

Bishopbriggs Academy Quality Review

Almost all findings shared within this report are based on the direct observations during our visit on the 28th of October until the 31st of October 2024. The visiting team consisted of:

- Kevin Kelly Quality Improvement Manager - Secondary
- Mary Kerr Quality Improvement Officer - Secondary
- Douglas Brown Head Teacher at Boclair Academy
- David Killin Head Teacher at St. Ninian's High
- George Stevenson Depute Head Teacher at Bearsden Academy
- Danielle Nimmo Depute Head Teacher at Douglas Academy
- Stuart Law Depute Head Teacher at Kirkintilloch High
- Duncan Mitchell Depute Head Teacher at Turnbull High
- Martyn Cosh Quality Improvement Officer - ASN Secondary
- Julie Murray (shadowing) Inclusion Support Officer

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

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

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

Here are our Review Team's evaluations for Bishopbriggs Academy

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

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

Practice Worth Sharing More Widely

- Approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are outstanding. Leadership, particularly that of the Head Teacher is a significant strength of the school. Together with his senior leadership team, the Head Teacher provides very supportive direction. This is characterised by openness, empowerment, consultation and strong collaboration.
- The arrangements for monitoring and tracking attainment throughout the school is outstanding. Senior and middle leaders have developed a comprehensive whole school system that allows underachievement to be identified promptly. Staff at all levels are pro-active in analysing this data and using this to help inform coursing.
- The strategic approach to learning, teaching and assessment is sector leading. In particular, staff's understanding of assessment and how this is used to help inform planning of learning, teaching, and assessment.
- The arrangements for monitoring and tracking wider achievement is relatively new but is comprehensive at capturing achievements both within and out with school.

1.3 Leadership of Change

Excellent

All staff and learners have a very strong understanding of the vision for their school. The vision 'Together we care. Together we learn. Together we thrive.' underpins the strategic direction of the school and the commitment to placing wellbeing at the centre of all that it does. Staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic, and cultural context of the school. The school's vision, values and aims were developed with the whole school community and are currently being embedded throughout all aspects of school life. Staff, pupils, and parents talk confidently about how the vision and aims inform changes within the school.

The Head Teacher along with all senior leaders, demonstrate outstanding strategic leadership of the school. They display confidence and courage in decision making and have a relentless focus on securing improvement for all young people. The Head Teacher has successfully established a very inclusive ethos across the school based on values and the wellbeing of all. By using a range of creative approaches to promote professional dialogue, he has developed a strong culture of collaborative working and collective learning. As a result, staff have ownership of the direction of change and high numbers of staff and young people feel empowered to lead aspects of school improvement. Senior leaders guide and support staff very well to lead on aspects of school improvement. In this way, the school is successfully making improvements across a number of different priorities and has built leadership capacity at every level.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are exemplary in their approach to continuous self-evaluation. This ensures that a wide range of evidence is gathered to inform priorities for improvement. This includes rigorous analysis of data at both departmental and school level, extensive use of pupil surveys, focus groups and an annual programme of lesson study supported by learning observations across the curriculum. Middle leaders use data systematically to evaluate the impact of their work on outcomes for young people. Middle leaders are very positive about the impact of collaboration which is empowering them to lead change and improvement confidently across their departments. This group are highly motivated and demonstrate a strong commitment to the school's vision and aims. They have a sound understanding of local and national priorities and use these and professional reading effectively to inform their planning.

Senior leaders continue to drive improvement and manage the pace of change very well. They have invested in professional learning in strategic planning which is having positive impact on focusing their priorities for improvement on three key areas. There are clear connections between the different priorities which reinforce the central vision for the school. The purpose of all improvement initiatives are clear, and outcomes are identified and measurable. There are a number of appropriate actions related to each priority area. Staff are overtaking these priorities through structured cycles of action and review, demonstrating a consistent highly effective distributed leadership model over a sustained period.

Senior and middle leaders are outward looking and proactive in seeking partnerships that support the school to improve. As a result, staff learn with and from other schools across the local authority. These shared improvement initiatives are resulting in positive change and improvement. The Head Teacher prioritises time for staff collaboration and professional learning during collegiate time. There is a strong sense among staff that they are supported well to take initiative and innovate. This is leading to highly engaged and motivated staff who use evidence-based approaches to inform their work.

The school is continuing to develop its processes for young people to contribute to and lead school improvement and is a significant strength of the school. These include the 'House Council' and 'Pupil Leadership Forum' alongside a wide range of pupil voice groups. Young people are leading important changes within the school through their work on equalities and rights, and through the significant number of leadership and volunteering roles. This is contributing to a strong sense of empowerment and ownership of their school.

