

Summarised inspection findings

Dollar Academy

Independent

14 July 2020

Key contextual information

Dollar Academy is a selective, independent, co-educational day and boarding school. The school consists of a prep school, junior school and senior school, with a roll of approximately 1300 children and young people. The Rector has been in post since August 2019. He is supported by a bursar, a deputy rector and four assistant rectors. There is also a head of the prep school and a head of the junior school, as well as many heads of department in the senior school.

The school provides boarding accommodation for boys and girls aged from 10 years of age. NcNabb and Tait House caters for boys. Argyll and Heyworth Houses cater for girls. At the time of the inspection, there were 82 children and young people residing across the three boarding houses.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- There is a very positive ethos across the school that is underpinned by a three-point ethos statement, 'Be kind; Work hard; Get involved'. This statement resulted from collaborative work that took place between a range of stakeholders to create the school's 'Knot of Values'. Throughout the school, children, young people and staff live out the values, through very positive relationships. Staff work well together to try to ensure that children and young people attain and achieve to the best of their abilities.
- The school continues to seek children and young people's views. Recently, young people were involved in developing a whole-school policy linked to the use of mobile phones in school. They consulted widely other schools' policies, prior to presenting their thoughts to staff and peers on a potential policy for Dollar Academy. This work was evaluated very positively by the senior staff group (SSG). The school is using parents' views to inform specific school developments, such as the recently designed school website. A minority of children and young people and a minority of parents would like their views to be listened to and acted on more regularly. A next step for the school would be to gather more regularly the views of all stakeholders to inform ongoing improvement.
- The annual school development plan outlines the range of developments that have taken place over the previous year and celebrates children's and young people's achievements, international successes and other links, and staff contributions to Scottish education. The annual development plan identifies major aims for the following years, linked to key areas of the school's work, such as learning and teaching, guidance, health and safety and the co-curriculum. These developments are pertinent in relation to the school's ongoing journey of improvement. The Rector has aspirational and exciting plans for the future of the school, which involve a wide range of national and international partners. A next step for the school is to enhance improvement-planning processes by making more focused use of the ongoing

evidence that the school gathers on its own performance. This should take increased account of the views of all stakeholders.

- Increasingly, self-evaluation permeates aspects of the school's work. There is scope to improve more consistently the culture of self-evaluation across the school. The heads of the prep and junior schools, and the heads of department in the senior school, work closely with appointed senior leaders to continue to aim to raise attainment and improve practice. They engage yearly in reviews with the Rector and depute Rector, which helps to inform appropriate next steps and contributes to school improvement. In the senior school, staff engage in departmental improvement planning in addition to the annual reviews and produce a range of plans. A next step for the school is to align these plans more closely with the whole-school development plan. This would help to secure a more coherent strategic overview that focuses consistently on key areas of school improvement.
- The newly appointed Rector is astute and demonstrates an open and consultative style of leadership. This has helped him to gain very quickly the respect and trust of stakeholders. He engages readily with children and young people, staff and partners, and has a very positive and visible presence around the school. The Rector works well with the school bursar, the Chair of the Board of Governors and all board members. Collectively, the Board of Governors plays an important role in supporting school improvement, ensuring that the school community continues to thrive.
- The experienced and dedicated SSG and extended leadership team support the Rector very well. Commendably, their remits require them to work across the different stages of the school. This brings about increased coherence between the prep, junior and senior schools and helps staff to support children and young people consistently as they progress through the school. Senior leaders meet regularly, formally and informally, to discuss school priorities and drive forward the school's vision for improvement.
- Recently, senior leaders have sought to strengthen the role of middle leaders, using middle leaders' experience and expertise to inform more effectively whole-school improvement. Senior leaders empower skilfully middle leaders to work with staff to lead change, with the aim of impacting positively on raising attainment. Heads of year and heads of department now meet more regularly to engage in professional dialogue. This contributes helpfully to the development of a more consistent approach to leadership across the school.
- There is a strong culture of collaborative professional learning. Staff share practice with one another regularly, for example at staff meetings and as part of peer observation visits. Staff across the prep, junior, and senior schools benefit greatly from sharing their knowledge and understanding with one another. This helps to share standards and promote continuity and progression in children's and young people's learning.
- A few staff are engaged in practitioner enquiry, which helps them to develop their practice and improve continuously children's and young people's experiences. Many staff at the senior stages are involved in leading work with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). This helps them to have an improved knowledge of national standards. It also helps them to enable young people to respond more appropriately to assessment questions. In addition to the strong link between staff's professional learning and the school's development needs, staff are empowered to engage in learning that also meets their own needs and aspirations.
- Children and young people across the school are provided with different opportunities to undertake leadership roles. This includes children in the prep and junior schools leading and sharing their learning in highly articulate ways. For example, they participate in events such as

the annual science fair and performing Burns songs and poems at school events. Children and young people act as house and vice captains. Young people in the senior school lead through their roles as school captains, vice-captains and prefects. Young people in the senior school support younger children regularly as reading and sports buddies. They take an active role in raising the profile of the school in the local community and beyond. They are proud to share confidently the work of the school with prospective pupils and their families. Senior leaders should continue to build on this very positive foundation, to increase and strengthen the ways that children and young people are empowered to lead their own learning, and support and influence positive change across the school.

