# Balfron High School

## Standards and Quality Report 2014 - 2015

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Balfron High School is a six year non-denominational comprehensive school serving rural West Stirlingshire. Our associate primaries include Balfron, Buchlyvie, Drymen, Fintry, Killearn, Kippen, Milton of Buchanan and Strathblane. At Balfron High we work closely with primary colleagues to maintain effective and productive links that benefit our community and young people. The school has significant numbers of placing requests (approximately 10%) from outwith our catchment area and 42 pupils with a Free Meal Entitlement. We have a strong, positive partnership with Care Visions and 10 Looked After and Accommodated young people. The school roll at September 2014 was 897 with 72.5FTE teaching staff. Of these, ten were newly qualified teachers.

Our school aims focus firmly on putting young people first. Positive attitudes, strong values and relationships underpin the work we do. With the support of Stirling Council, our goal is to improve the life chances of all of our young people, working in partnership with parents, carers, employers and the wider community. We have a supportive Parent Council who provide a vehicle for strong and effective partnership with our parents.

The school is fully committed to meeting the needs of all young people and to providing a wide range of opportunities for all members of our school community. Supporting learning and learners are core responsibilities of all members of staff. Pupils and staff have a strong affiliation to our House system. There are three Houses – Campsie, Endrick and Lomond. Within the House system, Form Class Leaders ensure that young people are known very well. To support the transition to high school, all S1 pupils participate in a residential experience with their Form Class, Form Class Leader, House Principal Teacher Pupil Support and Head of House. Form Class Leaders provide effective, targeted support and guidance to young people throughout their time at Balfron High School.

The school has a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils in S1-3 follow a Broad General Education programme of study that reflects the principles and practices of Curriculum for Excellence. In S3, Masterclasses provide additional opportunities for depth and challenge, personalisation and choice. Option choices are now taken at the end of S3, S4 and S5. S4-6 pupils embark on National Qualification courses. Pupils in S4 study 6 subjects leading to National Qualifications. Young people may then reduce to five subjects as they enter S5. All pupils in S1-S6 follow a planned programme of Personal Social and Health Education.

The Senior Leadership Team consists of the Head Teacher and three substantive Depute Head Teachers. A fourth DHT was appointed in January 2015 to lead and manage the Developing The Young Workforce Agenda. The Leadership Team includes nine Principal Teachers of Learning and Teaching/Pastoral Care, five Principal Teachers of Pupil Support (3FTE) and one Principal Teacher Staged Intervention. The school has six Chartered Teachers. The Support for Learning Team includes 2.5 FTE of teaching staff and 84.8 hours of SLA/ASN support.

We are very proud of the wide range of opportunities for personal achievement in the school. More than 24 co-curricular activities are available throughout the year. We have a number of successful sports teams, dance groups, creative writing, debating, an orchestra, choir and a range of bands. We provide many opportunities for our young people to go on a variety of trips and expeditions locally and abroad.

Feedback, comments or suggestions on this report are most welcome.

Elaine Bannatyne, Head Teacher

**Our Priorities 2013-16**

- Continued improvement of Learning and Teaching
- Further develop the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence
- To promote an Ethos of Attainment, Achievement and Inclusion
- Improve the Leadership of Staff and Pupils
- Develop effective Partnerships and Involve Parents

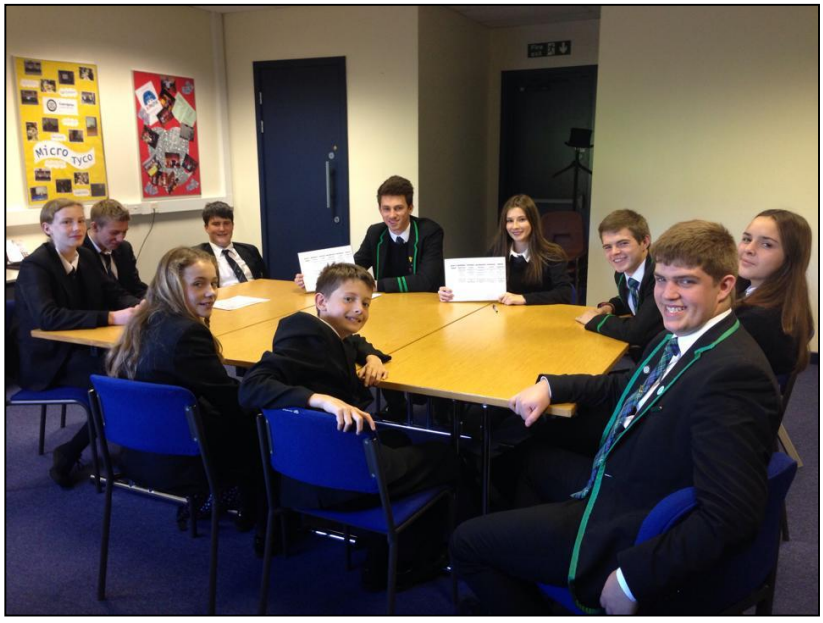
# *Balfron High School Standards and Quality Report 2015*

## What is a Standards and Quality Report?

This report provides an evaluation of the overall quality of educational provision within our school. It shows the positive aspects of our provision and highlights the areas which the school is planning to improve.

Each evaluation is supported by evidence from the past school session. This is generated in a planned and systematic way throughout the year. This session we have used a wide range of approaches including:-

- Classroom observations, formal, informal and our tri-learning programme
- Pupil, staff (teaching and support) and parental questionnaires
- Pupil focus groups
- Staff focus groups
- Parent focus groups
- Data analysis
- SQA results
- Discussions between Senior Management Team and Principal Teachers
- Review and improvements led by working groups of staff and pupils




*Left: Pupil focus group, led by Head Prefects on promoting Healthy Eating*

The school was last inspected by HMIe in September 2014. We were pleased at the outcome of the inspection. The school was judged 'very good' in every category. The report can be found on our school website or by following the link below:
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/BalfronHighSchoolStirling.asp

Information is shared frequently with parents. The school publishes Balfron Highlights regularly, where key aspects of the work of the school and pupils' experience and achievements are celebrated. These are available on our website along with other important information. The school posts updates daily on Twitter and is regularly featured in The Stirling Observer and the Milngavie and Bearsden Herald.

