



Believe... Achieve

Ayr Academy

**Standards and Quality Report:
Session 2020-2021**

*Ambition, Respect, Responsibility,
Compassion, Community*



Head Teacher's Introduction

Dear Parent / Carer,

It is my pleasure to present this report evaluating the work of Ayr Academy for session 2020-21. It provides an overview of our achievements and identifies the areas we will focus on this year. The evaluations in the document are based on a range of evidence including:

- Analysis of pupil performance in SQA examinations, other forms of accreditation, along with statistical data relating to young people's achievements.
- Annual surveys of the views of pupils, parents, staff and partners, at whole school and departmental levels.
- Self-evaluation using HMIE's evaluation tool 'How Good is Our School? 4' and other Education Scotland publications to support self-evaluation.



Our Values and School Context

Covid 19

Our school, along with all other schools, was significantly affected by the Covid 19 pandemic in the year 20-21.

The pandemic continued to impact upon our families and disrupt our learning. We were able to quickly and effectively move our learning to digital learning. This continued change to routine had an effect on our children's learning and social interactions. It also led to the SQA exam diet being cancelled for the second year in a row. This created a situation where teacher judgement of internal assessments was the vehicle for achieving SQA qualifications.

Our school vision is *Believe...Achieve*, this was created for our unique setting and continues to drive our improvement. Our values are at the heart of everything we do and support us to achieve an inclusive, aspirational community. They are:

Ambition, Respect, Responsibility, Compassion, Community



Ayr Academy is a 6-year, non-denominational comprehensive school situated in the North of Ayr. It's associated primary schools are Annbank Primary, Coylton Primary, Dalmilling Primary and Newton Primary. It is led by a Head Teacher, three Depute Heads, 11 curricular middle leaders and 4 pastoral support PT's. Overall, we have 44 teaching staff and 10 school assistants working in the building. Our staff are skilled and experienced and include a community police officer, two councillors, two Education Welfare officers and a youth worker. The building itself is a modern new build which opened in August 2017. It sits within the Craigie estate, North of the river, ideally situated to foster strong links with Ayrshire College and UWS. It comprises state of the art accommodation to facilitate 21st century learning.



The 2020-2021 roll will be 585 pupils. 60% of young people live within SIMD 1/2. 36% of young people are registered for free school meals, 0.5% living in the 20% most affluent areas. Children who are 'care experienced' make up 6% of our cohort with a further 3% being previously looked after. Attendance is currently 86% against the local authority figure of 90%. Exclusion figures were 15.5 per 1000 versus the Authority's 23.7 per 1000 and positive destinations were 100% this session. These figures give a measure of the extent of deprivation, urban and rural within the catchment and they set a clear agenda for improvement for us as a community.

Priority 1 Raising Attainment – Learning and Teaching

There has been a real focus on creating a quality learning and teaching environment throughout this session. This has been enhanced by our use of digital technology to ensure that all lessons were delivered in a way which is not only matched to our learners needs but also allows us to make appropriate and robust assessments of pupil's progress. Learning conversations have played an instrumental part in ensuring pupils know their strengths and can articulate their next steps in learning. This progress has been captured on our new tracking and monitoring system which allows pupils to be targeted by both middle and senior leaders if they are under achieving. The robust process has been a significant improvement in our BGE and will lead to improved attainment in the Senior phase. The majority of our staff have taken part in co-operative learning training which is impacting positively on classroom practice, this continues to be a focus for development. All staff engaged with their subject networks and took part in an Authority moderation event. This work has supported staff to develop their understanding of achievement of a level and will support work on progression in learning next session. A number of staff have had the opportunity to act in lead roles in parental engagement, family learning, pastoral care and attainment and achievement, this has allowed them to gain valuable experience and has supported the work of the school.



We have worked extensively on our approaches to positive relationships across the school using 'The pivotal way'. This work has involved a range of staff training sessions on attachment and behaviour management strategies. Classroom routines have been improved and changes to the structure of Pupil Support have supported staff and young people to maximise learning and teaching experiences.

We have had inputs from the locality team in HMiE that focuses on our curriculum pathways, our effective use of data and our leadership of learning and change. These supported our position to address the delivery of the BGE and the pace and challenge at which the courses are delivered, particularly in S3.