- Across the three boarding houses, staff are committed to engaging in relevant professional learning to ensure that children and young people benefit from a high quality and homely living environment. The very experienced depute Rector is the head of boarding. Senior house parents provide wise leadership and guidance for colleagues across the houses. Senior leaders have developed a quality assurance calendar to check on different aspects of the boarding provision. They carry out a review of each house annually in the summer term, to determine what is working well and what needs to improve. All staff participate in these reviews. To strengthen this process further, senior leaders should sample areas of practice more frequently across the year, to help to ensure there is consistency in the experiences of children and young people who board. Close links and effective communication between senior school leaders, house parents, house tutors and support for learning and medical staff ensures interconnectedness between children's and young people's school and boarding experiences. The depute Rector seeks the views of children, young people and their parents through surveys. The head pupils in each house meet each term with the depute Rector, to share the collective views of their peers. Young people value this, and would like more opportunities to share their views with senior leaders. Recent examples of change that has been made as a result of boarders' feedback include how children and young people can order their lunches; where they have breakfast at weekends; and when they do their homework at weekends. Children and young people across the houses really appreciate these changes.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

Prep and Junior Schools

- Across the prep and junior schools, there is a positive and purposeful learning climate. Children value and engage very well in the attractive and stimulating learning environment. They are very confident and articulate learners. All children are very friendly and polite and proudly welcome visitors to their school. Almost all children are motivated and engage fully in their learning. Children are keen to discuss their learning and respond well to all adults who work with them. They benefit greatly from their positive relationships with staff and peers. Senior school pupils play a significant role in supporting children in the prep and junior schools. This includes acting as reading buddies, mental health ambassadors and helping younger children learn to swim. This contributes to the strong ethos of community which permeates the whole school.
- In almost all lessons, children are curious and keen to learn. They enjoy and contribute well when working in groups. Children are able to reflect on their learning and are encouraged by their teachers to develop a resilient approach to learning and learn from their mistakes. When given the opportunity they effectively lead their learning. There is strong practice in this area in the child-led science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) project, where children choose, plan and research their own science investigations. Commendably, children showcase their investigations in attractive, informative displays which they share with fellow pupils, staff and visitors. Staff should build on this practice to increase the opportunities for children at all stages to lead their own learning.
- Overall, the quality of teaching within the prep and junior schools is very good with a few examples of outstanding teaching practice. In these classes, teachers deliver a range of interesting and stimulating lessons which excite and motivate children. Overall, teachers share the purpose of lessons well and explain clearly how children can be successful. In a few lessons, teachers revisit these steps to support children to successfully complete activities. Staff should share this good practice more widely across the prep and junior schools. Almost all teachers employ very effective questioning strategies to promote children's higher order thinking skills. Positively, this is a strong feature of lessons across the curriculum.
- Staff make effective use of digital technology to support and enrich learning. For example, younger children use digital tablets to take photographs as part of their study of birds and to support them to understand the concept of time. As planned, staff should continue to develop the use of the outdoors to promote learning across the curriculum.
- In most lessons, staff plan differentiated activities and tasks that meet the needs of all learners. They have a sound understanding of the individual needs of children. As a result, children who require additional help with their learning benefit from well-judged approaches to help them

engage meaningfully in appropriate learning experiences. Staff monitor closely children who may be experiencing barriers to learning, and support them very well to ensure that they make the best possible progress.

- Teachers make use of a wide range of assessment information to help to make reliable judgements about children's progress. This includes summative, formative and diagnostic assessments that are planned across the school year. Teachers gather and use assessment information well to inform future planning and well-considered interventions. They are improving their approaches to providing effective feedback to support learners. For example, staff highlight children's next steps in writing and regularly reference the steps to success during lessons.
- Children have individual targets for literacy and numeracy. They are clear about their targets and can talk confidently about their next steps. Children's targets are recorded in their learning profiles and writing jotters, which children use thoughtfully to reflect on their progress. A next step for the school to consider is to share children's learning profiles more regularly with parents.
- Staff engage in moderation activities with their stage partners and colleagues across the school. This, alongside the use of National Benchmarks, is helping all staff to develop a shared understanding of national standards in literacy and numeracy. Staff are increasing their use of National Benchmarks to make judgements of children's progress for other areas of the curriculum. Positively, they also engage well with staff in the senior school to promote continuity and progression in children's learning. This helps to ensure appropriate challenge for children who are working beyond expected national levels at Junior 2.
- Teachers plan learning well on a weekly and termly basis. In the prep school, staff make very effective use of weekly review sheets that help to inform the following week's planning for groups and individuals. Commendably, staff use these each week to evaluate the quality of their learning and teaching. Children have an increasing role in shaping what and how they learn. Teachers plan closely with their stage partners, but take good account of the different needs and interests of the children in their own classes. This approach empowers teachers' own individual creativity.
- Senior leaders and staff in the prep and junior schools track children's attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing well. This supports staff to monitor children's progress and to identify where individual children may need additional support or challenge. Staff and senior leaders have a very good knowledge of children's individual progress. They should develop further their approaches to tracking children's progress. In doing so, senior leaders should ensure that this clearly shows the progress individuals and cohorts are making over time.