The views of parents are sought regularly, and parents are actively involved in decision making. The Parent Council is an important forum for debate where diverse viewpoints can be voiced. The Head Teacher works well with parents to ensure they understand the context for change.

All staff have a strong understanding that closing the poverty-related attainment gap is an important priority. Staff use data well to identify the poverty-related attainment gap and identify individuals and groups who require additional support. There is close monitoring at school level of the progress made by individuals affected by attainment factors such as poverty, free school meals, care experience or additional support needs. The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) budget is reviewed and utilised effectively to target support for those most affected by poverty. This is enabling the school to support more families and work in close partnership with the school community. The school's systematic approach to Developing the Young Workforce is having a positive impact on the range of pathways open to learners. This is enabling staff to connect learning to the development of meta-skills across every aspect of the school. All external partners talk positively of the good relationships they enjoy with school staff. These positive relationships bring a wide range of opportunities for young people.

2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment

Very Good

The vision of Bishopbriggs Academy, 'Together we care. Together we learn. Together we thrive.' is clearly evident in the inclusive, caring ethos across the school. Relationships are a major strength, and this is evident in almost all lessons. There are established routines in place for learning and teacher explanations in almost all lessons. Using the school's learning and teaching brand, 'B8', all teachers plan tasks and activities which can motivate and engage learners. Young people are clear about the purpose of their learning and teachers support this in a variety of ways, including sharing the aims of the lesson and success criteria linked to meta-skills development, while making links to prior learning. In almost all lessons, teachers share examples of successful learning.

The 'B8' learning brand is embedded across Bishopbriggs Academy and provides all teachers with a plethora of methodologies to engage and motivate young people. Most teachers utilise these skilfully and successfully to provide young people with a rich learning environment, supported by an expansive suite of formative assessment techniques in lessons across the school.

There are clear opportunities for young people to learn independently, with their peers, and in groups, enabling them to take responsibility for their learning. In most lessons, young people are active participants in a wide range of learning activities. Teachers use questioning very well in most lessons to check the understanding of young people and recall prior learning. The majority of teachers employ a range of active learning approaches to support pace and challenge. A number of lessons would benefit from teachers directing questions to engage all learners. A few teachers directed questions to learners with hands up, without engaging other young people in the class. In a few lessons teachers should consider opportunities to provide challenge for confident learners at an earlier stage. The majority of teachers use digital technology in creative and wide-ranging ways to enhance the learning experience.

The Learning & Teaching Committee work exceptionally well to share practice and expertise to improve learning, teaching, and assessment. This is supported by a comprehensive CLPL programme, Professional Reading groups, Lesson Study group and Learning and Teaching Ambassadors. Almost all staff highly value the opportunities to learn together, and most staff have engaged in planning, observing and collegiate discussion around a lesson or series of lessons. Staff have made a significant contribution to sharing practice across the authority through the secondary Learning Festival. Learner voice has informed the Learning & Teaching policy and professional learning programmes. The school should continue their highly effective collaborative approaches to build on their strengths in learning, teaching, and assessment.

Meta-skills are planned within most lessons and young people can articulate these skills, particularly in the BGE. Staff should continue to ensure there is opportunity for young people to reflect on the skills used and how they have applied these in their learning. Most teachers provide feedback to young people on a regular basis within lessons. Young people benefit from learner conversations with teachers to review their progress, identify strengths and agree targets and strategies for improvement. Staff should continue to build on these approaches in the BGE. Targeted interventions at departmental and whole school level are effectively supporting young people. These approaches have successfully improved outcomes for young people.

All teachers engage in moderation activities within departments to ensure a common understanding of expectations, using the National Benchmarks in the BGE. As a result, teachers develop courses and programmes in the BGE that are set at the appropriate level of difficulty for their young people. Teachers' planning considers learners' individual rate of progress and as a result activities and tasks reflect either third or fourth Curriculum for Excellence levels. Staff also make effective use of attainment data to validate assessment judgements. Building on the very good practice that exists within the school, staff should continue to develop approaches to moderation of curriculum planning as part of the ongoing BGE review. Almost all staff use Satchel effectively to communicate homework, deadlines and provide feedback to young people and parents on progression of learning.

In almost all departments, teachers have a very strong understanding of how well their young people are progressing throughout the Broad General Education (BGE) and senior phase. Senior and middle leaders have in place robust processes across the school that enable departments to identify young people at risk of underachieving. This then informs a range of strategies for supporting these young people, including targeted supported study, or directed tasks and activities to consolidate learning.