Our digital learning was enhanced significantly through the periods in lockdown. Led by the more proficient members of staff, and the digital champion, we effectively taught quality lessons to our pupils through MS Teams and other platforms. The school has systems in place to self-evaluate its own work and this evidence can be seen through departmental documentation. Most staff demonstrate a shared understanding of their collective responsibility and accountability for school improvement and show commitment to improving outcomes for our young people. All staff agree that as a next step they need to regularly discuss how to improve achievement for all young people.

Some staff take on leadership roles across the school. Staff have also led work on assessment and moderation, learning and teaching, differentiation and digital learning and have volunteered for



various working groups across the school, the impact of this work is evident in the improved experiences pupils get and improved learning and teaching environments across the school.

The school takes good account of the views of learners, parents, staff and partners when planning for improvement and this will be evident on school improvement. Next session we will be working hard in the recovery of education, the promotion of wellbeing and we will work with our young people to look at new and improved ways of gathering their views and developing the Learning environment and the ethos. Almost all parents feel the school asks for their views and takes them into account and most feel informed about their child's progress.

Middle and senior leaders have looked outwards to other secondary schools, both locally and nationally, to take forward areas they feel would have a positive impact on our young people. Staff have identified the need for improved professional learning across the school and next session we will work to develop a calendar of activities and opportunities including leadership roles to improve staff skill and knowledge. A number of our middle managers have shown interest in developing their skills and knowledge to ensure they are continually improving their own professional abilities and to provide excellent experiences for our pupils, this is really pleasing to see.

Priority 2 Improving the wellbeing of our pupils and ensuring they feel included

The school vision Believe...Achieve is well embedded and continues to drive our success. We are using social media more effectively to celebrate success and have reintroduced our house system to further engage pupils in the life of the school. The teacher and pupil surveys were significantly more positive indicating a more connected community within the school.



The successful implementation of the support hubs within the school have provided extensive support to those pupils who require it, enabling the other pupils to be pushed in their learning. We have continued to prioritise improving pupil's health and wellbeing which is fundamental to increasing opportunities for pupils to learn and develop in school. We were not able to fully support the promotion of the theme for the week due to the difficulties of covid but we plan to focus our attention on this again next session. Our positive relationships and anti-bullying policies were refreshed through working groups and consultation with pupils. These will be relaunched next session to ensure we provide a supportive environment for pupils to thrive. Our staged intervention within the school has been significantly overhauled to ensure that all data and information is current and targets are clear with impact being tracked and monitored through all





of our cohorts. Information sharing across the school and indeed from our cluster Primary schools has been targeted and focused to ensure we are better placed to support all of our pupils needs effectively. The school councillors have positively added value to our support network offering 1-1 and small group sessions to those who require it in our school community. This has allowed us to provide universal and targeted support to our pupil's health and wellbeing throughout this very challenging year.

There has been a big focus on dyslexic learners within our school and this has identified and provided appropriate supports to ensure pupils are supported. Our PEF and Attainment Challenge cohorts have been targeted through a range of interventions to ensure they are being supported to get involved and engaged with their communities and their learning. This has been very successful and has impacted positively on our attainment. Our Team around the school approach to supporting our community has been very successful this session with Community Learning and Development colleagues being based within the school to provide opportunities to our pupils in most need. They are able to facilitate a gardening group, a friendship group, a wider achievement group, work out sessions and they do 1-1 sessions with specific individuals. Their relationships and outcomes have been extremely positive and this is practice we aim to continue to develop.

Priority 3 To improve employability skills and positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

Positive destinations are up to 100%

Our DYW offer now comprises nail bar, barista and a smoothie bar, bike maintenance, construction and- the Ayr events management project. These are offering our pupils valuable employability skills.

54 pupils are currently embarking upon the Bronze award, we have 6 pupils currently involved with the Silver award and 5 pupils involved in the Gold award within the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.