Senior School

- Young people have strong relationships with staff and with each other. These are underpinned by the school's values. Almost all young people have a strong sense of pride in their school and their achievements, and almost all enjoy learning in Dollar Academy.
- Teachers are encouraged and supported by senior and middle leaders to be reflective in their practice, and have a high degree of professional autonomy. They have regular, helpful opportunities to participate in a wide range of professional learning. Senior and middle leaders should now ensure that professional learning activities are linked to agreed school improvement priorities. They should also track the impact of these activities across the school.

- Most teachers across the school ensure effectively that young people are active participants in their learning, by employing a range of strategies that develop higher order thinking skills and independent learning in almost all young people. Across most curricular areas, teachers make effective use of a variety of digital platforms to share information with young people, and to allow young people to exercise choice in their learning. Senior leaders should continue with plans to develop further approaches to digital learning. Across the school, almost all teachers ensure that young people have a variety of meaningful opportunities to learn and work collaboratively. Most young people experience learning that is purposeful and takes into account their needs. Most teachers ensure that young people are engaged in learning and actively encourage discussion. Whilst most tasks provide sufficient challenge, teachers should continue to ensure that experiences in class provide all young people with opportunities to extend their thinking and learning.
- In most classes, young people are clear about the purpose of their learning. Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Teachers regularly give young people the opportunity to make decisions on how they demonstrate their learning, including in SQA National Qualification classes. Most young people can articulate clearly their learning progress, which is documented in their learner profiles. Heads of departments and teachers analyse this information, identify pupils who would benefit from additional support for learning, and report progress to parents. Senior leaders should ensure that they have a comprehensive strategic overview of all young people's academic progress through the senior school. This attainment data should be used by senior leaders and teachers to pinpoint future improvements in learning and teaching.
- Most teachers employ assessment approaches skilfully, enabling young people to demonstrate their subject understanding and their opinions clearly. Teachers' use of questions elicits high quality responses from almost all young people, across the whole senior school.
- Teachers plan for assessment very well across the school. In classes, teachers use appropriate interventions to support almost all young people. At Form 1 and Form 2, teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is based on use of the National Benchmarks. Across the senior school, a high number of teachers are involved in SQA duties. As a result, almost all staff are clear about their roles in implementing the key requirements for National Qualifications and share these well with young people. Teachers and staff provide valuable opportunities over and above the school day to support young people in their learning whenever necessary.
- In all three boarding houses, children and young people are very well supported in their learning outwith the school day. The dedicated team of house tutors plays an essential role in assisting children and young people to complete homework, to study and to participate in individual pursuits, such as practising musical instruments. House parents and house tutors work very closely with support for learning staff to ensure that learners with particular needs receive individualised help. Within each house, learners can access digital resources safely, enabling them to personalise their work. They can use desktop computers in study areas or their own laptops or handheld portable devices to complete project work. These opportunities allow children and young people continuity in their learning and a chance to reinforce and develop further their digital skills. Staff across the houses ensure that children and young people have time and space to relax and rest with their friends. Houses are very well equipped and resourced to keep boarders actively engaged in their house community. Joint house evenings, trips and excursions at weekends ensure that all of those who board have opportunities to enjoy each other's company in a variety of well-supervised settings.

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, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their 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 each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Across the prep, junior and senior schools and boarding houses, the promotion of wellbeing is an underpinning feature of the whole school. This helps children and young people to develop confidence and resilience, and helps them to feel safe and included. Each term, all children and young people carry out individual assessments on their own health and wellbeing, using the wellbeing indicators. This information allows staff to offer appropriate support to children and young people if necessary. As a result, staff, children and young people have a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators and their relevance to the lives of all learners. The school should continue to work on the development of staff wellbeing approaches, in order to focus on the wellbeing of the whole school community.
- Across the school, and overall across the boarding houses, there are strong, positive relationships between staff, children and young people. In the prep and junior schools, children comment positively on being part of the 'Dollar family'. This is fostered by the effective buddying systems and the way that senior pupils take a very active role in supporting the children in the prep and junior schools. At all stages of the school, children and young people are well behaved and are caring and respectful to each other. Staff know children and young people very well and support them effectively in dealing with both learning and pastoral concerns.
- A strong focus on mental health has encouraged children and young people to be more open about mental health issues and to seek appropriate support. In the boarding houses, staff are sympathetic to issues that children and young people may face, such as homesickness or exam-related anxiety. They work very closely with health partners to find the best strategies to support individuals at times of need. Across the school and boarding houses, children and young people receive support from the school medical centre, school counsellor, and if appropriate, Community Paediatrics, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and educational psychologists. The school community benefits from health and wellbeing themed days; opportunities to practice mindfulness and yoga; and visits from outside agencies, such as the Samaritans. To increase the school's capacity further, 48 members of the staff team across the school and boarding houses have been trained as mental health first aiders, with six achieving 'trainer' level. A number of senior pupils are trained as mental health ambassadors in order to support their peers. The mental health ambassadors outline their role at school assemblies and have their photographs on posters throughout the school for ease of identification for children and young people. The school should continue with its plans to expand the mental health first aid training across a wider variety of staff.
- Staff value the views and opinions of children and young people. For example, recently young people have been key in researching and developing a new mobile phone policy for the school. Staff should continue to ensure that learners of all ages are empowered to drive developments within the school. Staff should continue to encourage children to be aware of their rights by

continuing to promote the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child. A next step is to develop this in conjunction with further development of the wellbeing indicators.

