

# MEARNS CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

## Standards and Quality Report 2023-2024

### Context of the School

Mearns Castle High School is a large non-denominational secondary school in Newton Mearns in East Renfrewshire. The Mearns Castle Cluster consists of one partner Family Centre, Hazeldene and five partner Primary Schools:- Mearns (shared with Eastwood High School), Kirkhill, Eaglesham, Calderwood Lodge and the recently opened Maidenhill Primary School. Our school roll (at May 2024) is 1461 with further increases expected in coming years. We have a staying on rate of well over 90% and maintain very high numbers in our senior school.

The school is fully staffed with 116 teachers and 30 support staff. We also benefit from an active Parent Council which takes an interest in promoting and supporting the school. Together we work in partnership with staff from a range of partner agencies to ensure the highest quality educational experience for our pupils.

Our school has an excellent reputation for high levels of academic attainment as well as very successful wider participation and achievement. We pride ourselves on providing an inclusive education for all of our pupils and we are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve their full potential. We work hard as a school community to successfully deliver our shared mission for every member of our school community to be their best. Throughout session 2021-22, we consulted across the school community on our new Mission, Vision & Values. This was launched in January 2023. Our Mission, Vision and Values are:

### Our Mission:



### Our Vision:

### Being Our Best

We will work together, supporting every member of the school community to be their best. We will learn co-operatively with equal appreciation of excellent learning experiences with the strongest outcomes. We will continue to evolve our curriculum to meet future challenges and develop our understanding and care for the world and each other. We will support the development of our skills, resilience, knowledge and wellbeing to fully realise our potential as confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens and effective contributors. We will identify our own personal goals and celebrate our achievements. We will take pride in our school and community, encouraging everyone to reach the highest standards in all aspects of school life.

### Our Values:



## Improvement Plan Priorities 2023-2024

Our main priorities for session 2023-2024, in line with our three-year Strategic Improvement Plan, continue to focus on:

### **Curriculum:**

- *Strategic Priority 1: "To increase personalisation/choice and widen options/accreditation in line with a newly developed curriculum rationale"*
- *Strategic Priority 5: "To utilise all contexts for learning to promote equality and diversity."*

### **Learning, Teaching & Assessment:**

- *Strategic Priority 2: "To improve approaches to formative assessment, ensuring learners are actively engaged in self and peer assessment, taking increasing leadership of their own learning."*

### **Wellbeing:**

- *Strategic Priority 3: "To improve universal and targeted support for positive mental health and wellbeing."*
- *Strategic Priority 4: "To improve approaches to tracking, recognising and intervening in relation to achievements, skills and indicators of wellbeing."*

### **Drivers of Improvement:**

- *Strategic Priority 6: "To maximise the impact of our approaches to leadership and our cluster and parental partnerships as key drivers of improvement."*

Our key improvement activity in this second SIP of our three-year plan, included:

### **Curriculum**

- 1) Further widening of the curricular offer, including Level 6 NPA, Employability & Mental Health Awards.
- 2) Implement developments in utilisation of 'core' curricular time in S3.
- 3) Explore re-modelling S1/2 Citizenship to utilise wider contexts for learning linked to the promotion of equality and diversity.
- 4) Pilot Gen+ in S1 PSE – our new meta-skills and leadership programme and profiling platform.

### **Learning, Teaching & Assessment**

- 1) Embed approaches to formative assessment – all depts. supported to take forward their 'plus 1'.
- 2) Update observation model – a menu of options for all teachers/ departments to assist self-evaluation.
- 3) Trial approaches to further utilise learner voice in improving learning and teaching.
- 4) Improve planning, assessment and moderation in the BGE, increasing challenge and interventions to raise attainment through enhanced professional learning.

### **Wellbeing**

- 1) Further develop and promote the universal elements of the school's wellbeing programme.
- 2) Develop agreed proposals on tracking of Health & Wellbeing as a Responsibility of all.
- 3) Build on MVP and Equality Heroes training to further embed anti-bullying approaches across the school with a focus on pupil leadership and mentoring (taking forward Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and Equality Heroes).
- 4) Develop and implement approaches to interventions utilising personal achievement and participation data system.

### **Drivers of Improvement**

- 1) Embed new Self-Evaluation Framework and refine improvement planning and QA approaches to build on the new framework.
- 2) Enhance data use at class teacher level – earlier intervention to increase challenge and raise attainment.
- 3) Successfully implement new Year Team model with associated working practices in line with GIRFEC, attainment tracking and curricular pathway planning aspirations.
- 4) Align cluster approaches to parental involvement and engagement – assisting an effective transition to MCHS from all associated primaries.

### **Method of Gathering Evidence**

The evaluative judgements made throughout the Report are based on evidence gathered from the following sources:

- Systematic analysis of SQA, Curriculum for Excellence and Standardised Test attainment data at both school and Cluster level
- Systematic analysis of other key performance data e.g. finance, attendance, exclusion, SLDR
- Systematic evaluation of performance against Local Authority targets
- Regular meetings of school teams at all levels including SLT, ELT, Faculty and Departmental Teams and School Improvement Teams
- Regular Self-Evaluation Meetings between HT and PTs/Faculty Heads
- Completion of Self-Evaluation Toolkits within our updated Self-Evaluation Framework.
- SLT link arrangements with Faculties/Departments
- Regular meetings between Head Teacher and Teachers' Representatives
- Informal and formal consultation with staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders
- Staff involvement in PRD programme
- Regular consultation with Parent Council
- Parental feedback formally and informally throughout the session
- Regular meetings between Head Teacher and School Support Leaders
- Parent and Pupil Focus Groups which have taken place this year on: School Mission, Curriculum and Learning & Teaching.

