

# Summarised inspection findings

**Boclair Academy**

East Dunbartonshire Council

9 June 2020

School name      Boclair Academy  
Council:         East Dunbartonshire Council  
SEED number:    8325936  
Roll (Sep 2018): 973

## Key contextual information

Attendance is generally above the national average in 2018/19. Exclusions are generally below the national average. In February 2019 10.5% of pupils were registered for free school meals. In September 2018, 18% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland. In September 2018, staff reported that 20% per cent of pupils had additional support needs.

### 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

- Based on a clear set of values, the school's vision for young people as learners is ambitious. All members of the school community work together to create and sustain an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Young people are positive of what it means to be a learner in Boclair Academy. Young people describe the school as helping them to develop their confidence, a view held equally by almost all parents in the questionnaire. The learning environment is enhanced well by very positive relationships, based on mutual respect, evident in the interaction between teachers and learners. Young people describe staff as being approachable. As learners, they benefit from the high expectations of senior leaders and staff.
- In most lessons, most young people are highly motivated and display a strong work ethic. Most feel that the school listens to their views, with the majority of learners commenting that their views are taken into account. Most young people feel that they are treated with respect, supported well by their teachers and encouraged to do their best. Within the classroom, young people are respectful, interact well with each other and work well in group activities. When given the opportunity, young people respond positively to the challenges of more open-ended learning with young people working well together in groups and in peer activities. Young people are articulate and confident in expressing their views and answers.
- As staff continue to refine whole school approaches to learning and teaching, there is scope to continue to build on the existing very good practice and for independent learning to become more widely embedded across the school. This should help to ensure further that all learners are engaged fully and challenged appropriately. Young people would benefit from being able to make a clearer connection between what they are learning and the skills which they are developing as a result.
- Almost all learners indicate that they appreciate the opportunities they have to take part in wider aspects of school life beyond the classroom. Plans are already being taken forward to

build on the existing opportunities for young people to become even more involved as leaders of learning through furthering their leadership roles, for example within the pupil council. Young people are actively encouraged to apply their skills and talents in a variety of contexts. The school's wider achievement programme provides learners, at all stages, with access to a series of highly relevant learning experiences.

- Almost all staff model the school's vision and values and this is underpinning their work. Staff are aware of the social context of the school. An established school learning and teaching policy is in place that emphasises the features of high quality learning and teaching and the central role of assessment in planning appropriate support and challenge for all learners. Supported through planned professional enquiry and voluntary learning lunches, staff continue to refine approaches to improve learning outcomes for young people. In improving consistency, senior leaders now need to build on the very good practice which already exists across the school and evaluate the impact of current learning and teaching strategies.
- A comprehensive range of partners liaise closely with the school to enrich the learning environment. They are supporting learners effectively in developing an awareness of vocational pathways and the wider skills of learning, life and work. Across the curriculum, there is a consistent approach to sharing the purpose of learning activities and where appropriate the links with young people's prior learning. Success criteria aligned to Curriculum for Excellence National Benchmark standards in S1-S3, and to Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) standards in the senior phase, supports young people's understanding of their progress and next steps. Most teachers provide clear success criteria and direction. In a few classes, overly teacher directed learning limits the opportunities for young people to assume responsibility for their own learning and pursue more open ended learning. In most classes teachers use questioning effectively to gauge understanding and recall. Approaches to questioning could be developed further to promote higher order thinking. Senior leaders should review the school approach to the use of digital technology with and beyond the classroom to enhance learning further.
- Across all curriculum areas, assessment information is supporting well the planning of lessons and the monitoring of progress within learning. Teachers display a clear understanding of the needs of learners. Within the classroom, support for learning staff are deployed effectively in line with a staged intervention approach to support identified learners.
- A wide range of assessment information, including teacher professional judgement, is gathered to monitor the progress of learners and identify young people requiring additional support. In the broad general education (BGE), young people's progress is being assessed across all curriculum areas in line with the National Benchmarks. Supported through moderation activities, staff express confidence in determining achievement of a level. In the senior phase, young people have aspirational target grades for subjects studied which take account of their prior attainment. Progress is reviewed at scheduled points in the course of the year, enabling learners and staff to plan and agree appropriate support if necessary. Information gathered also supports young people to develop a better understanding of themselves as learners. Plans are underway to incorporate within the school's assessment and tracking strategy the profile of wider learning experiences. Developments are taking place to bring together the tracking of wider achievement and learning to provide a coherent picture of young people's development and engagement across different contexts.
- Young people, in the BGE and in the senior phase, also benefit from the opportunity to reflect on their learning through self-and peer assessment, feedback in class and planned learner conversations. Senior leaders should continue to monitor the impact to ensure the consistency of these arrangements. Most young people indicate that they have opportunities to influence

what and how they learn. At a more strategic level through focus groups young people have been involved in shaping the school's learning and teaching policy. In planning learning, there remains scope to increase the opportunities for more self-directed and open-ended learning.