Our pathways into positive destinations continue to be strengthened by additional qualifications and partner working. The concept of PRINTS continues to be the area we focus on to ensure consistency in our learning and teaching and departments continue to improve their course plans by grouping the experiences and outcomes and benchmarks in the BGE





Evaluative Summary

Quality Indicator	School Self Evaluation (Please add 3 or 4 evaluative statements linked to the themes) and include Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	<p>Most staff have high expectations of learners, as a school we need to improve outcomes for our top 20%, this will have a positive effect on the middle 60%. We now have a number of different opportunities for our bottom 20%. Pupils, parents, and staff were involved in the creation of our ambitious vision, aims and values and this is referred to regularly by all stakeholders in the school. All staff understand the social and economic context of our community and there is an ongoing focus on the national picture to influence our key focus areas. Middle leaders have a key role to play in promoting the vision, values and aims to ensure pupils are getting a consistent message across all curricular areas. Teaching staff have the opportunity to reflect on the GTCS standards through department work and during the PRD process. Many staff are committed to change which results in improvements for learners, they are keen to try new strategies and are focussed on their learning to effectively bring about change in the teaching and learning environment. All staff are clear on the schools strengths and areas for development which include development of our middle leaders through group work/ a skills drive and sharing best practice. This is used to create a clear rationale for future improvements. Senior leaders have worked hard to guide the strategic direction and pace of change within the school as there have been a number of changes at SLT level. Careful consideration has been given to how best to select and take forward priorities which ensure we can effectively and accurately evaluate the impact.</p> <p><i>Overall evaluation for this section – 3</i></p>
2.3 Learning and teaching	<p>The ethos of our school reflects the commitment to young people’s rights and positive relationships. A few of our young people are resilient and highly motivated. Learners’ experiences are challenging and enjoyable in many areas, encompassing an element of choice and we work hard to ensure this is consistent.</p> <p>Some areas of the school exhibit consistently high expectations. This is demonstrated through a variety of learning and teaching approaches and very positive relationships. We are developing our use of HOT questioning to deepen learning. Staff are engaging in and sharing good practice to develop a consistent approach to learning and teaching which incorporates the use of digital technology and outdoor learning. Effective feedback and differentiation are areas we intend to focus on.</p> <p>When assessing the progress of young people, we consistently use a variety of different approaches to determine knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities. Assessment and moderation is a local authority priority and staff are working in line with guidance provided to ensure our evidence is accurate and reliable. As an authority we will move to a four stage within a level model. Staff are working collegiately across the collaborative to ensure their understanding of progress is</p>



	<p>standardised. Robust tracking systems are in place allow all staff to monitor the progress of pupils in all curricular areas. Learners are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning across curricular areas. Moving forward we are taking pupil views into account through Learning councils who meet regularly to ensure all planning incorporate their views.</p> <p><i>Overall evaluation for this section – 3</i></p>
<p>3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion</p>	<p>Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibility for the promotion of wellbeing. We are improving outcomes for the majority of young people in our school community. We work hard to foster positive relationships and a nurturing culture that allow young people to feel they belong. The majority of our young people engage well with the positive relationships policy we have in place, this continues to be a focus for improvement for us. We comply with the statutory requirements to protect and safe guard our young people by ensuring ASN plans are in place for individual young people. These are reviewed and amended on a timely basis. Staff training is ongoing and relevant including principles of GIRFEC, nurture, child protection, restorative approaches, data protection, and speech and language therapy. We are developing our approaches to restorative practice so that everyone feels safe, healthy, able to achieve, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Support is available for young people to access all aspects of the curriculum.</p> <p>Staff have a clear understanding of the barriers that our young people and families face. They are fully aware of all groups of pupils including those who are care experienced. Outcomes for all are significantly improved as a result of the support they receive from our teaching and non-teaching staff. We have changed the PTG structure to include three PTG’s and one who focusses specifically on attendance.</p> <p><i>Overall evaluation for this section – 3</i></p>
<p>3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</p>	<p>Young people are making some progress in literacy and numeracy - this will be a key whole school focus next session to ensure we are adding appropriate value to all learners’ experiences and achievements in these areas. We are looking closely at our BGE to ensure it creates a solid foundation for the Senior Phase to allow our young people to consistently achieve at the highest level through the development of their skills. We use assessment data and the CFE benchmarks to plan and deliver lessons appropriate for all of our young people, allowing us to monitor progress and effectively target groups of young people. Our targeted interventions will be more effectively utilised and deployed next session through mentoring and robust data analysis to ensure appropriate progress is achieved. We are also working on a system that effectively tracks progress over time through four stages within a level. There is a tracking tool for the BGE now to allow us to explore our data in the S1-3 phase of the school. This enables us to compare individuals and cohorts achievement and provides baseline data for continual improvement.</p> <p>We have worked hard to provide all young people with appropriate and well planned pathways to their next destination. For some, this is based on academic attainment, for others it is a blend of academic and vocational opportunities that will allow them to develop the skills required for learning, life and work. We offer a range of wider achievement awards including Duke of Edinburgh, John Muir Award and Saltire. We are developing systems to capture and track this information, including what our young people are involved in outside of school,</p>