- Children and young people are aware of the importance of healthy food choices and are provided with the opportunity to make these choices through the range of high quality of food on offer. Catering staff have won a number of national awards. Children and young people, particularly those who are boarders, have a say regularly in the range and types of food at mealtimes. At all stages of the school, children and young people participate in a wide range of sports and games which encourages them to both develop and enjoy physical activity. This is helping them to feel more confident and to work better with other people. It has also motivated them to go outdoors more often.
- Across the school and boarding houses, staff monitor any reported instances of bullying. Information from the school's tracking shows a decreasing trend in the number of reported bullying incidents year on year. School staff have commented that the successful implementation of a peer mentor and leadership scheme has been one factor for this decrease. This scheme gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin bullying and other forms of violence. As a result, children and young people are developing the confidence to speak up when they witness peers not treating each other kindly. Whilst children and young people say they know where to go to for support, a minority of learners and parents feel that the school could deal better with bullying. School staff should continue to study any emerging patterns or trends linked to bullying, including those related to children and young people with protected characteristics.
- Across the school and boarding houses, senior leaders have a very good understanding of statutory requirements and comply with codes of practice. They work closely with staff, governors, learners, parents and partners to fulfil these duties. Children and young people with additional support needs are very well supported using a staged intervention model. Support for learning staff are extremely skilled in assisting children and young people sensitively, within the support for learning base and in classes. There are robust learning support plans in place for children and young people who require these, with appropriate targets set which are regularly reviewed. Support for learning staff liaise very well with guidance staff and prep and junior school staff to ensure that there is reciprocal and effective communication to ensure that children and young people are well supported holistically.
- The head of support for learning, and other support teachers and staff, provide professional learning to the wider school staff team. This is building the capacity of staff to support children and young people with additional support needs throughout the school. This is particularly important given the increasing number of children and young people with additional support needs that attend the school. Senior leaders should sample and monitor regularly the variety of pupil records that staff maintain across the school and boarding houses, to ensure these are maintained to the highest quality and that language used within these records is always appropriate.
- Children and young people for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are very well supported by teachers in the EAL department. Young people, where appropriate, will sit National 5 and Highers in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) examinations.
- Overall, across the school and boarding houses, approaches to inclusion and equality are becoming embedded to ensure all children and young people can make the progress they are capable of. Staff are skilled at developing children's and young people's awareness of diversity and cultural difference. Children and young people from different cultures help others learn their

language, for example, Mandarin. This strengthens the school's inclusive culture. Staff are very aware of financial constraints of families and strive to ensure sensitively that all children and young people are able to access all that the school can offer. The comprehensive personal and social education programme (PSE) is progressive from prep through to senior years. This allows children and young people to explore further diversity and equality at an appropriate level according to their age and stage. Young people contribute very well to the PSE programme. For example, senior pupils deliver lessons to young people in Forms 2 and 4, on relevant themes such as peer mentoring, mental health and anti-bullying. Within the PSE programme, effective use of outside speakers helps young people to challenge stereotypes and promote equity and inclusion through their day-to-day interactions. The school should continue to look at widening access to activities to all children and young people, regardless of their gender.

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

Prep and Junior School

- Across the prep and junior schools, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good overall.

Literacy and English

- Across the prep and junior schools, almost all children's attainment in literacy is very good. Almost all children are making very good progress from their prior levels of attainment and a significant number are working beyond expected levels.
- Children demonstrate highly developed skills in listening and talking. Their writing is of a very high standard and almost all engage very well in this curricular area. They have a clear understanding of their strengths and next steps in writing, which is supporting them to make strong progress.

Listening and talking

- Across the prep and junior schools, children listen very well and respectfully to each other, both in class and in small-group situations. Children are articulate and are able to talk very confidently and audibly about a range of topics. They communicate with respectful self-assurance with adults. In all lessons, children share their thoughts and ideas readily with other children. They take turns and contribute at the appropriate times. They are curious learners and can relate their own experiences to discussion topics. All children benefit from preparing talks and presenting these to their classmates. Towards the end of Junior 2, almost all children are able to share information and opinions with ease. They build well on the contributions of others during group discussions.

Reading

- At Prep 1, almost all children are making very good progress in developing knowledge and application of phonics in their reading. They share confidently their thoughts and feelings about stories and other texts and understand the use of terms, author and illustrator. They are able to answer questions to predict what happens next in a story.
- Older children in the prep school read with expression and understanding. They can find key information in texts and identify features of fiction and non-fiction, enjoying both genres. Children use their reading skills well to support their understanding of texts. Children in the junior school respond well to reading challenges. Children display a positive attitude to reading for enjoyment, which is developed further for children who are supported by the older children who act as reading buddies. Children across both schools can identify their favourite books and authors and enjoy reading independently.

Writing

- Across the prep and junior schools, all children write for a variety of purposes. At Prep 1, children are making very good progress in their writing, using their topic about birds and digital technology as stimuli to make bird books and identification cards. Almost all are able to write a few sentences using simple punctuation. From the middle stages, children make good use of dictionaries and a thesaurus to support their writing and to extend their use of vocabulary. A strong feature of the teaching of writing across the prep and junior schools is the time teachers invest in encouraging children to plan their writing well. This provides children with a solid framework and structure for successful writing. As a result, almost all children produce high quality, sophisticated and entertaining pieces of writing with great attention to detail. Towards the end of Junior 2, most children write high quality extended pieces of writing for a range of purposes. Across the prep and junior schools, children's writing is presented well.