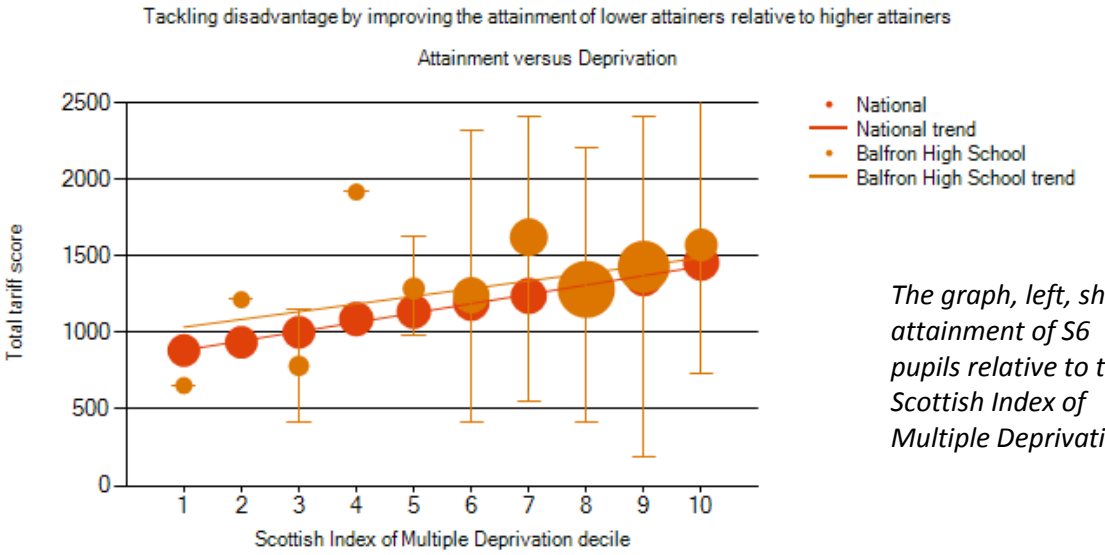
# How well do our children Learn and Achieve?

We are committed to raising attainment and achievement for all of our young people. We strive to provide high quality learning experiences at all times and in all contexts that reflect and support this. The school continues to perform well above the national average in every indicator. As there is no longer an appeal system, data is unlikely to change significantly. However, there was one priority marking review submitted which was successful. Of 25 general marking reviews, 20% were successful and resulted in an increase in the band that was awarded. These were all in social subjects or English. In 2014, 23 re-marks submitted; 22% were successful.

## S6 Pupil Attainment

| By end of S6 as % of S4 roll (accumulate) | 2012 post-appeal | 2013 post-appeal | 2014 | **2015** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 + Advanced Higher | 23% | 31% | 32% | **38%** |
| 2 + Advanced Higher | 12% | 13% | 19% | **21%** |
| 3 + Advanced Higher | 4% | 5% | 7% | **9%** |
| 5 + Higher | 42% | 49% | 54% | **52%** |
| 3 + Higher | 55% | 66% | 69% | **62%** |
| 1 + Higher | 68% | 82% | 85% | **77%** |

Attainment by the end of **S6** is strong relative to the national average. Seven S6 pupils gained three or more Advanced Highers. One pupil, Jonathan Short, achieved four Advanced Highers at Grade A. The number of pupils who attained at least one Advanced Higher continues to increase. On analysis it became evident that an increase in young people studying and sitting Advanced Highers had occurred at the expense of the same pupils increasing their portfolio of Higher qualifications. S6 pupils at Balfron High School performed in line with or better than the national trend relative to SIMD with the exception of one pupil in SIMD 1 and two in SIMD 3.




*The graph, left, shows attainment of S6 pupils relative to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.*

For session 2015-16, there will be an early review of pupil progress to ensure that young people are following the best possible combination of courses that will maximise opportunities for entry to FE/HE or Modern Apprenticeships.

Attainment measures may be attributed to increased stay on rates and a strong ethos in the senior school that encourages young people to be hardworking and ambitious. Young people with study periods are expected to contribute to leadership activities, groups and study in Home Area. This is monitored by the Leadership Team. Some S6 pupils undertook a flexible timetable where they worked towards National Qualifications while undertaking work experience to prepare them for transition from school.

Not captured in our statistics are two pupils who attained grade A awards in Higher Psychology. The pupils travelled to Forth Valley College one day per week for classes.

## S5 Pupil Attainment

**Cameron Wilson**
School Dux 2015

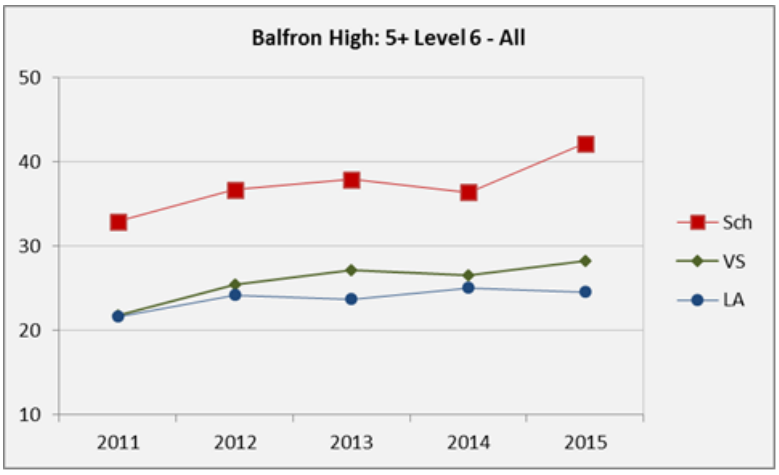
**Elaine Cameron**
Proxime Accessit 2015

| By end of S5 as % of S4 roll | 2012 (post appeal) | 2013 (post-appeal) | 2014 | **2015** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 + Higher | 33% | 34% | 31% | **38%** |
| 3 + Higher | 55% | 57% | 52% | **64%** |
| 1 + Higher | 78% | 81% | 70% | **81%** |