In the senior phase, teachers have a very strong understanding of assessment standards in National Qualifications which they use to set aspirational targets with young people and plan learning that supports them to achieve these targets. They have well developed verification procedures in place to ensure that their judgements are valid and reliable. This has been developed through subject moderation activities, the sharing of standards by those who undertake Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) duties and participation in professional learning events. Young people in the senior phase have a very strong understanding of their strengths and next steps in learning. They have regular opportunities to discuss their learning with their teachers. As a result, young people show independence in moving their own learning forwards.

QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion.

Very Good

The vision, values and aims of the school ensure that wellbeing, equality and inclusion are priorities for young people. The school community has a shared understanding of the school's vision and values and were involved in an extensive consultative process when these were recently refreshed. School vision and values are clearly displayed throughout the school and are embedded in classroom practices.

The school has ensured that children's and young people's rights are embedded across all aspects of school life and work. This is evident within the ethos and climate of the school. The school is a Rights Respecting School, having been awarded a Bronze Award in recognition of their commitment to the United Nations Charter on the Rights of a Child. These rights permeate the school and inform day-to-day interactions. The Pupil Leadership Forum provides opportunities for young people to develop their leadership skills, and to have a voice in decision making processes.

Bishopbriggs Academy values and celebrates diversity and were awarded a Silver LGBT Charter Award and were named LGBT Youth Scotland's Flagship School in recognition of their approach towards promoting inclusion. They also achieved a Level 2 Vision Schools Scotland Award in partnership with the University of West of Scotland in recognition of their work in delivering excellence in Holocaust Education.

Senior Leaders and Pupil Support Team have a very good understanding of statutory duties and responsibilities. They have established comprehensive systems to ensure that all young people, especially those facing additional barriers, are included, and supported. Young people and their families participate in these processes and their views are captured when creating action plans. All staff are trained in legislation, statutory requirements and codes of practice every session.

Caring and positive relationships are evident across the school community, almost all young people feel safe and most young people feel that they are treated fairly and with respect. Relationships are strong between pupil and teacher and peer to peer, with a resulting positive ethos within classrooms. Young people and their families feel well supported, cared for and proud of their school. Almost all parents /carers feel comfortable communicating with the school and that their young person is supported at school. Staff have created an environment where young people feel safe discussing personal and sensitive aspects of their lives and most young people identify that they have someone in school that they can speak to if they are upset or worried.

The 'Bishopbriggs Academy Personalised Support Strategy' provides a strong framework to promote the positive wellbeing of young people and their families. Systems and processes are in place to provide a robust structure in relation to the planning, implementation and

review of universal and targeted supports. Work is ongoing to ensure these processes are embedded. Universal support plans are used widely in conjunction with a whole school tracker to ensure that all staff are aware of any barriers to learning and strategies to support learners within classrooms. In most cases Universal Support Plans and Action Plans are used by Pupil Support Staff to document, review and measure the impact of supports.

The new vision, values and aims ensure wellbeing, equality and inclusion are an increasing focus across the school; wellbeing and development of young people is at the heart of the school's vision for learners and supporting the wellbeing of staff is an important part of this in improving outcomes for learners. All staff have opportunities to support their wellbeing and have a shared understanding of their individual and collective responsibilities for positive mental health and wellbeing for all.

There is evidence of formal wellbeing policy implementation and supportive relationships at all levels from a wide range of sources, including SHINE surveys and responses from pupils, parents and staff relating to the wellbeing indicators. Consultation with the school community highlighted the need to widen opportunities available to learners and staff to increase their social and emotional resilience and to build the overall sense of inclusion and equality for all.

Staff wellbeing continues to be a focus, with a provision of staff wellbeing activities and professional learning opportunities, enabling almost all staff to explore wellbeing approaches that will benefit them and the whole school community. It is hoped that partnership opportunities with Mental Health and Wellbeing organisations will further benefit learners and staff, with learners also achieving accredited awards.

A school wide contribution to the review and development of the S1 and S2 PSE curriculum has allowed the development of programmes of work which are current and relevant, evidenced by almost all pupils reporting that the lessons were enjoyable. Pupils reported that they felt safe to share their opinions in PSE. There are robust child protection processes in place, with all members of the Pupil Support and Senior Leadership Team having undertaken additional 'Specific Level CP Training.

3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

Excellent

The Head Teacher, in partnership with senior leaders and staff, has developed a strong culture of ambition and success within the school.