Numeracy & mathematics

- Almost all children across the prep and junior schools are making very good progress from their previous levels of attainment. Almost all children are working at an appropriate level, and a few are achieving beyond expected levels. Across the prep and junior schools, children demonstrate their number skills enthusiastically in active learning activities, such as mathematical games.
- Across the prep and junior schools, almost all children show a secure understanding in number processes and place value. Overall, children use this knowledge confidently to carry out calculations appropriate to, or beyond, their stage of development. Most children say they enjoy mathematics. At Prep 1, almost all children count forwards and backwards within 20. At Prep 2, children are gaining skills in telling time to o'clock, and can work well together to sequence days of the week and months of the year. At Prep 4, children use their understanding of place value and the four operations to solve calculations. By Junior 2, most children work confidently converting fractions to decimal fractions and percentages. A life skills topic encourages children to make connections with finance, budgeting challenges and the world of work.
- At Prep 1, children demonstrate an understanding of two-dimensional shapes in the outdoors. Towards the end of Prep 4, almost all children use mathematical language to describe the properties of three-dimensional objects. They can provide reasonable estimates of length, but there is scope for them to consolidate their knowledge of relationships between the units of measure to make simple conversions. At this stage, children identify a few different ways of interpreting and displaying data. Towards the end of Junior 2, children demonstrate a good understanding of data handling as they collect, organise, interpret and display data for their science investigations. Across the prep and junior schools, children are becoming more skilled in problem solving. Children engage very well in problem solving activities and respond well to the different challenges presented.

Attainment over time

- Staff gather a range of data for aspects of literacy and numeracy, that demonstrates that children's attainment is improving over time. Currently, teachers and senior leaders scrutinise this data on a class-by-class basis. A next step is for staff to gather data across the stages of the prep and junior schools, to build a clearer picture of children's attainment over time. Senior leaders and staff analyse the data they collect well to identify children who may require additional support or challenge in their learning. Successful, targeted support and interventions are assisting all children to make progress from their prior levels of attainment. The school is at the early stages of capturing and tracking children's progress in other areas of the curriculum.

- Across the prep and junior schools, children attain very high standards in STEM subjects with a progressive, challenging and engaging programme in place. By Junior 2, children's level and application of knowledge in science is particularly strong. Children's achievement in art and design is also a strength of the prep and junior schools, with a range of high quality pieces of children's work displayed in the classrooms and corridors.

Senior School

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

Broad General Education (BGE)

- Teachers continue to develop strategies to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy across Forms 1 and 2. This is preparing young people well for the rigours of Forms 3 to 6.

Senior Phase

- At Form 4, all young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in 2018/19, improving from almost all in 2016/17 and 2017/18. By Form 5, almost all young people attained SCQF level 6 in literacy from 2016/17 to 2018/19.
- At Form 4, almost all young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy from 2016/17 to 2018/19. By Form 5, most young people attained SCQF level 6 in numeracy in 2018/19. Almost all young people attained this qualification in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Attainment over time

BGE

- Teachers use assessment information well from a variety of assessment activities, including class tests, to show how young people are performing across all curricular areas. All heads of department use this information to track and monitor young people's progress. Staff are also using this information well to inform learner conversations with young people and to report to parents.
- As planned, senior and middle leaders should continue to collate and analyse more closely the attainment data for Forms 1 and 2 across the subject areas. This will help them to gain a better understanding of young people's progress and to ensure that data across the school is as reliable as possible. The school needs to use all the information that it gathers on children and young people's progress across the broad general education to inform key improvement priorities, such as continuously improving literacy and numeracy across the school.

Senior phase

- Dollar Academy has very high standards of attainment over time in SQA National Qualifications. The school's values of 'Work hard, Be kind, Get involved' underpin the strategic approach to maintaining high levels of attainment. In the last five years, almost all young people who were presented for National 5 qualifications passed. In two of the last five years, most young people attained grade A passes, with the majority attaining A passes in 2018/19. In 2018/19, almost all young people who were presented for Higher qualifications passed, with the majority attaining grade A passes. At Higher level, there is an improving picture in the percentages of young people attaining grade As in the last five years, with the exception of 2017/18. In 2018/19, most young people who were presented for Advanced Higher qualifications passed, with the majority of passes at grade A. At Advanced Higher level, the percentages attaining grade A have been variable over the last five years.
- In the latest year, a few young people were recognised for having the highest performance in SQA National Qualifications across Scotland. An additional few young people from Forms 4 to 6 achieved 100% in these qualifications.