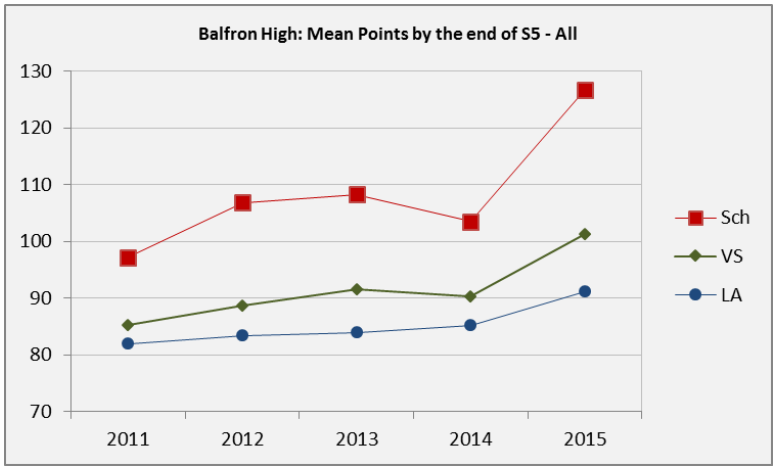
Attainment by the end of **S5** continues to show strength and is well above the national average. There was a strong focus on tracking progress and intervening quickly when young people were doing less well than expected. A Future Pathways event was delivered at the beginning of the session to highlight expectations and make links with study skills and partnerships with universities and colleges.

Pupils were given a 'free choice' of subjects for S5 in order to maximise the opportunity to study in areas of strength. Supported by Form Class Leaders, pupils were encouraged to consider UPS scores, subject combinations, levels of study and prior attainment in addition to aspiration. All S5 pupils sat the new Higher examinations, designed to progress from National 5 qualifications.

One S5 pupil, Hannah Merx, achieved six Highers at grade A in S5. The number of pupils gaining top grades continues to increase. Twenty-three S5 pupils achieved five grade A Higher awards (fifteen in 2014, nine in 2013). Thirteen S5 pupils achieved five Highers with four at grade A (nine in 2014, ten in 2013).



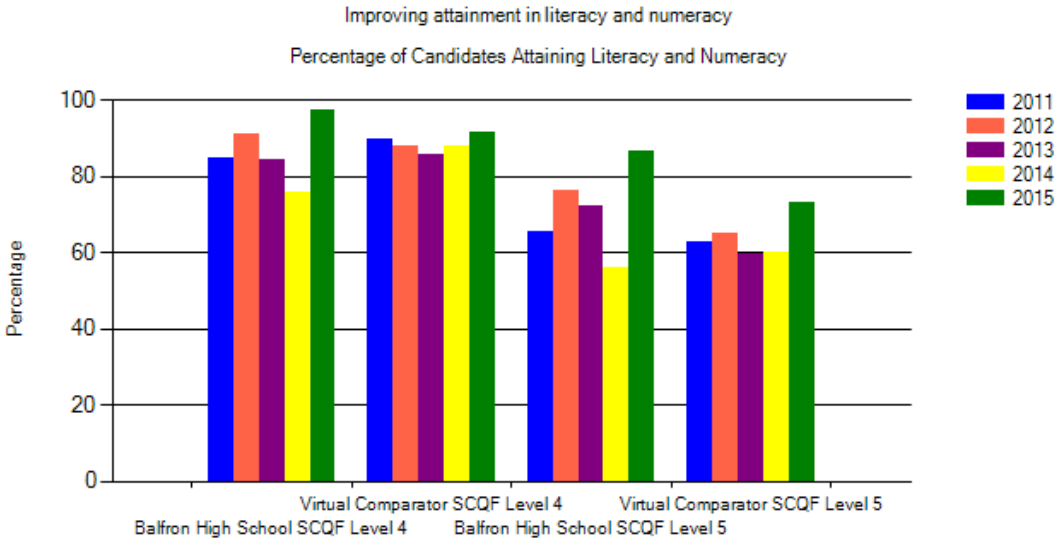

*The graph left (from Fyfe) shows the performance of S5 pupils (red) relative to the local authority and virtual comparator. While 38% of S5 pupils achieved five Highers with grades A-C, the graph shows the attainment of pupils, grade A-D.*




*The graph left (from Fyfe) shows the performance of S5 pupils (red) compared to the Local Authority and Virtual Comparator in terms of the mean tariff points.*

Early indications would suggest that pupils going from six National Qualifications to five in S5 has had a positive effect on the quality of the grades achieved and therefore the tariff points awarded. In this cohort, boys slightly outperformed girls. However, there is no significant trend that links attainment to gender.

## S5 Literacy & Numeracy levels




Performance in literacy and numeracy has improved in 2015 and is significantly greater than the national average and our virtual comparator. Lead Learners of Literacy and Numeracy have been driving whole school activities and training for all staff. All teaching staff contribute to the development of literacy and numeracy skills and have undertook moderation activities in literacy during one of the in-service days.

## S4 Pupil Attainment

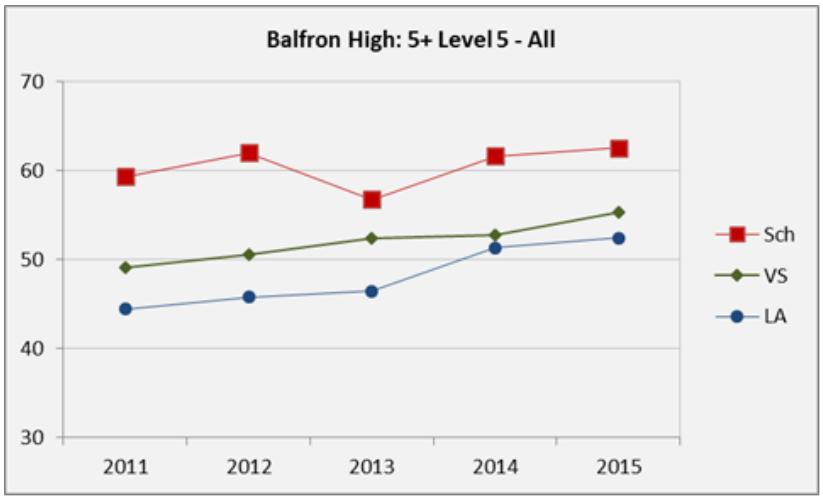
**Isla Harper and Emily Watson**

*Junior Dux and Proxime Accessit 2015*

This was the second presentation of the new National 3, 4 and 5 qualifications. There has been a steady increase in the number of pupils achieving top grades in all National 5 courses. 33 S4 pupils achieved As in all six National 5 Courses. Last session (2014), 24 achieved straight As and in 2013 there were 17.

| By end of S4 as % of S4 roll | 2012 (post appeal) | 2013 (post-appeal) | 2014 | **2015** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 + level 5 (**N5**/ credit/Int 2) | 58% | 52% | 56% | **60%** |
| 5 + level 4 (N4/ general/ Int 1) | 92% | 84% | 90% | **81%** |
| 2 + level 3 (N3/ access 3) | 100% | 97% | 99% | **99%** |

Our young people study six National Qualifications in S4. A particular target is to increase the number of young people who achieve 5 or more qualifications at all levels. Some young people, due to personal circumstances followed a flexible timetable with fewer than 5 courses. This was planned and agreed on an individual basis to meet the needs of individuals.