- The arrangements in place to track and monitor young people's progress are comprehensive and robust at all levels. Young people's progress is tracked systemically across all areas of the curriculum. The information is collated centrally, providing senior leaders and other relevant staff with a clear strategic overview of young people's progress within and across the curriculum areas at all levels. This profile, gathered through tracking updates, is being used effectively to inform discussions on learners' progress and support the planning of appropriate learning and targeted interventions. The progress of young people with potential barriers to their learning is kept under review with arrangements in place to address challenges. Staff provide good feedback to young people in the senior phase on progress towards success in qualifications. Most young people, taking account of prior attainment, agree initial targets with their subject teachers which are reviewed in the course of the session. Young people identified as being at risk of under-achieving are being supported through planned initiatives including the recently launched Boclair Learning Resource.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

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

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

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

##### BGE

- BGE data from 2016-2019 demonstrates that attainment in literacy is very strong at the end of S3 of the BGE and above the national figures with all learners achieving third level in the last four years. The school continues to refine and 'fine tune' their results. Attainment in numeracy is also very strong with almost all learners achieving third level numeracy by the end of S3 which is above the national figures.
- Senior leaders comment that a number of new initiatives recently in place are supporting a staff understanding of moderation. These include whole school literacy work in listening, talking and writing. Additional numeracy work across the curriculum along with the use of Education Scotland materials also helps learners to improve their numeracy. Staff have worked well at cluster level in planned exercises to evaluate the quality of assessment. When attainment in literacy at fourth level in the BGE is tracked through to S4 results at SQCF level 5 and 6 or better, this indicates that professional judgement of achievement of a level in the BGE is developing well.
- Teachers use the BGE benchmarking tool, professional judgment, Scottish National Standardised Assessments testing and a range of internal class tests as part of their approaches to demonstrate attainment improvement. In almost all classes young people are using National Benchmarks to consider how well they are achieving a level. Middle leaders make effective use of very well-developed subject tracking systems, in almost all departments.
- Young people requiring additional support are achieving in the BGE across the school. They are supported well through appropriate interventions including additional planning, work with parents and well planned assistance from Support for learning Assistants staff.

#### Literacy and numeracy

##### Senior phase

- Assessment data in literacy and numeracy is reliable in the senior phase as a result of very effective leadership in subject departments with all staff supporting literacy assessment and from challenge and support provided from senior leaders. Attainment of young people in literacy by the time of leaving school demonstrates that almost all learners who left the school achieved a literacy award at SCQF level 4 or better between 14/15 and 17/18. Almost all young people left school with SCQF level 5 or better in literacy between 14/15 and 16/17. This is significantly higher or much higher than the VC in 15/16 and 16/17. The percentage of young people attaining literacy at SCQF level 6 is significantly much higher than the VC.

- There have been improvements in the percentage of S5 leavers attaining literacy at SCQF level 5 or better and SCQF level 6. The percentage attaining at SCQF level 6 has improved to significantly much higher than the VC between 15/16 and 17/18.
- Young people are making very good progress in literacy as they move through the senior phase. In S4, between 15/16 and 18/19 almost all achieved literacy at SCQF level 5 or better. By S5, most went on to achieve literacy at SCQF level 6. The percentages achieving these levels in S4 and S5 are significantly higher or much higher than the VC.
- Between 15/16 and 17/18 almost all young people attained numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better by the time of leaving school, This is an improvement from the previous two years from significantly lower than the VC to in line with the VC. The percentage of leavers attaining numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better has also increased and in 17/18 has improved to significantly higher than the VC. With the exception of 15/16, the majority of leavers between 13/14 and 17/18 attained numeracy at SCQF level 6 and percentages attaining this level are significantly higher or much higher than the VC.
- Over the five years to 17/18, the proportion of S5 leavers attaining numeracy at SCQF Level 5 or better shows an improving picture. Over the same period, the proportion of S5 leavers attaining numeracy at SCQF level 6 is in line with the VC in three out of the last five years and significantly much higher in two out of the last five years.
- Young people are making very good progress in numeracy as they move through the senior phase. In S4, almost all achieved numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better in 18/19. By S5, in three out of five years a majority of learners achieved SCQF level 6 or better. By S6, between 15/16 and 18/19 a majority of learners achieved SCQF level 6 or better.
- Young people are mainly gaining awards in literacy and numeracy as part of National 5 English and mathematics courses. At S4, National 5 English results in four out of the last five years are in line with national results at A-B and A to C. At S5, Higher level English results at A-C are in line with national figures over the past five years. Almost all young people presented for the qualification achieve applications of mathematics at National 3 and all presented achieved this award at National 4. National 5 mathematics results at S4 in four out of the last five years are in line with the National at A-B and A to C. There is a drop to significantly below the national figures at National 5 for English and mathematics in 2019. The school demonstrates robust strategies in place to continue to improve numeracy including the use of ongoing professional learning for staff. Evidence suggests numeracy results will improve this session.