### **How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?**

(1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)

**Evaluation: Very Good**

#### **NIF Priority**

All

#### **NIF Driver(s)**

School Leadership  
Teacher Professionalism  
School Improvement

#### **School Priorities 2023-24**

- Embed new Self-Evaluation Framework and refine improvement planning and QA approaches to build on the new framework.
- Increase visibility of pupil leadership, in particular in relation to school improvement priorities, including learning and teaching and promotion of equality and diversity.
- Utilise the 'plus 1' approach to targeted departmental improvement related to learning and teaching, alongside significant professional learning.

## ***Progress, Impact and Outcomes***

Leadership at all levels continues to be enhanced through a strong and increasing culture of distributed leadership, professional learning and self-evaluation for improvement.

Almost all of this session's Improvement Teams have successfully overtaken their identified aims with one Improvement Team adapting their focus as a result of on-going and effective evaluation of impact.

All staff understand that self-evaluation is an integral aspect of our approach to continuous Improvement and all teachers report that our school mission and values drives their continuous improvement. This focus on delivering our strategic plan to support every learner to be their best is motivating and empowering staff to take forward and lead a range of improvements. This is evident in the high levels of engagement in sharing practice and findings from focussed improvement activity. Every department has shared the impact of their 'plus one' improvement activity on Formative Assessment this session and all teachers have engaged in their chosen professional learning on this area.

We have successfully embedded our updated approach to Self-Evaluation and our middle leaders are leading the sharing of good practice and impact in this area. The quality of self-evaluation activity across the school has been enhanced by a focus on clear and robust evaluative conclusions, leading to improvement activity with a focus on clear evidence of impact from the outset.

Senior Leaders and Improvement Team leaders have utilised a new implementation plan model with precise improvement cycles outlined at the start of session. This is leading to a tighter focus on expected outcomes and a more regular review and sharing of improvement activity across the school.

The leadership of learners is more evident and higher profile across our school as a result of improvement this year. The introduction of Young Leaders of Learning and Equality Heroes has ensured that pupil leadership is more clearly linked to the improvement priorities of the school. The Pupil Parliament has taken key decisions on school life, and whilst this is more regularly communicated across the school, there is a need to ensure all learners feel involved in decision-making in aspects of the school which affect them. A majority of pupils believe that the school listens to their views, whilst a minority report that they don't know or disagree. This will be an area for further development in session 2024-25 in order to ensure that most pupils have confidence that their views are taken into account.

Our Young Leaders of Learning have helped to ensure that approaches to learner voice in learning and teaching have been enhanced. Our Young Leaders of Learning have presented to staff Professional Learning session on areas such as effective questioning and they have presented to pupils on effective participation in focus groups. Our Equality Heroes have led a number of new activities to promote our school value of Equality, including our first Culture Appreciation Week, 'Who Am I?' workshops with pupils alongside our new school partner Humanutopia and partnership activities with Colourful Heritage and Show Racism the Red Card. These activities have enhanced the profile of pupil leadership and anti-discrimination approaches and have demonstrated the advantages of a higher profile of pupil leadership. Next session we will build on this clear link between pupil leadership and our school values.

All departments analyse and use evidence very well to ensure a clear focus on those priorities which will have greatest impact. We have accurate intelligence about the quality of learning and teaching and the attainment and achievement of all pupils. We gather a range of data and information to monitor and track progress for all pupils. We have continued to use our Gradient of Progression (3-18) to track pupils' progress through the BGE leading to appropriate interventions to maximise pupils' attainment. Our professional learning programme has increased confidence in the robustness of our BGE judgements and our newly developed data tools for all teaching staff has further enhanced teacher approaches to tracking and monitoring across the BGE and Senior Phase.

Our self-evaluation continues to focus on key aspects of our work. Our whole school Self-Evaluation Toolkits this session focussing on Wellbeing, Leadership of Learning and department 'Plus 1s' has ensured we have an accurate and helpful understanding of our current strengths and next steps.

Across our school, an ethos of professional engagement and collegiate working is evident. All teachers report that they are encouraged to learn alongside colleagues and that they are supported to engage in

professional learning. This session, we have further developed our Professional Learning sessions to continue a focus on formative assessment approaches whilst ensuring the professional autonomy of all teachers to identify the best use of this time. All teachers have engaged extensively in professional learning as a result. We will build on this next session, with an enhanced opportunity for teachers to engage in school-based research approaches in partnership with Strathclyde University.

The impact of leadership at all levels is a key driver of our strategic improvement. All staff have opportunities to contribute to school self-evaluation and almost all staff report that there are opportunities to develop their leadership within the school. Many teaching and non-teaching continue to undertake distributed leadership roles this session, enhancing their own professional development and contributing to school improvement.

Senior and middle leaders collaborate effectively to set a supportive climate, based on mutual respect and high expectations. Our joint development and implementation of Mearns Respect Matters this session demonstrates this collaborative approach and all teachers report that this has enhanced the learning environment across the school.

Clear policies and procedures are in place to ensure the pastoral support and wellbeing of staff. These are shared with staff and well understood. The culture and ethos of our school is positive and focused on the needs of all pupils, staff and members of our school community. We actively promote equalities for all, so staff feel confident in the workplace. Staff feel empowered and motivated to take decisions and lead aspects of school improvement with almost all teachers stating that they have opportunities to lead within the school, such as our newly trained staff Mental Health First Aiders who are developing plans to implement their training to enhance staff wellbeing. We have a well-established and extensive structure of School Improvement Teams based on the priorities in the School Improvement Plan.