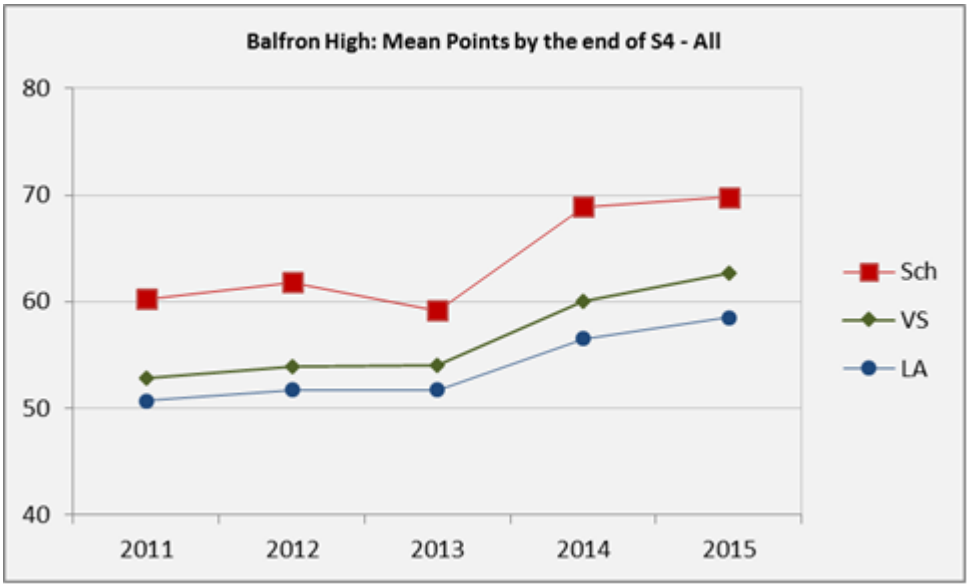

*The graph left (from Fyfe) shows the performance of S4 pupils (red) relative to the local authority and virtual comparator. While 60% of S5 pupils achieved five National 5 Awards with grades A-C, the graph shows the attainment of pupils, grade A-D.*

Although still well above the national average (last five years), data shows that following a dip in attainment in 2013 in the 5+ category, S4 has continued to rise. This was supported by our tracking, monitoring and interventions. Early indications suggest that the move to 6 National Qualifications in S4 has had a positive impact on S4 and S5 attainment.

**Scottish Studies Award**

In addition to their 6 National Qualifications, 11 pupils completed the SQA SCQF Level 5 Scottish Studies Award. To be eligible for this award, pupils had to be doing three of the following subjects: Business management, English, geography, history or modern studies.

The young people completed an investigation on a Scottish related topic. Plans for next session involve increasing the number of young people doing the investigation to secure the additional award.




It is important to note that the mean points per S4 pupil has continued to improve since the move to new National Qualifications in 2014. There has been an increase in the number of pupils in all subjects who have achieved A and B grades at National 5. There has been a strong focus on increasing the quality of passes at National 5 in order to best prepare students to progress successfully to Higher.

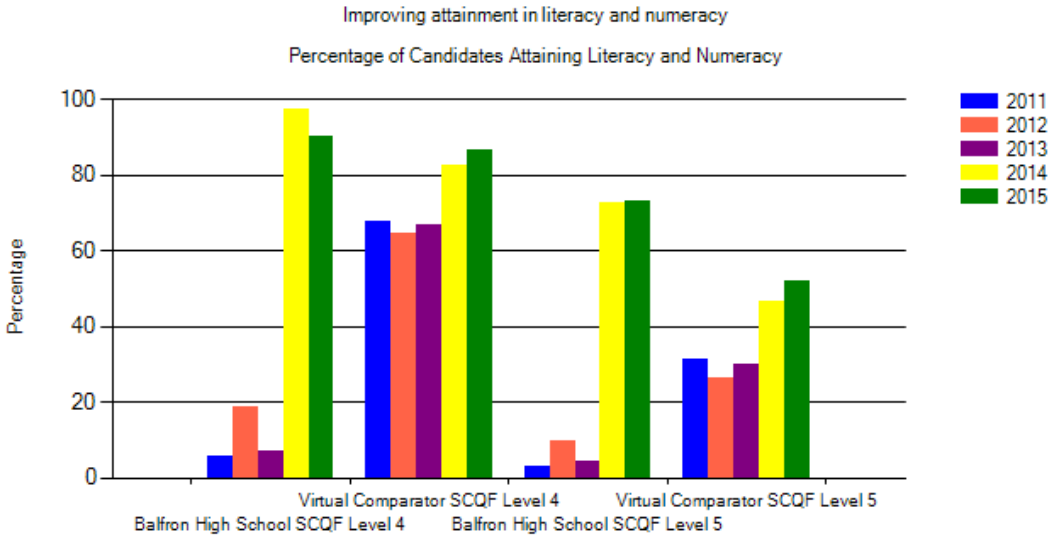
This year, unlike last, girls slightly outperformed boys in S4. However both male and female candidates significantly outperformed the virtual comparator and local authority.

**Early Presentations**

Two S4 pupils achieved higher Music at A, presented early. One S3 pupil achieved national 5 As in French and German, another S3 pupil achieved an A in National 5 French and a third S3 pupil achieved a B in N5 German.

**S4 Literacy & Numeracy levels**

Literacy and numeracy levels remain high relative to the national average and our virtual comparator at SCQF level 4 and level 5.