## **Attainment over time**

### **BGE**

- BGE attainment data, tracked over time, is reliable. Staff track learners progress carefully and identify well areas for improvement. Middle leaders and staff are using subject data well in most departments in the BGE. They use professional judgement well including their own internal assessments to demonstrate progress over time. All staff are supported and challenged regularly through the use of departmental meetings overviewed tightly by senior leaders to ensure that attainment and achievement continues to improve. All staff understand the importance of using Insight data for evaluating the strengths and areas for improvement in their faculty.



## Improving attainment for all

### Senior phase

- Across the school, three tracking periods are in place to track attainment. Senior leaders monitor all tracking systems closely in the senior phase in partnership with middle leaders and staff. Their analysis is used to decide what helpful targeted support is beneficial for individual learners.
- The average complementary tariff scores for the lowest attaining 20% and middle attaining 60% of leavers are significantly much higher than the VC between 14/15 and 17/18 whilst the highest attaining 20% of leavers are mostly in line with the VC.
- Senior leaders continue to work to extend the pathways available for subject choices. To improve results further staff understand there now needs to be further interrogation of the results of the highest attaining 20% of learners. Staff are already using the Boclair Learning Resource team to support improvement in this area of attainment. In addition, this session staff offered a science camp to support skills building and more revision and support classes with increased attendance this session.
- In S4, the lowest attaining 20% of young people are performing significantly much higher than the VC in four of the last five years. There is a dip to significantly higher than the VC in 18/19. The middle attaining 60% are attaining significantly higher than the VC in three out of the last five years, though there is a dip to in line in the last two years. The highest 20% are attaining in line with the VC in the last five years.
- By S5, the lowest attaining 20% are performing significantly much higher than the VC in the last five years. The middle attaining 60% are attaining significantly higher or much higher than the VC in the last five years. The highest attaining 20% are attaining significantly higher than the VC in three out of last five years. There is a dip to in line with the VC in the latest year.
- By S6, the lowest attaining 20% are performing significantly much higher than the VC in the last four years. The middle 60% are attaining significantly higher or much higher than the VC in the last five years. The highest attaining 20% are performing mostly in line with the VC in the last five years. Senior leaders plan to put in place focussed improvement actions next session to support improvement in the results for those in the highest attaining 20%
- Course choices for S5 are impacting positively in the last few years including the addition of new courses such as environmental science and Higher dance to broaden learner choice. The headteacher recognises that a few courses still have room for improvement in reducing the number of young people with no awards.

### Breadth and depth measures

- In S4 most learners are presented for eight qualifications. The percentage of pupils attaining three to seven or more qualifications at SCQF level 4 or better is mostly significantly higher or much higher than the VC in the last five years. The percentage attaining at SCQF level 5C or better are significantly higher or much higher than the VC in four out of the last five years for two to seven or more courses. There is a dip to in line with the VC in the latest year. At SCQF level 5A or better, the percentages attaining one to seven or more courses are significantly higher than the VC in 14/15 and 15/16, but have fallen to in line with the VC in the last two years.
- By S5, the school is maintaining strong levels of attainment. The majority of learners are presented for five qualifications with a few learners presented for four or six qualifications. For one, two, three, four or five or more courses at SCQF level 6C or better, results are mostly



significant higher or much higher than the VC in the last five years. For one, two or four or more courses, the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF level 6A or better is mostly significant higher or much higher than the VC in the last five years.

- By S6, the school continues to maintain strong levels of attainment. The percentage of young people attaining one to seven or more courses at SCQF level 6C or better is mostly significantly higher or much higher than the VC in the last five years. The percentage attaining one to three or more courses at SCQF level 6A or better is significantly higher or much higher than the VC in the last five years. The percentage attaining one or more courses at SCQF level 7C or better is significantly higher than the VC in the last five years. Advanced higher presentations remain stable with a few students achieving two or three Advanced Highers.

