSE in the senior phase is now delivered through three conferences, (one for learning, one for life and one for work). The school needs to review this approach to ensure that the curricular programme is comprehensive and delivers appropriate continuity and progression in learning. Young people's voice has influenced the content of the conference on life, their voice should also be included as other changes to the programme are being made. More consideration could be given to the inclusion of young people's views on their rights and responsibilities and their understanding of diversity.

- A few young people who attend the nurture base gain important skills for learning, life and work. They benefit from the safe nurturing environment which supports the development of their self-esteem and confidence. Young people are supported to develop lifelong strategies for dealing with anger and stress. This is leading to positive destinations on leaving school for young people and improving their life chances. A few young people benefit from attending additional classes in literacy and numeracy in the support for learning base. There is scope to review the use of this base and the rationale for the extraction of groups of young people. The behaviour support base provides an effective alternative to exclusion and ensures young people attending have opportunities to complete important classwork. Working in the base maximises opportunities for a few young people to gain success in National Qualifications.
- Teaching staff are making effective use of GIRFEC referral forms to the pupil support and support for learning teams. This could now be extended to devise support plans to meet the needs of individual learners. Targets in Children's Plans are reviewed at planning meetings. The school should ensure that all learning and support plans are reviewed appropriately. While targets are generally helpful, they are not well enough linked to learning. Electronic management information related to additional support needs is out of date. There are no young people in the school with a coordinated support plan (CSP). The school could work with health and social work partners to ensure that no young people who appear to meet the requirements are missing out. This includes the rights of 'looked after' young people to be considered for a CSP. The school could raise the profile of Young Carers and ensure that any 'hidden' carers receive appropriate support. There is scope for Young Carers to be highlighted through an input into the PSE programme for all year groups.
- The school approach to the provision of personal and universal support changed at the start of the session with the implementation of a new House structure. Each House has around 400 young people. As a result, pupil support staff have found it challenging to get to know the young people in their caseload as individuals. It is timely to consider current approaches and practices to personalised support and the need to ensure that all young people have a trusted adult who knows them well, has an overview of their progress in learning and who they are able to turn to if necessary. Staff and pupils are enthusiastic about the introduction of the House system and are keen to be involved in the review of the first year and the further development of this model.

### **Multistudy**

- Young people who attend multistudy are actively involved in decisions which affect their lives through regular visits to the base by the deputy headteacher to seek their views about the facility and quality of support. Young people told inspectors that staff are supportive and approachable and do their best to help. The school strives to include young people who attend the multistudy group in its life and work where possible. It does this by providing regular supported access to mainstream classes and ensuring that young people can access their subject choices as far as possible. The school has recently taken steps to improve partnerships to support and enhance young people's learning at transition to and from secondary school through engaging Youth Services, the National Autistic Society, West Lothian College and Sign Posts. Some parents would like the school to extend links with

appropriate businesses and organisations who can provide work experience for young people with autism.

- In the multistudy, young people's wellbeing is further supported and monitored through the use of wellbeing targets which are shared with parents. Helpful learner's profiles and wellbeing plans for multistudy pupils are shared with staff on a school information server. Most staff know about the most appropriate strategies to support them in mainstream classes. Timetabled support in the multistudy has an important focus on life skills, literacy and numeracy. While no young people in the multistudy have a coordinated support plan, all would benefit from appropriate long and short-term learning targets in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing where appropriate. This would help to more clearly evidence their progress and better inform intervention strategies in these key areas.

## 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.*

- Teachers are using evidence such as the results from a range of standardised tests and departmental assessment to inform their professional judgements on young people's progress and attainment. To identify and provide data on any gap in attainment between young people living in the most and least deprived areas, the school uses a range of standardised tests which assess aspects of literacy and numeracy. Staff are showing increasing confidence in analysing and using such attainment data. Teachers now need to ensure that they use a wider range of evidence and that it is set against national benchmarks to enable robust data on achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level to be generated. Staff recognise that further development of moderation activity will help to support this work. They should now, as planned, work towards reliably assessing and recording young people's progress and achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in all curriculum areas.