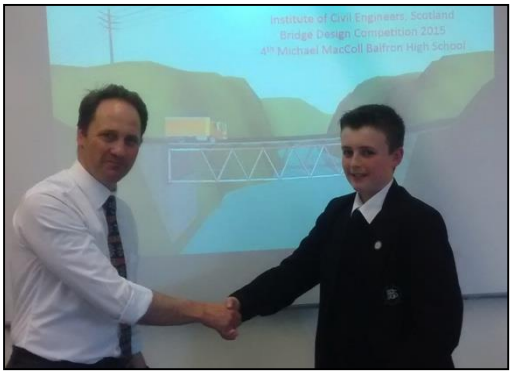


## Opportunities for Personal Achievement

There is a commitment to promoting and celebrating opportunities for personal achievement within the formal curriculum, inter-disciplinary learning, co-curricular activities and through our ethos. Links are made with partners in the community and beyond to design and deliver activities that genuinely develop the attributes associated with the four capacities (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors) in all of our young people. The picture above shows some of the S2 pupils who took part in a social influencing activity designed in partnership with the community to dispel myths about teenage antisocial behaviour. They researched behaviours, designed posters and created a video.

There is a high number of out of school hour activities in a range of disciplines available to pupils from S1-6. The number has continued to grow in session 2014-15 and is a huge strength of the school. These include creative writing, debating, astronomy, chess, orchestra, choir, ceilidh band, masterchef and many more. A new film club was established for S2 pupils. Young people have been developing their script writing skills while improving technological abilities to support film-making (above left).

Some of our creative writers graduated to enter the new Scottish Schools Young Writer of the Year competition. There were over 400 entries to the competition. Fergus Craig and Elaine Cameron (left) were short listed to the final 16 and presented with commendations for their entries at the Royal College of Surgeons. In January, Anisah McDonagh won the Aberdeen University Flash Fiction competition.




Young people representing Balfron High School entered a wide range of competitions throughout the session. Michael McColl (left) gained 4th place in the national bridge building competition run by the Institute of Civil Engineers.

The British Council awarded Balfron High a national Student Engagement Award for work done in eTwinning. Senior pupils participated in two projects where they worked with students from other European countries and were awarded eTwinning Quality Label certificates.

To promote science as a future pathway, pupils from S3 were targeted to attend Stirling University for four sessions within the School of Natural Sciences. Four S1 pupils (left) were chosen to represent Balfron High at the Salter's festival of Chemistry at the University of Glasgow.

We recognise out of school achievements of pupils. James Forrest, right, was awarded the James Fleming Piping Cup in June 2015. An S2 pupil, James achieved SCQF level 5 in bagpiping in June 2015.

Our S3 'Our Europe Team' made it through to the finals in Brussels where they made a video, using a range of languages, about the benefits of being a member of the EU. They won the overall competition.

Last session, twenty sports co-curricular activities were offered to pupils. Encouraging young people to participate, an annual Freshers' Week showcased the activities. Senior pupils and staff encouraged all young people, particularly S1 and S2, to participate. Partners from community clubs also attended the Freshers' Fayre. These included Tae kwon do, Active Stirling, Buchanan Castle Golf Club, Balfron Barracudas (swimming club), Balfron Wolverines (hockey) and Strathendrick rugby club.

| 2014-15 Sports Activites | No. signed up | School Roll | %age |
|---|---|---|---|
| S1 Girls Signed Up to Activities | 68 | 69 | 98% |
| S2 Girls Signed Up to Activities | 56 | 74 | 75% |
| S1 Boys Signed Up to Activities | 49 | 69 | 71% |
| S2 Boys Signed Up to Activities | 48 | 70 | 68% |
| Total | 221 | 282 | 78% |

Our link with Active Stirling affords the opportunity to offer after school clubs and coaching options. Active Stirling also provided work experience for some of our young people and a wide range of volunteering experiences. Working with active Stirling, S6 pupils completed a variety of National Governing Body courses.

In partnership with Active Stirling, two S4 pupils were chosen to take on the role of Young Ambassadors for Balfron High School. They worked hard to encourage and increase participation, were sports leaders and promoted the positive values of school sport.

School Sports teams go from strength to strength both in terms of the increasing number of participants and the number and success of teams representing the school. Notable successes include awards in the Scottish School Gymnastics Finals in March 2014. Our senior boys won the Stirling and Clackmannanshire basketball league. Our S1 Netball team were league winners. Isabel Gray was the Under 19 girls badminton champion in January 2015. Our S1/2 Cross Country team were 2nd overall and S3/4 3rd in the Forth Valley Schools competition. Sally Duncan placed 3rd individually in the S3/4 event, Rebecca Duncan was 2nd in the S5/6 girls category, Jamie Wastling was 2nd in the S3/4 boys category and Euan Brownlie was 3rd in the S5/6 boys category.

Our S2 Giant Heptathlon team made it through to the national finals where they secured a silver medal (top right).

In 2014-15 our Senior Boys (right) were Scottish Schools Athletics Relay Champions. Balfron High is the first state school to have its name engraved on the impressive trophy. In addition to this achievement, Ben McGuire was the Scottish Schools Long Jump Champion, Tom Chandler was 2nd. Lewis McGuire was the Scottish Schools High Jump Champion and Tom Chandler was Scottish Schools 60m Hurdles Champion.

We are committed to capturing the exceptional achievements of pupils. Our Internationalist Board displays the large number of pupils, current and former, who have competed for their country. Last session five additional pupils were identified and their names and activities added to the board.

There is a wide range of activities that promote personal achievement and many opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles. Supported by teaching staff, every S6 pupil opts into at least one Leadership Team in addition to the formal curriculum. These included Comenius, Events Management, Malawi Partnership, Water Aid, Fair Trade, Paired Reading, Charities Group, Eco Schools and School Dance Committee. Many S6 pupils became prefects, supporting the school during the school day and outwith in a variety of

events. Prefects are identifiable by braided blazers and tartan house ties. Most S6 pupils provided general support to junior classes throughout the year in their non-contact time. They also are encouraged to commit time to leading and supporting co-curricular activities.

**School Show – November 2015**

Our bi-annual school show took place in November with one third of the school (approx. 300 pupils) involved on stage, backstage, behind the scenes, with set design, front of house, costumes, hair and make-up. *All Shook Up* was a four night (and one matinee) sell out success! Notable was the large number of boys in the cast and crew. Young people feedback about their enjoyment and skill development in a wide range of contexts during the experience.

**School Concerts**

To celebrate achievement and provide opportunities for young people to showcase talent and build confidence, pupils are encouraged to perform at daily assemblies, special assemblies, celebrating success assemblies, to perform for guests and play and perform at the Christmas and summer concerts.