to ensure all achievements are valued and celebrated. This will happen through our new health and wellbeing courses and with the support of the Team around the school staff who work with our pupils within and out with school.

We use data effectively in many places to identify and reduce barriers to learning for our vulnerable groups. Our PEF funding has allowed us to employ two Educational Welfare Officers who work specifically with targeted group of young people and their families. This is having a positive impact on attendance and attainment as well as the general health and wellbeing of this group. In order to further develop this valuable resource we intend to launch a parental engagement programme to encourage parents to work in partnership with the school within the community to help close the attainment gap.

Overall evaluation for this section – 3

Key priorities for 2021-2022

1. The vision, values and aims will continue to be a central focus for all staff and pupils.
2. Ensuring the wellbeing of our staff and pupils remains a key focus.
3. Quality and consistently effective learning and teaching to close the gap and raise attainment is vital.
4. The development of skills for learning, life and work to facilitate positive destinations

Raising Attainment and Achievement



We have high aspirations of all of our young people. It is our intention to focus on literacy and numeracy levels, particularly for our leavers. Our aim is that 100% of pupils achieve a minimum of National 4 in both these areas on leaving school. We are doing this by focusing on positive relationships, staff willingness to develop their own skills and abilities and pupils having an increased passion for learning. We continue to aim high in our aspirations for all of our young people. We encourage a culture of ambition within the school.

All pupils in the senior phase choose six subjects to study in order to gain qualifications at their level which will facilitate the best progression pathway for them. The majority of pupils will be presented for course awards at National 4 (SCQF level 4) or National 5 level (SCQF level 5) in S4 and progress accordingly through S5 and S6. A small number of pupils will study some subjects at National 3 level.



Progress in secondary schools in Scotland is now measured using four National Benchmarking Measures and is based on information related to school leavers rather than cohorts. These four measures are:



- 1. Improving attainment in literacy and numeracy**
- 2. Leaver initial destinations: Increasing post-school participation**
- 3. Improving attainment for all: The Average Tariff Score**
- 4. Attainment versus deprivation: Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of low, compared to high, attainers.**

The results achieved by pupils in Ayr Academy are compared to the results of a virtual comparator (VC). Some results are also shown against an average of all South Ayrshire schools as well as results nationally. A virtual comparator is determined by the Scottish Government selecting at random 10 pupils from across Scotland with a similar background to one of our pupils. This is done for every pupil in S4 -S6 in Ayr Academy. This enables a fair comparison with similar pupils nationally.



During the Senior Phase, pupils will be presented for National Qualification course awards or units from courses in subjects of their choice. When pupils pass a National Qualification course or complete units, they are awarded points which, when added together, become their tariff score. The higher the level of course they sit, the more points they are awarded. The charts below show the average tariff scores achieved by our pupils over the last three years.

Literacy and numeracy

Most pupils leave school with SCQF level 4 in literacy and numeracy, which is above the Virtual comparator (VC). A minority achieving SCQF level 5 in both areas which is marginally below our VC