Our partnership working has increased and enhanced our school's improvement journey. Over the course of this academic session, we have continued to grow not only the number of consistent partners, but also the level of involvement they have within our school. Examples of new partners include Anytime Fitness and Colourful Heritage. Our partners are clearly identified and communication is continuous.

Examples of impact from our partnership work include our DYW careers fair with over 40 different organisations involved and the 17 different organisations supporting our learners during the school day with their curriculum, wellbeing, faith or leadership skills. Further examples of impact this year would be our work with Tigers supporting our S4 pupils in achieving their Level 4 Introduction to Construction, Shepherd and Wedderburn supporting our Law Society and our school chaplaincy team consisting of 3 school faith leaders and 1 member of the school leadership team, to deliver inter-faith assemblies throughout the year. Partnership work with East Renfrewshire Vocational Lead and Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire, has allowed learners to secure full time college placements, whilst school attendance and engagement was low.

We have been able to link many of our partnership activities this year with our cluster primary schools, supporting transitions and enhancing cluster identity. Examples of this are evident at almost all stages across the school from our work with the Anne Frank Trust and S2 Ambassadors, to our S1 Gen+ Ambassadors and finally from our S5/S6 Sports Leaders, in partnership with Active Schools, delivering a 7 week block to P1 and P6 classes. Pupil focus groups all reported an increased confidence in leadership skills, as well as enjoyment.

Professional learning for staff has been further enhanced this year through engaging with school partners. Examples such as Osiris, Colourful Heritage, Five Areas Ltd and Active Schools have all provided either resources for staff or direct staff training to support the curriculum. The impact of these partnerships have been extremely positively evaluated by all involved.

The pace of change is managed appropriately and has increased in recent years. The initial post-pandemic focus on wellbeing, recovery and approaches to self-evaluation assisted in gaining momentum across the school. The significant staff support for a new attainment support programme demonstrates the collective ethos across the school, with the introduction of extensive weekend and after-school supports to build confidence amongst learners as part of the recovery period. This assisted in ensuring notable increases in attainment. The momentum gained from the increase in the pace of change has developed an increase in collective efficacy, resulting in considerable staff support for developments such as Mearns

Respect Matters, pedagogical development and development of our curriculum. This collective investment in school improvement ensures we have strong capacity for continuous improvement.

**Next Steps**

- Our Whole School Self-Evaluation Focus will be QI 2.2 – Curriculum (Toolkit 5) & QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment (Toolkit 6). We will commence the development of our next three-year Strategic Improvement Plan (2025-28).
- Improve learner ownership of school improvement, with a new Pupil Executive and School Captains linked to our school values with specific improvement projects for session 2024-25.
- Enhance research and enquiry based approaches across teaching staff with a new partnership with Strathclyde University.
- Devise and implement a Phase 3 of the MCHS Leadership Academy linked to the new Research Hub to further enhance the evidence based approaches of leaders across the school.

**How good is the quality of care and education we offer?**

**(2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7)**

**Evaluation: Very Good**

**NIF Priority**  
All

**NIF Driver(s)**

School Leadership  
Parental Engagement  
Assessment of  
Children’s Progress  
School Improvement

**School Priorities 2022-23**

- Further widening of Senior Phase offer to implement new accreditation including Level 5 Sport & Recreation, Mental Health Award, Employability Award.
- Explore possibilities to re-model Citizenship in S1/2 next session with a focus on Equalities and consideration of IDL approaches.
- Pilot Gen+ in S1 PSE – a programme to assist pupils in developing leadership and tracking/profiling skills and achievements (linked to the MCHS Skills Framework).
- Embed formative assessment approaches – all departments supported to take forward their own identified ‘plus 1’ and this will be the main use of collegiate activity time.
- Provide an updated observation model for teachers to select from a range of options for observation for self-evaluation and professional development.
- Trial approaches to utilising learner voice in improving Learning, Teaching & Assessment following this session’s development work in this area.
- Collaborative planning, assessment and moderation further utilised to increase challenge in the BGE and improve impact of tracking, monitoring and intervention.
- Further promote the universal elements of the school’s Wellbeing work including evaluation of Living Life to the Full in PSE and the wider promotion of wellbeing for all pupils, staff and parents.
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## ***Progress, Impact and Outcomes***

Our curriculum has a clear rationale and vision in line with the school's mission, vision and values. All learners are supported to develop fully the four capacities by engaging with a wide range of experiences in and out of the classroom. We have continued to consult with stakeholders to ensure our Curriculum Rationale remains current and relevant to pupils' needs and interests. Our curriculum development network are future focussed and have facilitated rich debate around curriculum reform and AI by hosting valuable inputs this session from Professor Louise Hayward and Professor Judy Robertson. The curriculum is dynamic in support of school improvement priorities. With careful planning, ELM teams (Every Learner Matters Year Teams) have now been established and are well placed to take responsibility for the delivery of year group PSE and will be able to respond to the evolving needs of learners in their cohort. In line with strategic planning for cross-cutting themes, we have supported the addition of culture week, inter-faith assemblies, the Creative Thinking qualification and a continuously evolving Rights Respecting Schools group.