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

BGE

- The school provided data for attainment in literacy and numeracy for the current S2 to S4 cohorts for each of the last two years, however, they recognise that the results for 2016 are more robust than the 2015 data as teachers become more skilled and confident at making professional judgement about achievement of a level. The school has recently developed a new tracking system which is not yet embedded and so cannot yet accurately reflect attainment over time.
- The school provided data on the previous two years attainment in numeracy and literacy. This indicated that 39% of the current S2 students achieved third level by the end of S1 and 34% in numeracy, with 3% having achieved literacy at fourth level.
- The data for current S3 students indicated that 60% achieved third level in literacy by the end of S2 and 62% in numeracy, with 36% having achieved literacy at fourth level and 41% having achieved fourth level in numeracy.

### SENIOR PHASE

Leavers

- **Attainment of young people in literacy by the time of leaving school:** Attainment in literacy by the time of leaving school has been showing an improving trend across a five year period. There have been significant improvements in the number of pupils achieving both SCQF level 5+ and 6+ literacy over the past five years. The attainment levels are in line with the Virtual Comparator (VC).

- **Attainment of young people in numeracy by the time of leaving school:** There has been a significant decline in the percentage of young people attaining in numeracy at SCQF 5 or better as a course award over the last five years

### **As young people move through the school from S4 to S6**

- **Attainment in Literacy:** There are significantly improving trends over the last five-years for the percentages of young people achieving SCQF Level 5 or better and SCQF Level 6 by S5 and by S6. The proportions achieving literacy from S4 to S6 from SCQF 3+ to 6+ is mostly in line with the VC.
- **Attainment In Numeracy:** There is a five year significantly declining trend in the percentage of young people achieving a course award in numeracy at SCQF Level 5 or better by S5. In the latest year the percentage achieving an award in numeracy at SCQF level 3 or better, level 4 by unit and 4 or better as a course award from S4 to S6, is generally above or significantly higher than the VC.

### **Attainment over time**

#### **BGE**

- The school has developed a tracking tool which records current attainment data for the BGE across all areas of the curriculum. Information currently included relates to achieving levels in all subjects and will build up over time. When established this should enable progress of cohorts, groups and individuals to be tracked and monitored on an ongoing basis. It should also support the closing of any gap in attainment between young people living with disadvantage and their peers. It should help the school work towards monitoring the attainment of young people over time to ensure the school is adding value from P7 to S3. The senior team recognise the need to ensure all learners have a clear understanding of the levels at which they are working and the need to track attainment in the BGE over time.

#### **Senior Phase**

- The average complementary tariff score of all leavers in the latest five years is in line with the VC with no evident trends.
- The average complementary tariff score for pupils at S4 by S5 and by S6 is in line with the VC with no evident trends.

#### **Breadth and Depth**

- In S4 the percentages achieving one or more to eight or more awards at SCQF Levels 3 or better or 4 or better is almost always above or significantly higher or much higher than the VC. At SCQF Level 5 or above, the percentages achieving an award at Grade C or better and at Grade A or better, is showing an improving trend over five years from one or more to eight or more awards.
- By S5, the proportions achieving one or more awards at SCQF Level 6 at Grade C or better is showing an improving trend over the last five years. The achievement of two or more to five or more awards at this level has declined in the last year. The percentages achieving one or more to five or more awards at SCQF Level 6 Grade A or above by S5 has declined in the last year with one or more to three or more Levels being now significantly lower than the VC.

- By S6, The percentages of young people achieving one or more to five or more awards at Grade C or better in the last five years is showing an improving trend and is in line with the VC.
- The proportion achieving one or more to three or more at SCQF Level 6 at grade A or better is improving over the last five years and is in line with the VC.
- The proportions achieving an award at SCQF Level 7 is in line with the VC with the proportion achieving one or more awards at SCQF Level 7 at grade C or better being significantly higher than the VC.

