

Kyle Academy, South Ayrshire Council

Kyle Academy was inspected in April 2013. Inspectors noted the following features of *Improvements in performance* which contributed to the school receiving an evaluation of 'excellent' for QI 1.1 in the third edition of *How good is our school?*¹

Evaluations take account of the context of the school and these features are just part of the overall approach the school takes to improving young people's learning experiences and achievements.

Improvements in performance

The school has an outstanding and extensive range of approaches and activities for enabling young people to achieve. Some of these approaches are whole school projects and are having a significant impact in developing very positive attitudes amongst all young people.

Young people across the school benefit from a wide and extensive range of suitable opportunities to achieve in the wider community. The school makes very effective use of a range of external award programmes to recognise and measure achievement. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the John Muir Trust, ASDAN, Youth Achievement and the Saltire Award. Uptake and completion rates of these are very high and exemplify the inclusive ethos.

There is an upward trend in award achievements for Kyle Academy across almost all award programmes. Young people and particularly those from areas of disadvantage within the school catchment area, benefit significantly from increased confidence, and an opportunity to learn new skills, including social skills and resilience through these experiences and award programmes. This adds value to their school experience. Taken together these arrangements are outstanding.

As a result of this work at whole school and individual level, young people are enthusiastic and highly motivated. They have high expectations of themselves and for others. Amongst all there is a determination to do well.

In all measures across S4 to S6 the school is achieving above or well above the national average. The school has very effective arrangements for improving attainment at department level. It is effective at identifying areas of strength and addressing areas of underperformance. The school has systems in place which ensures departments identify young people who are not achieving as well in their subject(s) as they are in others. This work is proactive and uses tracking data and complements rather than relies exclusively on STACs SQA analysis and data.

¹http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf

At S4 there is a strongly improving trend in attainment over the last five years with a very notable improvement in 2012. By 2012, all young people achieved 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 3 or better and English and mathematics at SCQF Level 3 or better. Almost all achieved 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 4 or better and 56% achieved 5+ at SCQF Level 5 awards. By 2012, the school's performance was 13% above the comparator average and 19% above the national average. Tracking data, which has proven to have been very accurate in previous sessions, demonstrates that for 2013 the school will broadly maintain these very high levels of performance.

The school and EA also monitor improvements over time using average tariff scores. This data goes back to 2004. Studying this data provides the school and EA with an analysis of tariff scores by SIMD data zones and by the lowest attaining 20% and highest attaining 80%. This analysis demonstrates clearly that the school has successfully raised the attainment of the highest-attaining young people, whilst narrowing the gap between the attainment of the lowest- and highest-attaining young people.

There is a clear link between these significantly improved outcomes and the school's very focused and effective approaches for tracking and monitoring young people's progress. For example, the school had identified a need to improve the attainment of girls from S4 to S6. In 2009, the girls' attainment at S4 placed the school in NCD 6 for the proportion of awards at SCQF Level 5. By 2012, this had improved with the school being placed in NCD 1 for this measure and this showed that the girls in that session were the highest-performing girls amongst the school's comparators. Over the same period, the attainment of boys at S4 had improved from being placed in NCD 7 to NCD 2 for this measure.

By the end of S5, the school has improved performance at SCQF Levels 4, 5 and 6 over the last three years from a lower base. In 2010, the school was below the national and comparator average at SCQF Levels 5 and 6. However, the school has improved performance notably in all measures from 2010 to 2012. By 2012, in all key measures the school's performance is above the national average and in almost all measures it is above the comparator average.

The school is using a range of very effective approaches to track and monitor young people's progress across the broad general education. Staff are assessing young people's progress and achievement in all curriculum areas. The school has robust tracking data in all subject areas. The school also uses CEM/SOSCA data to triangulate young people's progress in reading, mathematics and science. The school takes appropriate action where there are apparent discrepancies in the assessment data. For example, in mathematics a few young people's CEM/SOSCA scores were lower than the profile of their attainment in relation to the experiences and outcomes. The school addressed concerns through a range of appropriate intervention strategies to ensure their needs were being met appropriately. The school tracks individual progress and takes action as appropriate.

Learning programmes across the school have been designed to incorporate literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes. The school has a

very clear literacy strategy. This is very well thought through and set out. There is clear evidence that this is well-embedded across the school.