Ambitious and well-planned pathways lead to positive and sustained destinations for almost all of our young people. In line with our strategic improvement priorities, we have continued to expand upon an extensive range of flexible pathways to ensure we are meeting the curricular needs of all of our learners. The addition of elective periods in Employability Skills and Mental Health for all S3 learners has provided welcome additional personalisation and choice for young people. The same year group will enjoy an enhanced offer with a skills focus into S4 including Level 5 Personal Finance and Level 5 Barista Skills. Furthermore, we have this session worked with young people to develop Focus Pathways; destination-focused options packages which promote a holistic approach to school and include IDL and partnership working and a focus on skills. Furthermore, in response to school improvement consultation, this session has seen the exploration of S1/2 citizenship being remodelled as an opportunity for pupils to collaborate on improving an aspect of school life related to our celebration of diversity. This will increase a sense of global citizenship and belonging. SCQF ambassadors have been trained to play a leading role in educating stakeholders about the value of alternative pathways to becoming confident and successful lifelong learners.

All staff and partners plan experiences which support pupils to recognise, develop and put into practice skills for life, learning and work in line with the MCHS Skills Framework. The rollout of Gen+ in S1 has seen pupils afforded time to reflect on their individual progress and development needs related to Meta-Skills. This has enhanced pupil understanding of their own skill development. Pupils report that this has been a valuable addition to their curriculum and that they look forward to continuing their development into S2. Groups of pupils have continued to benefit from opportunities to work with school partners to enhance experiences and provide additional layers of challenge. Young people have this session enjoyed working with Tigers, the Rangers Charity Foundation, Bike Velo, Colourful Heritage, Humanutopia, Sci-High Forensics, Amalgamate, a range of partners in our S2 STEAM day, Show Racism the Red Card, Live N Learn and Tree of Knowledge. Furthermore, over 150 pupils have continued to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. In order to continue developing the profile of skill-enhancing opportunities in the senior phase, Young Steam Leader, Young Enterprise and SCQF ambassador opportunities will next session sit alongside Powering Futures and Level 6 Personal Finance as valuable elective opportunities for pupils in S5 and S6.

Self-evaluation is central to our achievement of high quality learning and teaching. Our on-going whole school evaluation of learning and teaching provides confidence in our key strengths and next steps in this area. This session this on-going evaluation has included over 100 learning walk drop ins across the school. Self-evaluation has also centred around utilising our Pupil Parliament and Young Leaders of Learning to capture pupil voice as well as Pupil Focus Groups led by both the PT Development and from departmental self-evaluation on formative assessment strategies. In addition, BGE surveys as well as whole school census data from pupils, staff and parents have helped inform our evaluations. All teachers engage in quality evaluative discussions on learning and teaching using a variety of methods including DM Challenge Questions, PT interviews, Lesson Observation Group feedback and whole staff self-evaluation exercises. This extensive self-evaluative activity, focussed on learning and teaching, allows us to make sound judgements on our current strengths and agreed next steps.

Our children and young people are eager and active participants who are fully engaged, resilient, and highly-motivated and interact well during activities. Most classes observed through learning walks and class drop ins show engagement levels are high with pupils responding positively to the challenges, tasks

and assessments set throughout lessons. The majority of pupils surveyed through our BGE surveys state that they are motivated to learn, with most pupils in our census survey stating they are encouraged by staff to do the best they can. Most pupils also feel that their school work was challenging. Within focus groups within the junior phase all pupils felt engaged in the majority of lessons. Almost all staff through the school census felt that all learners engage well in their learning. Osiris noted during the Maths OTI programme that learners have impressive learning dispositions, are curious and committed and respond well to tasks set and get into flow. The climate for learning in all lessons is purposeful, calm, focussed and productive and this is a major strength allowing learners to make significant progress in their learning.

Learners' experiences are appropriately challenging and enjoyable and well matched to their needs and interests. This is a strength of the learner experience whilst we have identified clear next steps for further improvement. Most pupils feel lessons provide challenge and pace. This figure rises within the senior phase with most pupils strongly agreeing that the learning and teaching is regularly challenging. In observed lessons, SLT observe appropriate pace and challenge. This is particularly evident in the senior phase with increasing challenge observed in the BGE. There remains a need to increase challenge in the BGE in a few curricular areas and the focus on formative assessment leading to appropriate action has assisted teachers in developing approaches in this area. Departments have noted increased motivation and engagement levels in classes as a result of these developments. Within BGE Surveys the majority of learners agree that they are challenged in lessons to be their best and are motivated to learn in every or most lessons. In this and previous sessions, some teachers have engaged in the West Partnership's 'Improving our Classrooms' programme, carrying out case studies of improvement and putting in place data-informed interventions to challenge individual pupils at class level. Learners report that they have opportunities to lead their own learning and feel improved questioning strategies assist them to challenge their own thinking. Plans are in place to further enhance the use of data and on-going assessment evidence at class teacher level to intervene and further ensure appropriate support and challenge in a timely manner. For example, self-evaluation within Social Subjects identified a minority of pupils felt they were not challenged through their Social Subject work last session. This has increased to all pupils feeling challenged.

Learners understand the purpose of their learning across all levels with direct teacher instruction being very clear and purposeful. This continues to be an area of strength within our learning and teaching. Across the BGE surveys pointed to learners understanding the purpose of lessons and stating that they often or always know what to do within each lesson to be successful. Within staff evaluations all departments had the majority **almost all?** teachers stating that their instructions during lessons help learners understand the purpose of their learning. In almost all of the observed lessons pupils clearly understand the purpose of their learning with a greater use of modelling and Wagolls being adopted to aid understanding.

We use a wide range of learning environments and creative teaching approaches and this is a strength within the school with areas for development. Through observations and pupil feedback through focus groups and surveys, teaching approaches such as peer assessment, pupils co-constructing Success Criteria, WAGOLLS, show me boards to work through questions and challenges, showing process and answer on boards and in-moment feedback are being utilised within classrooms around the school. Effective use of retrieval, escape room tasks, pupils being challenged and working well together performance wheels with plickrs and retrieval, pupils recording and assessing their progress and next steps within the lesson as well as colour coded self and peer marking to identify gaps, all of this has been in evidence throughout the year. Visualisers continue to grow in use throughout the school to allow engaging and instant in the moment modelling and feedback.