**Residential Learning Experiences**

A key feature of our transition process and commitment to developing positive relationships between S1 pupils in their form class and with their Form Class Leaders is the S1 residential. Almost all S1 pupils attended residential in Ardentinny, Hexham and Lochgoilhead. The young people spend one week at a centre with peers from their house group and related staff members.

At Balfron High School, we understand that there is considerable value added when young people and their teachers can take advantage of residential experiences that enhance learning in an exciting and meaningful context. Our young people feedback that these opportunities provide opportunities for significant personal achievement. To this end, we support these opportunities as they arise.

S6 Advanced Higher geography pupils travelled to Lochranza in Arran for four days to undertake and complete field work for their investigation work.

S5 and S6 pupils studying Business and Technology subjects in the senior phase took part in a trip to London where excursions to the Bank of England, Tate Modern and Science Museum provided inspiration for independent learning. A design workshop at the Design Museum supported and developed Design and Manufacture students' work.

S1-6 musicians took part in a residential trip to Lockerbie, where they rehearsed pieces for the summer concert and took part in demanding physical team building activities.

A small group of S6 pupils (right) sailed the Alba Endeavour, a Challenger 72ft yacht with the Ocean Youth Trust.
Boys and girls rugby squads took part in a trip to Northampton Saints Rugby club where they took part in training sessions, learned about nutrition and had the opportunity as mascots, to lead Northampton Saints onto the pitch for their game.

## International Residential Learning Experiences

In June 2014, 40 S4-6 pupils went on expedition to Peru. When in country, their citizenship skills were honed as they contributed to local projects, building mud bricks, teaching English and painting a local primary school. Some rest and relaxation tool them to Lake Titicaka and a physically challenging hike to Salkantay Mountain at Machu Picchu.

Other international trips have supported and enhanced the curriculum. More than 40, S3 pupils travelled to Switzerland for a geography field trip (below left). In May, 30 S2 and S3 pupils travelled to our partner school in Villeneuve d'Ascq, France (below right) to hone their linguistic skills and experience and learn first-hand about the local culture. The first part of the exchange saw Balfron pupils and their families host young people from our partner school in September before making the visit to France.

Twenty S4 and S5 pupils took part in a skiing trip to Masella in the Spanish Pyrenees.

Our partnership with Robert Laws School in Malawi is in its eight year. Fundraising provided money to bring The Headteacher, 2 further staff member and 6 pupils to Balfron High in September 2014. Parents and the local community played a vital role in supporting this project.

**Citizenship**

Charity work was a key feature of every Home Area and a strength of the school. Every Home Area identified a nominated charity. A wide range of activities led by pupils raised funds for charities including Robin House, Children In Need, Alzheimers, Wear it Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness, Mind, Mary's Meals and Strathendrick Hospice. The charities were selected in response to issues and insight into personal experiences of young people in our school community.

Christmas saw the annual donation of presents for disadvantaged children in Glasgow. Almost all pupils donated a wrapped gift. These were distributed through Glasgow City Council Social Work Department. Balfron High pupils also contributed more than 100 shoeboxes for disadvantaged children in Eastern Europe. Prior to the summer holidays, a drive to collect for the Stirling Food bank was led by S6 pupils. All young people were encouraged to bring something for the food bank on the last day of term.

**Promoting Achievement in music and performance**

Supported by our nine instrumental teachers, we delivered weekly orchestra rehearsals, a string group, fiddle group, jazz band, wind band and choir. Musical events where our young people performed last session included Christmas and summer concerts, ceilidhs, the Strathendrick Music and Piping Festivals, Celebrating Success Ceremonies, our Outstanding Achievement Award Ceremony in addition to many assemblies. Many of our young people are members of the Stirling Council Orchestra.

**Recognising and celebrating achievements**

We formally celebrated achievements and success at our Celebrating Success Award Ceremonies, the Outstanding Achievement Ceremony and the Sports Award Ceremony. Lesson by lesson pupils' achievements are recognised and recorded in our merit system. All pupils were encouraged to participate in inter-house activities and competitions. The achievements of pupils in the classroom, co-curricular and personal achievements were recognised and celebrated through our tannoy system, our website, newsletters and through our Twitter accounts.

More than 60 young people were recognised for their commitment to school sport and personal achievements in sport beyond school at our second Sports Award Ceremony in June. We were delighted that Dan Nuttall and Robbie Stewart could attend and provide inspirational keynote speeches. Balfron High was runner up to Larbert High School in the Sunday Mail SportScotland School of the Year awards 2014.

Balfron High was among the first Scottish Secondary Schools to achieve the SportScotland Gold Sport Award in April 2015. 52% of young people regularly take part in sports clubs outside formal PE time. The award recognises the school's quality and quantity of physical activity within and outwith the curriculum.

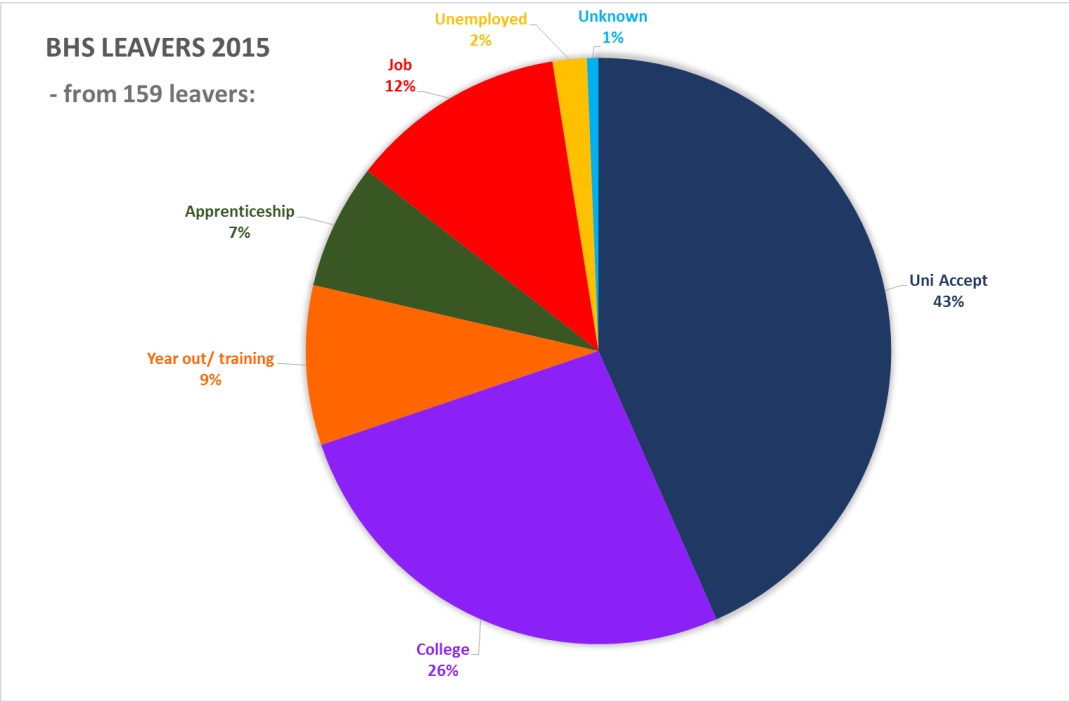
**Stay on rates**
Most young people stay on beyond school leaving age. There has been a trend of higher stay on rates relative to the local authority and national average at Balfron High.