Breadth and depth

- From data provided by the school for 2017 to 2019, all young people in Form 4 attained four qualifications at SCQF level 5 or better, with almost all young people attaining six qualifications, and most young people attaining seven qualifications.
- In the same period, all young people in Form 5 attained two qualifications at SCQF level 6, with almost all young people attaining three qualifications at this level. In two of the last three years, almost all young people attained four qualifications at this level, including the latest year, and most attained five.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- The school values and celebrates the achievements of children and young people. This is done through assemblies, notices on boards, presentation of colours and internationalist awards, the Rector's newsletter, end of year school prizegiving, social media, the Fortunas and the pupil-produced Galley publication. Children's and young people's talents are showcased in musical concerts, drama productions, art exhibitions and sporting events.
- An extensive co-curricular programme offers over 70 different clubs and activities, which encapsulates the school's value of 'get involved'. This offers wide-ranging opportunities for personal achievement. Children's and young people's strong participation in the clubs results in high levels of sporting, cultural and creative skills being developed.
- The school enjoys high profile successes in various team and individual activities at both international and national levels, with young people often demonstrating skills at an exceptional level. The Dollar Academy Pipe Band are the current Juvenile World Champions. The school's teams are Scottish championship winners in hockey and cricket. Other significant successes for individual pupils include them being university champions in 'ultimate frisbee' and engaging in international representation in rugby, skiing and tennis.
- Many young people have developed endurance and leadership skills by participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme or in the highly successful Combined Cadet Force. These activities promote team building skills, good time management and resilience.
- All children and young people complete a pupil profile detailing their personal achievements. Staff have plans in place to implement a commercial system to track the progression of achievements and the skills for learning, life and work that children and young people gain.
- Children and young people support others effectively through a wide range of roles, such as leading PSE classes, helping out with activities in the prep and junior schools and running extra-curricular clubs. All young people in Form 6 are prefects. Each prefect undertakes two helpful duties a week to contribute to the smooth running of the life of the school.
- Global citizenship is a strong feature of the school and many opportunities for children and young people are offered. Day and residential trips provide a variety of cultural, social and political experiences. There are exchanges with schools in several countries, as well as departmental trips overseas. Ski and sports tours are a regular feature. Travel scholarships are available to young people in Forms 5 and 6.

Equity for all learners

- Staff at Dollar Academy are aware of the importance of equity for all. They make very good use of their knowledge of the individual circumstances of children and young people to

ensure that all learners receive the support they need to participate fully in the life of the school. Children and young people contribute to the life of the wider community by helping out in local primary schools and at gala days. The bi-annual sponsored walk raises funds successfully for local and international charities. The established annual trip to support a children's home in Romania broadens the minds of the young people involved and develops their social awareness and perceptions of equality and diversity. Children and young people actively support a foodbank in the local community.

- From information provided by the school, almost all young people who go on to attend higher education, attend the university of their choice. They choose to follow a wide range of subjects. A few young people choose to have a gap year to broaden their experiences. The school supports all young people well in their choices.

Choice of QI : 2.6 Transitions

- Arrangements to support learners and their families
 - Collaborative planning and delivery
 - Continuity and progression in learning
-
- Children, young people and their parents are actively engaged in transitions at all stages of the school and boarding houses. Staff take very good account of children's and young people's mental and emotional health needs when planning transitions. For example, through 'Come and Play' sessions, open days, 'Moving up Mornings', induction and activity days for pupils, and information evenings for parents. There are effective arrangements in place to involve families and relevant agencies to support transitions for those children and young people requiring additional support. School staff liaise well to ensure effective transitions into, during and beyond any stage to support children's and young people's learning. There is also a strong focus on ensuring a high level of social and emotional support for all children and young people. This ensures children and young people feel well supported during transitions and continue to make progress. Senior pupils are enabled to make informed choices about their next phase of learning, including preparation for further and higher education and the world of work and future careers.
 - There is a comprehensive, well-planned programme of transition arrangements in place. Staff work with partners in local nurseries, other schools and agencies to ensure transition arrangements are effective for all learners, including those requiring additional support. Plans take account of transitions for groups of learners, as well as for individuals, including at key course choice stages in the senior school. Staff work well collegiately across Dollar Academy to ensure key information is shared about learners' progress and needs. Enhanced transition arrangements are in place for those children and young people who require this. For example, children and young people for whom English is an additional language benefit from tailored support when they join the school and boarding houses. Specialist teachers help them to settle into their new environment and make sure that staff across the school are aware of the best strategies to support individual learners.
 - There is continuity and progression in learning across all curriculum areas, at all stages of learning in the prep and junior schools and within departments in the senior school. Staff plan collaboratively with others to develop a shared understanding of progress within the prep and junior schools. A next step is to ensure staff work collaboratively to moderate numeracy and literacy across the curriculum. Staff make very good use of profiling and personal learning planning to help children and young people identify strengths and next steps in learning. For example, 'ICT passports' are used in the prep and junior schools to track children's digital skills. These are implemented up to Form 4, to ensure children and young people have transferable skills. Pupil profiles are in place across the school. The school should build on the plan to now develop these as electronic profiles, cross-referenced to skills for learning, life and work. Children and young people learn about careers throughout their time at school. For example, J1 pupils learn about the world of work through the 'Life Skills' programme and learners in Forms 5 and 6 speak highly of the planned events and individual support they receive to prepare them for higher and further education, the world of work and future careers. Working with partners, the school supports effectively all young people into positive post-school destinations.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- There are highly successful approaches to promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) across the prep, junior and senior schools. STEM is embedded into the curriculum rationale of the school. At the senior phase, over recent years there has been a clear focus on encouraging girls to choose STEM subjects and to contemplate future careers in associated professions. This has resulted in increasing numbers of girls going on to study STEM related courses at university. Young people in form 6 have the opportunity to study a Biology for Medics course. The syllabus is bespoke and topics studied are decided collaboratively by the young people and teachers. Young people's knowledge and skills are enhanced through this course, helping them to cope with the potential challenges of higher education. In the prep and junior schools, children benefit significantly from high quality learning and teaching in science. As a result, by the end of their time in junior school, their attainment in science far exceeds national expectations. All children in Junior 2 demonstrate their outstanding scientific knowledge at the annual science fair. This allows them to also apply their creativity, organisational, research and presentation skills in a worthwhile and highly relevant way.