Learning is enriched and supported by our effective use of digital technologies, which is a major strength of our approach to learning and teaching. Pupils during Year Group and Pupil Council consultations are very positive about how departments/classes use digital technology to support learning, features such as Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom and Kahoot all feature heavily in the positive feedback delivered by pupils. Every subject in school continues to utilise Teams or Classrooms to support learners. Observation shows a clear increase in the use of formative assessment strategies utilising digital tools such as plickrs, Mentimeter, Padlet, classroom screen, QR codes, all used widely across the school to enhance learning & teaching.

We observe learners closely to inform appropriate and well-timed interventions and future learning. This continues to be a strength of the learner experience, particularly within the senior phase. We continue to



use a robust tracking and monitoring system and teachers utilise learner conversations to discuss and agree next steps with learners. We have added additional mentoring strategies to support learners, including over 60 S6 mentors to support younger pupils, working effectively alongside assisted study and Saturday café sessions. Adding Pastoral Project Leads to our newly formed ELM teams allows an effective dialogue between class teachers and key adults to ensure any barriers to learning are removed. Regular meetings between DHTs and PTs ensure regular dialogue about pupils' progress and this is fed back to both pupils and parents with support and challenge built into next steps.

We use feedback effectively to inform and support progress in learning. Observations of feedback in lessons demonstrate a greater increase in the use of a variety of assessment strategies, with feedback being evident in lessons. In qualitative evaluation, pupils are very positive about the levels of feedback they receive with teachers being seen to be very supportive, friendly and approachable, giving regular feedback and supporting pupils when help is needed. Most Senior Phase learners feel they receive enough feedback on their learning, citing feedback from formal assessments as particularly helpful. BGE Surveys of our learners point to the majority of learners stating they receive feedback within lessons that helps them and that most learners know what they need to do to be successful across all year groups. Most learners also agree that the feedback they receive on their work helps to improve their learning, this is particularly strong among Senior Phase learners.

Teachers are increasingly using skilled questioning to promote curiosity, independence and confidence and to regularly enable higher-order thinking skills in all learners. This is an area of recent improvement and we will continue to embed approaches in this area. A team of teachers have collaborated to develop professional learning sessions and resources for colleagues and this has been well-received. BGE Surveys carried out point to most pupils being confident contributing to questions and discussion in my class but this is an area we would aim to improve to almost all. Pupils did feel that in almost all lessons within the BGE they are given the opportunity to contribute to answers and discussion in lessons. However we have identified a need to increase pupils' confidence in using mistakes or wrong answers to aid the learning. The range of questioning and higher order thinking techniques used by teachers is an area for development. Whilst the majority of learners agree that teachers consistently use a variety of approaches in their lessons and use appropriate wait time it would be beneficial to gain further improvements in this area.

Across our learning community we have shared expectations for standards to be achieved, and have arrangements for moderation across stages and across the curriculum. All departments have developed approaches to BGE learning, teaching and assessment this session. All departments have a BGE Moderation Coordinator who meet with the School Improvement Team, sharing support and resources to enhance BGE learning, teaching and assessment. Most teachers are confident in most or almost all areas of the moderation cycle and this focus will continue in all Department Improvement Plans next session.

All Curriculum Leaders are confident in most or almost all areas of the moderation cycle. Teachers have engaged with colleagues across the authority, reviewing approaches to assessment in the BGE. Teachers have highly valued this experience and all departments have taken forward next steps in further developing approaches to assessments in the BGE. All departments have secured a BGE Moderation Partner, with the majority of links out-with East Renfrewshire; key staff have engaged with their external partner to discuss and plan approaches to assessment for session 2024-25. Almost all staff have indicated that learners now experience a variety of approaches to assessment across the BGE, with the majority of pupils engaged in regular self-evaluation as part of day-to-day formative assessment. This helps learners identify where they are and how to make progress in their learner journey.

### **Next Steps**

- Self-Evaluation utilising QI 2.2, our Curriculum Rationale and local/national professional learning will lead to a focus on curriculum development as a key aspect of our next Strategic Plan, alongside ownership and clarity across the school community.
- Implement our new excellent experiences framework, based on our strategic improvement journey in Learning, Teaching & Assessment. This will provide a baseline for consistent, high quality experiences in every classroom and will inform teacher and department self-evaluation and engagement in further professional learning and observation.
- Adopt adaptive teaching and learning as our whole school 'plus 1' on learning and teaching, naturally

progressing from our focus on formative assessment.

- Continue to develop approaches to the learning and teaching cycle in the BGE, fully utilising collaborative planning and moderation internally and with our established external partners.

**How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our children / pupils?**

**(3.1, 3.2, 3.3)**

**Evaluation: Very Good**

**NIF Priority**

All

**NIF Driver(s)**

School Leadership  
 Assessment of Children’s Progress  
 School Improvement

**School Priorities 2023-24**

- Successfully implement new Year Team model (Every Learner Matters Teams) with associated developments in GIRFEC arrangements, attainment tracking and curricular pathway planning for improved outcomes for identified pupils.
- Further enhance use of data for improvement - increase consistency on how data is leading to interventions and improved attainment class teacher level.
- Develop and implement approaches to interventions utilising wider achievement and participation data this session.
- Develop proposals on tracking of Health & Wellbeing for implementation in 2024-25 school session.