**Leavers Destinations**

There is strong support for young people as they approach the point of leaving Balfron High School. Key elements of this were:

- Early identification of young people in danger of leaving school and not going to further education, employment or training. These pupils were identified early in S4/5 and discussed regularly at the School Liaison group (SLG)
- Key planning meetings to support these young people took place and included representatives from the school and Skills Development Scotland (SDS).
- Strong support for young people preparing job applications, UCAS forms and college applications by Form Class Leaders, PTs L&T/Pastoral Care, the Pupil Support Team and our SDS advisor.
- A commitment by our SDS advisor to individually support young people at their point of need from the beginning of S4.
- Key enhancement projects, including ACE and Positive Changes, were utilised to ensure that young people are given intensive support where required.
- The successful use of established partnerships with social work colleagues and Youth Services for those young people with Additional Support Needs leaving school.
- Tracking and monitoring by Form Class Leaders and PTs Pupil Support of individual young people to their point of leaving, ensured that whatever support or onward referral was made.

Last session (2014-2015), destination figures of all pupils in June 2014 have been identified as follows:



| Leavers Dest | ALL S4-6 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Balfron HS % | VC % | Stirling % | National% |
| 2009/10 | 92.64 | 93.31 | 86 | 87.18 |
| 2010/11 | 93.17 | 94.84 | 88.27 | 89.12 |
| 2011/12 | 93.57 | 94.79 | 88.64 | 90.12 |
| 2012/13 | 94.22 | 94.97 | 89.89 | 91.7 |
| 2013/14 | 94.38 | 95.5 | 92.06 | 92.57 |

While the percentage of pupils with positive destinations is higher than the Local Authority and National figures, a focus for next session is to improve in line with our virtual comparator. The formal figures for 2015-16 will be available for analysis in February 2016.

**Attendance**

Attendance at Balfron High remains well above the national average. We have a strong commitment to ensuring maximum attendance of pupils in all classes and to supporting those young people and families where there are difficulties. Key elements of this provision were:

- The successful employment of a text alert system to ensure that parents were aware of absences
- Quick response by the Form Class Leaders and teaching staff to suspected truancy or when pupils are off for a longer period of time without explanation
- Weekly House meetings, led by DHT, with PTs Home Area, Pupil Support and Staged Intervention. Patterns or concerns were quickly picked up and intervention agreed, minuted and implemented.
- Where genuine illnesses provided a barrier to attendance, flexible arrangements were made and agreed with parents that met the needs of the young person. These were reviewed on a regular basis. The school worked in partnership with health professionals to support individual pupils.

**Attendance Rates**

| Session | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Session 2010/11 | 92.1 % |
| Session 2011/12 | 94.3% |
| Session 2012/13 | 93.33% |
| Session 2013/14 | 92.66% |
| Session 2014/15 | 94.38% |

In 2014-15, some absences can be attributed as follows:

- Some flexible arrangements due to illness
- Family holidays taken in terms time

There was an increase in S6 attendance in 2014-15 compared to 2013-14. This contributed to the overall improvement.

## Exclusions

Balfron High School is an inclusive and supportive environment. We believe in working with pupils and parents in order to ensure that exclusions from school are a last resort. Our focus is on early intervention, promoting positive behaviour and restorative practices. We pride ourselves in positive, healthy professional relationships between all pupils and staff. Key elements of our work in this area are:

- A focus on the individual needs of our young people
- A commitment to resolving conflict, solution focused approaches, restoring relationships and building resilience
- Strong partnership working
- Use of Additional Support Needs planning to support young people and parents and to provide classroom teachers with strategies to assist in dealing with the most challenging behaviour
- The use of a merit system to help us to celebrate the success of the young people (the majority) who consistently cooperate with the school and work hard every day

### Exclusion Incidents

There were 19 incidents resulting in exclusion from the school in 2014-15, representing a total of 40 days lost. 17 young people account for this figure. Two of these were excluded more than once.

Behaviour data is reviewed and analysed on a monthly basis. Young people are identified every 4-6 weeks for intervention by Form Class Leaders, PTs and DHTs following the analysis.

# How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

## Transition

In partnership with Active Stirling, we offered 134 sporting Co-Curricular transition activities, where P7 pupils joined Balfron High pupils and staff. More than 80 young people from primary 7 took part in activities with S1 pupils in our Physical Education department after school between March and May 2014 . The activities were supported by our S3 Masterclass Sports Leaders and Senior Sports Leaders.

Supporting the transition process, a successful programme in Literacy, Numeracy and Modern Languages has been developed by our Lead Learners, and put in place across the cluster. With a focus on research skills, numeracy targets and individual talk, positive evaluations have been fed back by primary and secondary colleagues. As a Learning Community we focused on group talk to contribute to the improvement of Literacy. Every English teacher has visited at least one of our associated primary schools to support Literacy across learning and the Literacy Transition Project. New S1 pupils will give a presentation to peers in their class when they arrive in August.

P7 visit the library at Balfron High as part of the transition process (above). They meet with member of the English team and take part in literacy based activities.

Through our Numeracy Lead Learner we have built strong links with all primary colleagues to develop and share practice in the delivery of Numeracy. Our Maths team have linked closely with primary colleagues at Balfron Primary School. Frequent visits to all associated Primary Schools by Lead Learner Numeracy have promoted a strong partnership. Resources were created to facilitate moderation, these have been shared across the cluster. A Numeracy In-service morning was held in February to promote the delivery of Numeracy across the Balfron Learning Community.