1. How well do we support children's and young people's wellbeing?

Children and young people had mostly very positive, warm, nurturing relationships with staff caring for them at all levels. The school were aware of where this could be further enhanced and had plans for addressing issues. There were a number of people that children and young people could go to for reassurance across a range of settings within the school, including the services of a school counsellor. The school had a system for peer mentoring and prefects took responsibility for the wellbeing of younger pupils as part of their role. In the boarding houses, heads of house and depute heads of house provided support and guidance and advocated on behalf of the boarders in their house. The school had an ethos of 'Be Kind' which aimed to promote a positive, respectful culture throughout. For the most part children and young people said they experienced kindness, sensitivity and thoughtfulness from staff at all levels, and from each other.

Children and young people said they felt their privacy was respected, while they were included in aspects family life of the house parents and fun activities with them.

During our discussions with some young people, we heard that there were some areas where this could be improved to ensure privacy and dignity was maintained for everyone. Children and young people who shared rooms talked of the benefits they enjoyed from this and the positive friendships they developed as a result.

There was a range of ways provided for children and young people to make suggestions and give feedback. They had many opportunities to express their opinions and discuss their care and support with members of staff across the school. We saw examples of staff advocating for children and young people and encouraging them to take leadership responsibility. Children and young people who had English as an additional language benefited from extensive support from appropriate staff. Where additional support needs were identified there were clear links to appropriate support to ensure their needs were met.

While we saw that the outcomes for all of the young people were mostly very good, the experience of boarding for some of the young people was less positive in some areas than for others. The senior management team were aware of this. We highlighted the need to ensure that records made used language which reflected their 'Be Kind' ethos and positive reflection on young people.

We saw many examples of children and young people exercising choice. This included : co-curricular activities; sporting activities; spending time with friends; extensive links with the local community; choosing to take part in group activities or to spend time on their own; social events in each other's houses; and a range of stimulating outings.

Children and young people were encouraged and supported to properly use all academic facilities and resources to advance their studies, interests and achievements. They had an extensive array of fun opportunities such as:- jewellery making; bee keeping; photography; music and drama; in addition to sports and other outdoor activities including charity events.

Children and young people were supported and encouraged to keep in touch with family and friends. They told us they felt safe in the school and campus and we saw that security systems were in place across the campus to help keep children and young people safe. Policies and procedures relating to pupil safety and child protection were in place and appeared effective.

Staff were given regular training and guidance on child protection and safeguarding in a range of ways. The school had implemented measures to prevent bullying, and through tracking the outcomes, confirmed that instances of bullying had decreased.

Boarders had access to the nursing centre which was open during the day for five days a week. A nurse also attended on Saturday mornings to provide nursing cover for sporting events. There were very effective systems in place to make sure that medication for children and young people was provided safely and well, and their health needs were met. Children and young people we spoke with told us they could always visit nursing staff if they had any health related issues and would also be referred to local health or specialist services as required.

The school had recently introduced a programme focusing on positive Mental Health. This included Mental Health First Aid and identified Mental Health ambassadors, some of whom were pupils. There were different levels of training provided which different staff could access. The programme linked with the school's 'Be Kind' ethos. The school had a counsellor who provided a range of supports including one to one for children and young people (to which they could self refer), and advice and guidance to inform staff. The school provided a wide range of healthy meals and snacks, both in the dining room and in the boarding houses. Through the Dining Hall

Committee, young people had opportunities to influence menu choices and give feedback, and we saw that responses were given to questions raised.

In order to ensure that the quality of care and support provided consistently achieves positive experiences throughout the service the school should take action to address the identified.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 3.19 which states "My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well."

1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect

1.1 Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect Evaluation

4 - Good

1.2 Children and young people get the most out of life Evaluation

5 - Very Good

1.3 Children and young people's health benefits from their care and support they experience Evaluation

5 - Very Good

1.4 Children and young people are getting the service that is right for them Evaluation

Not assessed

Care Inspectorate grade: good

2. How good is our leadership?

There were a range of meetings which contributed to Quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement planning. Since our last inspection, members of the board of governors had increased their involvement with the boarding houses and carried out more regular visits. We discussed with them ways in which this could be further developed to provide more structured quality assurance. Regular reports to the board by senior managers provided them with an overview, and board members took responsibility for aspects of the school overview such as safeguarding, finance or health and safety. They also ensured that policies and procedures were in place and updated.

The school had a Quality Assurance calendar of weekly, monthly, and termly events which provided oversight by senior managers. In addition, annual self-evaluations, annual boarders questionnaires and feedback from parents all contributed towards improvement planning.

Each boarding house annual review was considered by the senior management team as a means of quality assurance.

The rector had a strong vision for improvement for the whole school and recognised the importance of boarders experiences.

We saw examples of children and young people embracing opportunities to lead improvement. While we saw that systems were in place for heads and deputed of house to meet with the head of boarding, it would be helpful to ensure that these were held more regularly to provide a more consistent response to young people's views.

The school should continue to build on systems of quality assurance and self-evaluation including an impact evaluation to assure themselves of continued progress.