***Progress, Impact and Outcomes***

The enhancement and promotion of wellbeing is a central aspect of our Be Your Best mission. As a result of our approach to supporting the wellbeing of our young people we are also improving outcomes for them. Key to these improved outcomes are the relationships we foster across the school, based on mutual respect. Our learners know that we have high expectations for them in all aspects of their development.

We have continued to make considerable investments in the promotion of wellbeing and in how we support all our pupils. Our unique partnership with CLD, with our own school-based CLD Worker has enhanced the curriculum in Personal Development and allowed more bespoke packages for some of our most vulnerable learners. Qualitative evaluation demonstrates the impact of these relationships and opportunities for these learners. Our investment in a DYW Support Officer has ensured close, targeted work with a small number of identified school leavers who were at risk of not securing a positive destination. Both of these staff members have established themselves as trusted adults within the school. They have also forged links to other partner organisations such as The Rangers Foundation, Tigers and the Steps to Work programme. These programmes have benefitted learners through offering opportunities for additional accreditation and learning experiences in a variety of contexts.

Our wellbeing team and base – The Hub – is a resource within the school which has been locally and

nationally recognised for both the universal and targeted support it offers learners. The Hub offers extra-curricular activities and a safe space for pupils on a daily basis. The Hub team work alongside senior student ambassadors to facilitate these activities and those learners involved highly value this support. The Hub have worked to expand their universal support, including exam support workshops, yoga and relaxation sessions. In conjunction with the Improvement Team they also provide activities as part of Be Kind to Your Mind Week. The universal offer remains an area for further development, with a need to engage a wider range of learners and staff in the promotion of wellbeing. This identified next step has informed actions which will be taken forward in 2024-25, including a strengthening of the Key Adult role in PSE/Tutor Time and the utilisation of universal health and wellbeing tracking, following development activity this session.

The Hub offers a range of effective targeted interventions, with over 150 learners accessing a range of 1 to 1 and group activities in the Hub this year. Targeted interventions are easily accessible through a referral system completed by the Named Support Person or through self-referral via a QR code widely publicised across the school. The evidence-based Living Life to the Full Programme is used to support young people and this session we have undertaken a ground-breaking pilot in training parents in the CBT skills used. This has been evaluated positively in partnership with the University of Glasgow and has helped inform wider improvements across the country as a result of published research based on this pilot. The key finding included that our parents felt more confident responding to wellbeing concerns relating to their child.

Learners who have engaged with targeted support from The Hub, CLD or the DYW Support worker acknowledge the benefits or the difference it has made to them. They recognise that their wellbeing has improved for those working with the Hub on aspects of mental health and wellbeing. The targeted support from CLD is responsive to the emerging needs of individuals or cohorts. For example, a group of S4 boys successfully connected with the Safer Choices programme with CLD and felt more confident in responding to wellbeing or safety concerns as a result. Our DYW Support Officer has taken forward effective targeted support, such as supporting senior learners with applications and planning when this would be too challenging to tackle independently. In addition, our Support for Learning team have successfully supported non-attending learners to access and pass Literacy and Numeracy units. The department has also undertaken significant development work on widening the curriculum for pupils working at National 1-3 as well as delivering bespoke options such as ESOL courses and a successful John Muir group.

In line with our improvement plan, we have successfully re-structured our Support for Pupils team in order to allocate Principal Teachers of Pastoral Support horizontally across one year group and enhance collaboration across key staff to support pupils requiring interventions. We have formed Every Learner Matters (ELM) Teams, consisting of a Head of Year (DHT), PT Pastoral Support, Year Group Leader - and Pastoral Project Lead. The strength of this model is that pupils can easily identify key members of staff whose role is to work with them and support them as they progress through school. This model has allowed an increase in early and effective intervention for pupils within equity groups and further developments next session will ensure a wider, universal impact from this new structure. The development activity undertaken this session has allowed an initial pilot of our universal Health & Wellbeing Tracker to be implemented, with full roll-out and on-going evaluation to be implemented in session 2024-25 as planned. This will further aid the approach of our ELM Teams to ensure highly effective universal support to enhance the wellbeing of all learner.

We have further enhanced the culture of inclusion and celebration of diversity within our school this session. Building on our well-established Rights Respecting Schools group, the introduction of Equality Heroes has assisted in taking forward a number of positive developments this session. Pupils evaluated the Culture Appreciation Week very positively and on-going evaluation will inform next steps as we continue to promote cohesion and equality across the school community. A wide variety of school activities and opportunities ensure an inclusive environment, including the facilitation of Friday Prayers, the introduction of a Hindu Club at pupil request, the identification and removal of barriers to participation in extra-curricular activities and the high profile given to learner leadership in relation to inclusion within our school culture. The collective impact of this work will be more tangible over a longer period of time than the evaluation of each individual activity, whilst these are positively evaluated by learners.

Learners make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. As a result of recent improvements, almost all school leavers attained level 5 in both literacy and numeracy.

This compared favourably against our virtual comparator. Robust tracking and monitoring supports teachers to target effective and appropriate literacy and numeracy intervention. Another first saw S2 students, on average, securing the strongest standardised assessment scores in East Renfrewshire Council for both reading and mathematics.

The percentage of pupils achieving benchmark Curriculum for Excellence levels is a further indication of continued strong performance.

	% Achieving Third Level		% Achieving Fourth Level	
	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy
By the end of S1	49.8%	24.7%	0%	0%
By the end of S2	83.8%	96.1%	21.6%	51.0%
By the end of S3	97.0%	98.2%	91.1%	90.7%

Across all curriculum areas we have maintained consistently high standards of attainment for all learners. Staff make effective use of assessment and a shared understanding of standards to make confident judgements about learners' progress. Robust tracking systems at all levels ensure that appropriate and well-timed interventions are put in place to support learners to achieve success at all stages. In recognition of high-impact tracking systems, opportunities have arisen to share practice with colleagues both in and beyond the local authority.