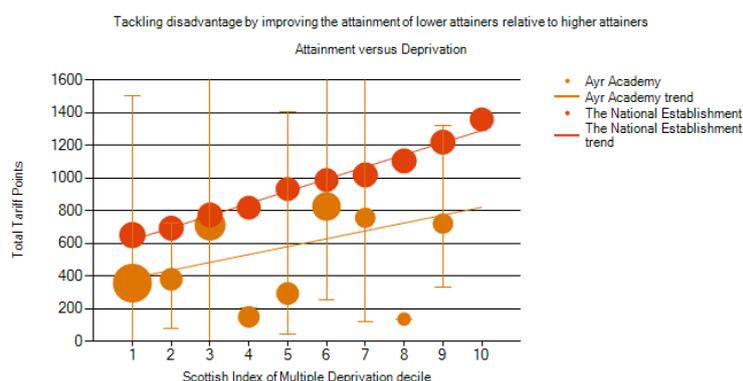
DisplayName	Year	% Level 4 Literacy and Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy and Numeracy
Ayr Academy	2020	80.82	38.36
The National Establishment	2020	89.57	68.53
Virtual Comparator	2020	74.25	43.7
Ayr Academy	2019	79.49	42.31
The National Establishment	2019	89.27	66.55
Virtual Comparator	2019	77.95	43.33
Ayr Academy	2018	82.72	44.44
The National Establishment	2018	89.08	67.11
Virtual Comparator	2018	79.75	56.3



Attainment over time

Performance Measure	2018	2019	2020
5+ awards @ Level 3 (end S4)	86	94	98
5+ awards @ Level 4 (end S4)	70	70	68
5+ awards @ Level 5 (end S4)	20	18	29
1+ awards @ Level 6 (end S5)	38	37	41
3+ awards @ Level 6 (end S5)	16	13	22
5+ awards @ Level 6 (end S5)	3	1	10
1+ awards @ Level 7 (end S6)	10	7	7

Attainment versus deprivation



Ayr Academy is a vibrant and exciting learning environment that is in an ideal position to build on key priorities and improve capacity for next session. We see our staff and partners as valuable resources and intend to build on and strengthen these to encourage further opportunities and positive relationships. We are very proud of our young people and their achievements. The 'school of' model now includes football, rugby, dance and music, which offers more choice and opportunities to our young people. This will be significantly enhanced by the extensive development of the sporting facilities surrounding us.

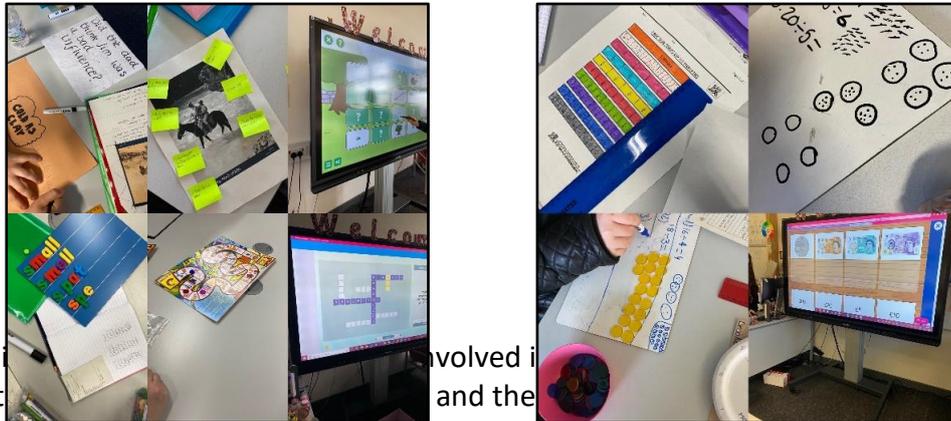


Our new building and change of location is attracting significantly more pupils to our school in S1 and we will be in a very good position to maintain numbers in the Senior Phase due to the changes we have made to curricular pathways. This will allow us to bring additional staff to Ayr Academy to join us on our journey to excellence. We have adapted the curriculum to better suit the needs of our learners and we are confident this will impact positively on attainment and achievement.

Standards and Qualities Ayr Academy



Wellbeing and nurture is an integral part of our business and we continue to develop this to support young people and their families. We have made clear and focused plans to ensure the transition between Primary school and Ayr Academy is efficient and seamless in preparing pupils for learning and developing. This happens through a DHT who is employed through the Attainment Challenge to focus on transition.



Staff have
opportunit

involved i
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Overall we are excited about the year ahead and how this will prove to be a positive and meaningful experience for our whole community.

More details on each of these priorities can be found in our improvement plan for session 2021-22 which can be found on our website.

To contact our parent council please email Ingrid McCormack on ayracademyparentcouncil@gmail.com

Laura Traynor

Head Teacher