This is to ensure that the quality of wellbeing is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 4.19 which states "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.

2.2 Quality assurance improvement is led well

2.1 Vision and values positively inform practice

Evaluation

Not assessed

2.2 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Evaluation

4 - Good

2.3 Leaders collaborate to support children and young people

Evaluation

Not assessed

2.4 Staff are led well

Evaluation

Not assessed

Care Inspectorate grade: good

3. How good is our staff team?

The school had reviewed the staffing in boarding houses and introduced more house tutors to support children and young people. There were some boarding staff who were highly skilled and experienced and led the boarding staff team. Staff were flexible and supported each other to work as a team. Clear roles and responsibilities were evident. Boarding house staff were highly motivated and clearly enjoyed their work. In most instances, they spent as much time as possible with the children and young people. There was effective communication between staff about ways of providing high quality care.

Staff in the boarding houses created a warm, welcoming atmosphere for the children and young people. We identified that there were some occasions when supports were less readily available to some young people.

The school had appointed a Human Resources manager who was leading on recruitment, selection, staff retention and succession planning. Systems were in place for safer recruitment, however we advised about ways to ensure these were more effective, including regular updates of PVGs.

A new system of staff induction had been devised and implemented for new staff in the boarding houses. The senior house parents devised and implemented a programme of training for boarding house staff. Newer house parents confirmed that they had found this very helpful. One of the senior house parents was the SVQ coordinator. Staff were registered appropriately with the SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council) and were encouraged to take responsibility for recording their continued professional development. In addition, there was a range of practical training events throughout the year.

Annual professional reviews were carried out to monitor and improve performance. We advised that the school provides a formal system of support and supervision for boarding house staff in accordance with their responsibilities as an employer of staff registered with the SSSC.

3.1 Staff are recruited well

Evaluation

Not assessed

3.2 Staff have the right values, skills and knowledge to care for children and young people

Evaluation

Not assessed

3.3 Staffing levels are right and meet children and young people's needs, with staff working well together

Evaluation

5 - Very Good

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

4. How good is our setting?

Children and young people had access to a very good range of facilities within the boarding house. There was a range of communal spaces which were very comfortable, safe and well laid out. We saw pupils relaxing and socialising in groups of different sizes across the houses. There was access to different spaces for using computers or other links to academic matters. There was also space and facilities for practising musical skills.

One of the lounge areas in each house was used for house meetings which were attended by all residents.

There was a communal kitchen and dining area which was used as a hub by pupils and staff. It provided an area where pupils could make drinks and snacks and staff could make and distribute snacks and suppers.

Individual rooms provide a mix of comfortable space, secure storage for personal items and study space for older pupils. Children and young people told us they could have privacy in their own room and staff respected this.

The campus had a range of facilities for children and young people to use. These included academic study areas; places to meet with academic staff; music practice areas and rooms; art facilities and a range of sports areas and facilities. Young people could access indoor and outdoor sports areas including gyms, which could be used for general exercise, games and personal fitness and conditioning.

We saw that the different buildings had adequate security measures in place and there was CCTV cover of potentially vulnerable areas of the campus. Staff were employed to ensure the campus properties were well maintained and repairs were promptly undertaken. Major redecoration, improvement work and refurbishment for the boarding houses was planned for the summer holidays so it did not intrude on the daily life of boarders.

Ground staff were in place to manage sports pitches and the external areas of the campus. This included artificial pitches which could be used all year round. Overall, the campus was safe and very well maintained.

4.1 Children and young people experience high quality facilities

Evaluation

5 - Very Good

4.2 The setting enables children and young people to thrive and develop their independence

Evaluation

Not assessed

4.3 Children and young people can be connected with and involved in the wider community

Evaluation

Not assessed

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

5. How well is our care and support planned?

Child's plans were in place which were based on GIRFEC indicators. These had been in place for some time. Not many were in use at the time of the inspection as there were few young people currently boarding who had identified support needs at a level which required a Child's Plan. In boarding houses, a range of documents were kept for each pupil and covered different aspects of their daily life and care needs.

Information was held electronically and this allowed it to be shared across relevant school staff and sent to external agencies and parents when required. Staff were able to communicate effectively with parents about any aspect of their child's life at Dollar.

The service was developing a new GIRFEC indicator based support plan for all pupils. These were based over the three terms and included sections on: Nature of concerns; impact of concerns; Actions required; Desired outcome; By whom; By when.

There was also space for additional information. These had been completed for the first two terms for pupils with identified support needs in one of the boarding houses. We saw that areas where individual pupils needed support had been identified, and tasks to provide the required attention had been allocated to specific staff. A review date for work to be carried out had been noted.

Files also contained pupil profiles which pupils had completed. These were linked to GIRFEC indicators. Where concerns were noted in these, action would be taken to link the pupil to relevant support from appropriate staff. We suggested that these could also include a question to enquire which of the adults involved with the child would they feel most comfortable to discuss worries/anxieties with, if they had any.

We discussed the need for clarity of outcomes from reviews in the new plans linked to the dates stated for review of the support provided. We also advised that consideration should be given to the use of a different wording to reflect a more positive ethos and discussed examples during feedback.

5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs and wishes

Evaluation

5 - Very Good

5.2 Parents, carers and family members are involved

Evaluation

Not assessed

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

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.