The impact of this work can be seen in school leavers' results from the 2023 diet of SQA examinations.

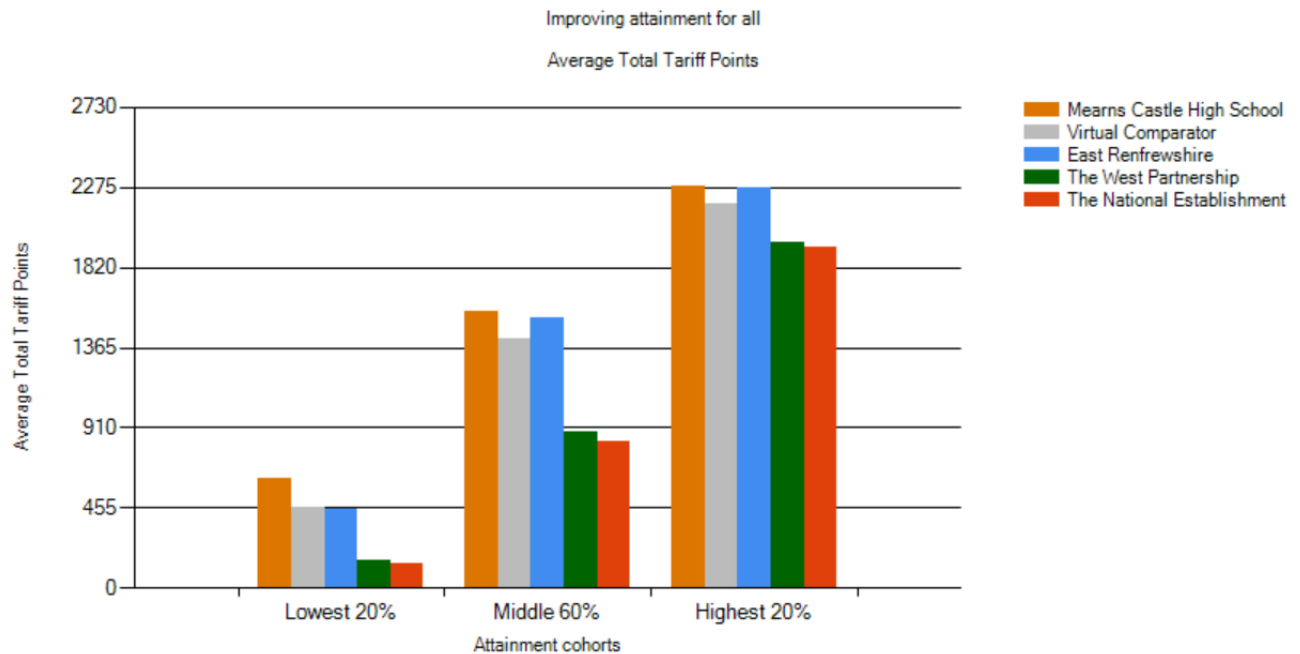
**1+ Level 7:** 59%\* (Virtual Comparator 49%)  
**3+ Level 6:** 87%\* (Virtual Comparator 81%)  
**5+ Level 6:** 80%\* (Virtual Comparator 68%)  
**5+ Level 5:** 94% (Virtual Comparator 90%)  
**8+ Level 5:** 85% (Virtual Comparator 67%)

\*Best ever school performance

Pupils make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. We have raised attainment in literacy and numeracy. On average students at MCHS SIMD levels 1-9 have performed at least as well as the national average for SIMD level 10 students for national certification (total tariff points). On average S1-S3 students SIMD 1-9 also perform better than the ERC and National averages for Literacy and Numeracy. Standardised Test Score averages in literacy and numeracy in recent years are also higher than the ERC Averages. Overall this is robust evidence that we are adding value to the attainment of our learners.

Furthermore, our overall total value of attainment as measured by tariff scores for leavers demonstrates we outperform all comparators across all attainment cohorts. This is the second year where previously our highest attaining 20% were below the East Renfrewshire average:

The selected year is 2023



The overall quality of learners' achievements and our approaches to tracking, monitoring and intervening is very strong, with features of excellence.

Our vibrant, successful school recognises and celebrates the widest range of our learners' achievements alongside the opportunity to learn, develop skills and achieve success in a wide range of contexts. Using our whole school database we have information on almost all of our learners' achievements and participation and have been able to respond to requests regarding specific experiences and opportunities to go further. We have used this information well to target additional support where this will remove equity gaps.

Over 342 pupils are involved in school sports teams and after school sports clubs. Each student has the opportunity to discuss their wider achievements with a member of staff in the school. An analysis of impact can be read in the MCHS Wider Participation Report.

All staff and partners provide very good opportunities to develop children and young people's skills for learning, life and work in motivating contexts for learning. We pay particular attention to ensure pupils experience increasing levels of challenge as they develop skills for learning, life and work. Our staff and partners provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of the world of work. This session using our new partnership with Gen Plus, all S1 pupils undertook skills profiling to enhance awareness and planning relating to skills development. We are the first secondary school in Scotland to have all of our cluster primary schools using Gen + for leadership development and meta-skills profiling. This is a ground-breaking pilot which is assisting Gen Plus to develop their primary programme.