Attainment in Literacy & Numeracy

In the BGE, young people are consistently attaining very well in literacy and numeracy. In 2024, almost all young people in S3 had achieved CfE level 3 in literacy and numeracy and most had achieved CfE level 4. These high levels of BGE attainment are underpinned by collaborative progression planning and moderation of literacy and numeracy with associated primaries. This is supported by robust tracking which identifies young people who would benefit from targeted interventions to ensure effective transitions and progression throughout S1-3. Key factors that have contributed to these high levels of attainment have been a review of curricular progression throughout the BGE, partnership working with associated primaries across curriculum areas and systematic and robust moderation, tracking and interventions.

Leavers are performing very well in literacy and numeracy. Almost all leavers consistently attain literacy at SCQF 5 or better with the majority achieving SCQF 6. This performance is above the VC. Most leavers consistently attain numeracy at SCQF 5 or better while a minority have also achieved SCQF 6. SCQF 5 performance is above the VC (except in 22/23) and SCQF 6 performance is significantly above the VC. There is active monitoring and tracking of literacy and numeracy in place with targeted workshops to support all young people achieve these awards before they leave.

Attainment Over Time

In the Broad General Education, young people are attaining exceptionally well in all curriculum areas and sustaining these high standards over time. The school collates data for all subjects showing the percentages of young people achieving third and fourth CfE levels. By the end of S3, almost all young people are achieving third CfE level or better in all subject areas out with literacy and English, and numeracy and Mathematics.

The school has consistently sustained an exceptionally high standard of attainment in National Qualifications over the past five years. High quality passes at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher are of particular note.

Based on average complementary tariff scores, the performance trend for the lowest attaining 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% of leavers is significantly or significantly much greater than the VC.

Based on average complementary tariff scores, the performance trend of lowest attaining 20% and middle 60% of learners moving through S4-6 is significantly higher or significantly much higher than the VC. For the highest attaining 20% of learners, performance is generally in line with the VC in S4 and then overtakes it in S5 and S6.

The school is consistently sustaining very high standards of S4-6 performance over time. By S6 most young people are consistently achieving five SCQF awards at level 6 with a majority achieving one or more SCQF awards at level 7. The percentage of young people attaining five or more National Qualifications at SCQF level 6 (at grades A-C) is significantly higher than the VC. The percentage of young people attaining one to three courses at SCQF 7 is also significantly higher than the VC.

The school has robust Senior Phase tracking systems which staff at all levels are confident in using to monitor progress and implement effective interventions when required.

Overall Quality of Learners' Achievement

Almost all young people across the school are developing a broad range of skills and attributes as a result of participation in the school's extensive programme of wider achievement. Almost all young people are also gaining a wide range of recognised and accredited awards. The levels of achievement across the school are outstanding.

There is a wealth of activities on offer across the school, within and out with class. Wider achievement clubs are offered across the full curriculum. Staff at Bishopbriggs Academy aim to have all young people taking part in clubs either in school or in the local community and gather data through an attendance and wider achievement tracker to find gaps.

Young people develop their skills through curricular offering and wider achievement opportunities. Young people are beginning to articulate the meta-skills that are being developed and identify where they are being used. Meta-skills have been embedded within the Vision, Values and Aims of the school.

Young people across the school have developed their leadership skills through participation in a variety of programmes and awards, such as the 'Mental Health Ambassadors' programme, Barista programme, John Muir Award, SCQF Level 6 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work, Wellbeing Awards, Dynamic Youth Awards, and Volunteering Awards – the width of opportunities offered ensures that young people are supported to achieve, regardless of background or circumstance.

A number of pupils are developing their meta-skills by participating in the Young STEM Leaders programme. The school has also just achieved a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Nation Award.

Equity for all Learners

Most young people within Bishopbriggs Academy reside in Quintiles 4 and 5. In the senior phase, few pupils reside in quintile 1. In attainment versus deprivation, young people in S4-6 attain above the VC. The school has implemented measures to ensure that young people in lower quintiles are targeted to remove any barriers to attainment. Senior and middle leaders ensure that any young person affected by poverty is supported to ensure they access curricular or wider achievement opportunities.

The gap in complementary tariff scores between quintiles 1 and 5 has increased between 2019-20 to 2023-24. However, it should be noted that only 2% of the cohort reside in Quintile 1 in the Senior Phase. Senior leaders report that increased focus and targeted interventions for young people in Quintile 2 has ensured that the gap in complimentary tariff scores between Quintile 2 and 5 has remained consistent.

Using a whole school tracker, all staff are aware of young people that are impacted by attainment factors and staff support these young people through a number of measures and interventions. Almost all young people have entered a positive destination on leaving school in the last 5 years.