### **Overall Quality of Achievement**

- The school has established a culture which recognises and celebrates the achievements of young people in and beyond school. There are a range of whole school awards which young people across the school have contributed to with appropriate levels of encouragement and support from staff. Young people, in discussion groups, spoke of the positive effect of their involvement in gaining these awards and competing in challenges. This includes improving their social skills, self-confidence and their ability to communicate, contributing to successful teamwork and time management to ensure targets are achieved.
- The school recognises and celebrates the achievements of young people through the use of newsletters, school assembly, prizegiving and award ceremonies. Participation certificates are regularly used. School newsletters promote some activities and events. This includes information on Girls into Construction, Girls into Computing and the annual Burns Supper. The school would benefit from a consistent approach to ensure all young people are made aware of wider opportunities available to them.
- Young people are achieving a range of awards for their volunteering. For example, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers volunteered at the Edinburgh Tattoo and at the Party at the Palace.
- Young people experiencing bereavement or loss are benefiting from support from the Give us a Break and Youth Action Peer Mentoring programmes. Some young people across senior phase are developing skills and attributes through access to a range of external programmes. For example, a few Girls into Construction and Bles (Blackburn Local Employment Scheme) pupils have developed skills for learning, life and work through exposure to a range of construction trades within a workplace setting.
- Young people would benefit from further support during introduction to new contexts. Opportunities to reflect on skills gained and areas to build on and develop further would also enhance learning experience.
- Pupil council representatives have influenced changes to the way the lunch area operates to improve pupil congestion issues. A few pupils, as part of Personal Development class, redesigned the library area to improve accessibility and encourage wider use. They are gaining in confidence and sense of achievement

from their improvements.

- There are a wide range of out of class activities supported by teachers and wider partners. Some partners are working with young people who are not undertaking a full timetable, such as those identified through the internal Hub. As a result, young people's motivation and attendance in school has increased. There are a few examples of joint self-evaluation of programmes taking place, however, this could be more consistent to ensure partners contribution is widely understood, recognised and equally valued.
- The school does not systematically share young people's skills developed through their wider achievement programmes. More needs to be done to ensure all young people gain recognition for their achievements both in and out of school. The school should work with partners to put systems in place which will help identify trends in participation and achievement.

### **Equity For All Learners.**

- The school aims to promote equity for all learners through its inclusive set of Catholic values as well as the work of the Rights Respecting School Level 2. The monitoring and tracking database has the potential to provide a clearer overview of equity and there are plans to link the work of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) with school improvement planning and attainment.
- Exclusion rates are higher than the national average and in 2014/15 the school has more than double the national average. This figure has reduced in the current year 2016/17 and staff are working to continue this reduction.

### **Attainment Versus Deprivation - Leavers**

- The average complementary tariff scores for young people who left school who live in data zones designated from one to ten has been in line with the VC in the last five years. There has been a declining trend in complementary tariff scores in the last three years for those living in SIMD 1 to 5.

### **As young people move through the school from S4 to S6**

- The complementary tariff scores for young people at S4 by S5 and by S6 is broadly in line with the VC for those residing in SIMD deciles one to nine. Young people living in SIMD six have often achieved above than the national average over the last five years.

### **Destinations**

- Over the past five years, almost all leavers have entered a positive destination with a slight increase in 2015/16. The percentage entering Higher Education has steadily dropped over five years with a similar increase in those going into employment. Numbers leaving school for a job are now above the VC whilst the pattern of leaving to go to college is generally in line with the VC. There has been an increase in numbers staying on from S4 to S5. However, there has been a significant decline in staying on rates from S5 to S6 in comparison to the VC.
- The percentage of leavers with additional support needs going into a positive destination was above the VC in 2013/14. However, this dropped to below the VC in 2016.

## Multistudy

- According to Multistudy's own information, most young people at BGE are working within or beyond the second level in English language and within expected levels or higher in mathematics. Information was not yet available for a small number of young people who had not been attending mainstream classes. At the senior phase, the majority of young people achieved a wide range of National Qualifications at National 4 and 5 in 2015/2016 and a small number are expected to achieve Highers. While there is a clear focus in the multistudy on activities which focus on literacy and numeracy, young people's progress in these areas is not tracked formally as part of individual planning.
- Young people in the Multistudy have good opportunities to achieve additional awards and participate in alternative programmes focused on preparing them for life and work. Five achieved a Junior Award Scheme for Schools Award which recognised their wider achievements in the community and at home. S5/S6 pupils successfully completed a transition college programme in October 2016 which helped them to develop independent living skills, skills for work and to build their confidence. Through the personal development award, young people learn enterprising skills and caring for others through open days, cafes, shopping trips and visits to an old people's home.
- All young people who have left the multistudy group over the past two years achieved a positive destination appropriate to their needs. Almost all moved on to attend college courses suitable for those with autism and a small number successfully sustained employment in shops and local businesses.