### **Overall quality of learner's achievement**

- Young people participate in an extensive programme of wider achievement. The programme ensures that all young people from S1 to S6 are achieving a broad range of skills and attributes. There is a wide range of recognised and accredited awards gained by almost young people who speak very highly of the programme and the range of skills they are achieving. In S1, the John Muir 'Discovery' award recognises young people's work within the natural environment. This work involves staff across the school who support young people to gain accreditation through their curriculum in partnership with local authority outdoor learning staff. In S2, young people improve their understanding of citizenship skills through fundraising and support for the local foodbank. This is leading to young people gaining a Saltire awards, developing empathy for others and taking responsibility for delivering much needed food to those in need.
- In S3, all young people undertake training delivered by a dementia charity. Their skills are demonstrated through visits to local care homes and dementia support groups as well as by participating in a variety of music and reminiscence activities. Their efforts are recognised and celebrated well. All S4 pupils achieve an SCQF level 6 award for their training in emergency first aid in the workplace. S5 pupils participate in the youth philanthropy initiative, working on presentations to compete for substantial funding for a local charity. Understanding their purpose and the way in which they would spend the funds as well as a volunteering element, are all important features of this initiative. All S6 pupils benefit from training and support from the 'Medics against violence' programme which is enabling them to understand the impact and consequences of violence in society. They deliver lessons to S2 classes demonstrating leadership and communication skills in how to keep young people safe, and support younger pupils to develop strategies to support their wellbeing.
- Young people perform well in a variety of concerts, services and other music events as a result of their involvement in music. A few learners have reached the standard to perform with a local authority youth band and orchestra. Young people are developing a very wide range of skills through strong partnership work with a variety of local businesses. They gain organisational skills through planning activities and evaluate well the impact of the work. Young people demonstrate strong physical performance skills and also lead on a wide variety of sports activities. Sports leaders work with teams in the lower school and with associated primary pupils to share their expertise in, for example, gymnastics, football, rugby and dance. Young people benefit from skills developed through participation and success in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. They complete expeditions, volunteer and complete skills development and physical challenges in order to gain a bronze award.
- In-school activities are tracked to ensure that staff have an overview of young people who participate in wider achievement, and those who achieve accreditation and certification. The school is beginning to capture young people's achievements outside the school and through

after school clubs in a more systematic way, to ensure that no young person is at risk of missing out. There is scope for the school to further develop their tracking to include the skills that young people are developing through their wider achievement activities. The school should continue to find more ways to celebrate the achievements of all learners.

## **Equity**

- Staff have a strong focus on raising the attainment, aspiration and ambition of all learners in an inclusive and caring environment. They ensure that no young person faces a barrier to learning or participation due to personal or socio economic factors. Staff know their learners well, and put measures in place to ensure that every young person has an equal chance to do their very best. There are 18% of young people living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1 and 2 attending Boclair Academy. The school provides a range of additional support for these young people to help them to achieve well. A residential visit for these young people offers focussed supported study and opportunities for team building. 'Spring Revision' additional study support for identified young people and a mentoring programme offers one-to-one support for learners as they prepare for National Qualifications. The 'Achievement Resource centre' (ARC) provides strong support for targeted young people who face challenges in their learning.
- Funds are available to support those in need of financial assistance for necessary resources, school trips or to participate in residential visits. The school have a free breakfast club available to all. They ensure that all young people have access to transport to attend clubs and supported study and uniform items available for those who need them. Departments bid for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to support young people for whom poverty is a barrier to success. Plans are detailed, and have a strong focus on young people who may require some basic resources to access fully all aspects of the curriculum.

## **Attendance and exclusion**

- The school provided the latest attendance figures which show a stable picture to 2019. Exclusions have decreased from 11 exclusions in 2014/15 per thousand pupils to four exclusions per thousand pupils in 2018/19.

## **Attainment versus deprivation**

- In 17/18, young people living in SIMD 1-3 performed significantly much higher than young people living in the same deciles across Scotland. In four of the last five years, young people living in decile 1, attending Boclair Academy performed significantly higher or significantly much higher than young people living in the same decile across Scotland. PEF funding is used well to support improvement in pupil attainment through enhanced staffing to support learning, free transportation for supported study and resources to support young people to access the curriculum.

## **Positive and sustained destinations**

- All young people who left Boclair Academy in 2019 moved to a positive destination. There is a strong partnership with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the data they provide shows that these destinations are being sustained. The majority of young people move to higher education. In 2018, 14% of young people entered employment in a range of areas including, for example, construction and hairdressing.
- The school works closely with SDS to support young people in identifying appropriate future pathways and links to the world of work. The careers adviser works well with staff to deliver information and advice to young people at key points in their school career. This includes supporting them to research career ideas through My World of Work, delivering lessons on

course choices through Personal and Social Education and offering help with applications and work experience.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

- Senior leaders and staff have developed strong tracking systems that support a clear understanding young people's progress through the BGE.

## 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.