Our participation tracking tool has been used effectively to gather information about the vast majority of students in the school and this data has been used to further improve the learner experience. PPL's have an additional participation intervention with any learner in equity groups and this has improved outcomes, through ensuring that a number of learners are now engaging in wider participation who would have experienced barriers. The tracking tool empowers school staff to identify key areas of improvement in relation to wider participation and act effectively. Evaluation involving parents and learners regarding the wider participation (extra-curricular offer) remains very positive as the school meets the needs of more learners in this aspect of school life. Almost all learners report they are encouraged to get involved in the wider life of the school, which is now the most positive aspect of learner evaluation in our annual school census exercise.

We are continually building the leadership of learners in all aspects of school life. As a new development this session we have introduced Club Captains for the majority of extra-curricular activities. This has allowed a higher profile for learner leadership of wider participation, such as presenting in our virtual Monday Morning Assemblies across the school community. The link between skills and wider

participation is now more evident. As a next step, we linked our MCHS Skills Framework to each of the extra-curricular activities and learners now complete reflective activities that raise their awareness of the skills that they are using and developing within their activities. Moving forward, learners in S1 and S2 will now reflect and record these meta-skills in their Gen + profile.

School staff devise and offer a very wide range of opportunities to enhance the learner experience and build a range of skills and achievements. We have over 150 pupils involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, our learners consistently achieve high levels of success in both Debating and Public Speaking and the range of excursions, clubs, accredited leadership opportunities and career-focussed wider achievement opportunities increases each year.

The MCHS Pupil Parliament plays a key role in ensuring that pupil voice influences decision making in the school and empowers our learners to support positive change at MCHS. Each meeting has had a focus on items in the School Improvement Plan including learning and teaching, wellbeing and respect and the use of school resources. The Pupil Parliament has also decided to create a Resource Hub that will contain a wide range of resources for learners from everyday resources to more personal items. This approach ensures a cultural as well as practical impact to remove barriers to learning and reduce the cost of the school day.

We have a well-established culture of celebrating achievement. The MCHS Colours system, House Reward System/House Points, Pupil displays and the Head Teacher's Weekly Assemblies all assist in recognising achievements across the school. Year group assemblies are now used to celebrate learners' achieving MCHS Colours. The visibility of celebrating achievement continues to increase with the use of Departmental Twitter Boards, Colours Boards, S1 'All About Me' displays and the MCHS Hall of Fame. The newly introduced Sports Award Ceremony helps to ensure that the MCHS calendar is rich in opportunities to celebrate wider achievement.

### **Next Steps**

- Further develop effective approaches to supporting the attainment and achievement of the lowest attending learners.
- Build on this session's improvements to class teacher data use to ensure systemic use of all tools available by all teachers.
- Further develop approaches to profiling meta-skills and linking with all contexts for learning.

### **Pupil Equity Fund – How are we ensuring Excellence and Equity?**

We have used our Pupil Equity Fund to improve health and wellbeing through the provision of staffing in The Hub to implement an extensive programme of universal and targeted supports to enhance wellbeing.

See our Pupil Equity Fund Report (2023-4) for a summary of interventions and impact.

### **What is our capacity for continuous improvement?**

Having launched a new Mission, Vision and Values for our school, this increased focused on high quality experiences alongside the strongest outcomes is driving a range of school improvements. This is demonstrated through the enhanced approaches to wellbeing, impactful professional learning on formative assessment and a higher profile given to wider achievement and participation. Our improved attendance and improved positive destinations, alongside consistently high levels of attainment indicates the school community continues to successfully deliver a high quality experience and outcomes for learners.

Whilst we have identified a wide range of improvement priorities, these are being taken forward in line with our Strategic Improvement Plan by a range of highly motivated individuals and teams across the school community. We are utilising the opportunity to capitalise on high levels of motivation and commitment of all stakeholders to ensure the pace of change continues to be well-managed.

We continue to ensure improvement priorities for class teachers are manageable and impactful. This session there were two clear priorities for all class teachers, with a focus on embedding formative assessment approaches and to further enhance planning, assessment and moderation in the Broad General Education. This clarity has helped to ensure the wide range of improvement activity across the school is not a barrier to tightly focussed improvements to the learner experience.

Our talented, hardworking and motivated staff and pupils; our active, caring and supportive parents; positive and successful partnership arrangements; a challenging and supportive Education Department, and very effective and committed leadership will ensure that we will continue to improve the school and achieve our stated goal within our vision of “the highest standards in all aspects of school life”.

## National Improvement Framework Quality Indicators

Quality indicator	School self-evaluation	Effective Transitions Review evaluations 2016
1.3 Leadership of change	Very Good	Very Good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Very Good	Very Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Very Good	Very Good
3.2 Securing children's progress / Raising attainment and achievement	Very Good	Excellent Upgraded by Head of Service

### School Improvement Priorities 2024-2025

Our main priorities for session 2024-2025, as we continue to strive towards our goal of excellence in every dimension, are as follows:

- **Improve learner ownership of school improvement**, with a new Pupil Executive and School Captains linked to our school values with specific improvement projects for session 2024-25.
- **Enhance research and enquiry based approaches** across teaching staff with a new partnership with Strathclyde University.
- **Further development of our curriculum**, with professional learning, evaluation and planning involving all teachers in all curricular areas.
- **Implement our new excellent experiences framework**, providing a baseline for the highest quality experiences in every classroom.
- **Continue to develop approaches to the learning and teaching cycle in the BGE**, fully utilising collaborative planning and moderation internally and with our established external partners.
- **Further develop approaches to planning for and profiling meta-skills** and linking with all contexts for learning.

More details, on these priorities, can be found in our School Improvement Plan 2024-2025.