## **SCHOOL CHOICE OF QI: 1.5 MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES TO PROMOTE EQUITY**

- **Management of finance for learning**
- **Management of resources and environment for learning**

- The headteacher and business manager work together effectively to direct available finances towards short and long term priorities as well as maintenance expenditure. There are efficient arrangements in place to ensure that faculties are funded on a transparent and equitable basis. Suitable arrangements are made to attract and prioritise additional bids for funding and appropriate attention is given to ensure that finances are used in line with the school's aims, vision and priorities. For example, improvements have been made to curricular provision, including Skills for Work courses, as a result of prioritised funding decisions. Targeting of resources to the most disadvantaged has contributed to improvements in aspects of attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- Effective arrangements are in place for financial stewardship and management. Arrangements for devolved financial decision making provide the headteacher with flexibility, support and accountability. The authority's finance officers provide specialist support for the school's business manager and regular meetings and quarterly returns allow appropriate opportunities for monitoring spending.
- The additional and significant funding received through the Scottish Attainment Challenge has helped staff to address potential inequity due to poverty. For example, textbooks for all learners at S1-S3 living in SIMD 1&2 have the potential to encourage higher levels of home learning. Staff need to ensure that young people are given full encouragement to learn at home as a result of well-planned and varied homework activities. Records kept of attendance at study clubs indicate that the school is achieving success in attracting young people living in SIMD 1 and 2. Senior staff are confident that local arrangements for planning and using Pupil Equity Funding will continue to help them to target funds towards the most disadvantaged.
- Senior staff are aware of the need to ensure sustainability, particularly in regard to additional funding streams. As a result, they have placed a strong emphasis on ensuring that staff's professional skills are developed appropriately. Specialist experienced staff, working on a consultancy basis, help to develop and share staff's skill set. Student Support staff and Pupil Support Workers have recently experienced extended mental health training as part of the school's approaches to enhancing young people's health and wellbeing.
- Across the school, in line with its vision and values, staff work well to remove potential barriers which some young people may have in participating in activities, including, local and international residential learning experiences.
- Senior staff, with support from the authority, have developed suitable procedures for allocating, maintaining and renewing major resources, including digital technology.

- Across the school, staff make appropriate use of digital technology in their lessons. For example, in most lessons, staff made confident use of the widely-available interactive white boards. An increasing number of teachers are making effective use of Google Classroom and other digital resources, but this is not yet used consistently across the school. Digital books have the potential to provide young people at S1-S3 with opportunities to reflect on their learning and achievements. There is scope, however, to improve the quality and consistency of how this activity is managed.
- In several classes, young people make effective use of a wide range of resources, including tablet and laptop computers to enhance their learning. In some classes, however, an emphasis on teacher-led approaches leads to a reduction in opportunities for young people to make such effective, responsible and independent use of available resources.
- Young people have concerns about having ready access to toilet facilities during parts of the day. They also report experiencing some inconsistency in being allowed to leave class to use toilet facilities when necessary.
- Overall, resources across the school are well managed and organised. The school has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that relevant health and safety legislation is followed and to ensure that any health and safety issues are addressed promptly.

## **PARTICULAR STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL**

- The leadership of the headteacher in taking forward his vision for change, building the capacity of staff at all levels and setting high expectations to encourage a climate of continuous improvement.
- The commitment of staff in ensuring young people from all backgrounds are fully included in every aspect of school life.
- The impact on young people's learning from the team of pupil support workers. The benefit to young people of effective partnerships with teaching staff and the support workers' skills in engaging and supporting young people.
- The benefit to young people of the range of learning pathways available from S4 to S6 that suit their needs and aspirations. This includes an increased range of options leading to qualifications both within school as well as at college and neighbouring schools.
- The quality of enhanced transition arrangements and support which is helping young people with autism make a successful transition to the school and enabling them to participate in mainstream classes.

## **AGREED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL**

- Continue to build the leadership capacity of staff at all levels to create a more consistent high-quality strategic approach to school improvement.
- Develop a strategic overview within pupil support to ensure careful and appropriate allocation of resources to ensure all young people are fully supported.
- Further develop approaches to monitor and track learner progress to make sure there is timely, reliable data on the attainment of every learner. Staff could then consider how to put in place mechanisms to share this with young people and their parents.
- Continue to review the broad general education provision. Learning pathways through S3 and into the senior phase need to provide a smooth transition into courses leading to qualifications.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE INSPECTION?**

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. West Lothian Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.