Our Modern Languages Team liaise regularly with our primary colleagues and have worked on a plan for delivering French in the primary schools that provides a coherent and progressive pathway to S1 French experiences. An S3 masterclass saw S3 pupils lead and support primary teachers in the delivery of French.

A bespoke programme of enhanced transition was planned and delivered to young people with Additional Support Needs.

Having implemented the GLOW e-portfolio for S3 pupils, our Lead Learner ICT will link with primary colleagues to progress the work done with S3 profiling with a view to rolling out Profiles from S1.

**Curriculum**

The school operates on 30 periods per week plus 20 minutes form class time every morning. There are no more than twenty pupils in a form class. The relationship between Form Class Leaders and their pupils is central to the success of our pupil support system. Staff are committed to fulfilling this role. The same Form Class Leader stays with pupils throughout their time at Balfron High where possible. To build positive relationships and maximise opportunities for contact, pupils in S1 have their form class leader for PSE and the subject that teacher delivers. Form Class Leaders are the first point of contact between home and school. They track and monitor pupils and link with colleagues to support pupils on stage 0 and stage 1 of the staged intervention framework.

All pupils in S1-3 follow a Broad General Education covering 8 curricular areas. These include Expressive Arts, Health and Wellbeing, Languages, Mathematics, Religious and Moral Education, Sciences, Social Subjects and Technologies.

In Social Subjects S1 pupils follow a common course with a single teacher delivery. In S2 there is personalisation and choice in terms of topics within a progressive skills (Enquiry Skills) based course. All S3 pupils completed a taster course in German and Spanish in addition to studying French.

Subjects were allocated periods and delivered as follows:

| Subject | S1 | S2 | S3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| English | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Maths | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| French | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Social Subjects | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| Sciences | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Physical Education | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Religious Education | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Music | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Technology | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Art | 2 | 2 * | 2 * |
| Health and Wellbeing | 2 | 2 ** | 2 ** |
| PSE | 1 * | 1 | 1 |
| Business Enterprise/ Technical | 1 ** | 1 | 1 |

* for 26 weeks
** for 13 weeks

As we move towards the 33 period week model, the curriculum is under review.

## S3 Masterclasses

S3 Masterclasses contributed to the development of skills for learning, life and work and provided challenge and depth to young people in a real life context. The aim of each masterclass was to further develop each of the four capacities in our young people through innovative and challenging learning experiences that added depth and challenge to learning.

Masterclasses were delivered to S3 pupils between January and June. Pupils chose four from the options below. Two classes are delivered for two periods each per week for 8 weeks. Masterclasses offered in 14-15 ranged from Aircraft Flight to Animal Behaviour (above pictures). Pupils were given a free choice and asked to choose in order of preference. 100% of pupils were successful in getting all 4 of the 6 Masterclasses that they requested.

Teacher questionnaires showed a high degree of agreement, demonstrating that in the majority of Masterclasses the aims had been achieved. Examples of very high concordance include Financing your Future and Early Years Childcare, while the Debating and Sports Science Masterclasses exceeded expectations. The National Parks Masterclass provided the opportunity for some young people to gain accreditation for their learning. 34 pupils achieved the John Muir Award.

Pupils made choices for national qualifications towards the end of S3. In addition to English and Maths, pupils were given a 'free choice' of subjects to study in S4. This meant that there were more opportunities to meet course requests. 96% pupils were given their first choice.

## Vocational opportunities

21 pupils attended Forth Valley College in 2014-15 one day per week. There had been 23 the previous session and 9 in 2012-13. Courses included Creative Industries, Beauty, Construction, Hospitality, Sound Production, Early Education and Higher Psychology.

**Pupil attainment at Forth Valley College**

| Course | Number of pupils | Outcome |
|---|---|---|
| SfW Construction | 1 | Pass |
| Create and Image Hair & Beauty | 1 | Merit |
| Creative Industries N5 | 7 | 4 passes |
| Early Education & Childcare N4 | 2 | 2 passes |
| Higher Psychology | 2 | 2 passes both grade A |
| Playwork and Childcare | 1 | Pass |
| Sound Production: Recording | 7 | 7 passes |

We were successful in bidding for funding from Education Scotland to build a polytunnel on campus. The polytunnel (left) will allow us to develop and design bespoke vocational courses for young people. The project has afforded us the opportunity to build strong partnerships with colleagues from the local rural community.

Plans are in place to deliver a ConneXions course in 2015-16 that will support numeracy awards and make connections between Home Economics, Maths, Biology and Support for Learning. It will be invaluable to have this resource fully functioning on campus.

**Developing the Young Workforce**

Our young people collaborated with business partners from the local community to investigate the keys skills that are required to be successful in the work force. The skills identified will be shared with staff and pupils in 2015-16 with a view to developing them to a high level.

There has been an increase in partnership working with colleagues from the business sector who have supported curricular links, provided input to events and helped deliver mock interviews and work experience for young people.

**Wider achievements**

All S4 pupils have the opportunity to take part in Work Experience. Last session almost all successfully completed the experience. Plans to identify accreditation for work experience will be instigated in 2015-16.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is run in partnership with a group of current and former parents who link regularly with our teacher representative. This session 63 S3 pupils embarked on the Bronze Award and 20 pupils, the Silver Award. This is an increase in the number of pupils starting the silver award from last session (7 pupils more). It was recognised that the completion rate was fewer than hoped due to skills not being completed and entered on My DofE. Plans are in place to change the order of the programme to increase the number of overall awards.

**Health and Wellbeing**

We recognise the connection between health and well being and achievement and are committed to ensuring that our young people are supported to make good choices that will impact the quality of their lives.

The Health team planned and delivered a Health and Wellbeing course to all S1 pupils. The course consists of four blocks – Heart Start; Sky Sports Living for Sport; Sport and the Media; Commonwealth Games, Glasgow 2014. To support the Sport in the Media course, Ian Morrison, Chief Rugby journalist for the Herald and former rugby internationalist, visited all S1 classes.

Home Economics was delivered to all pupils in the BGE. PE was delivered in the core up to and including S4. There was high uptake of S5 and 6 pupils into certificated PE in the senior school.

PSE was managed by our 5 PTs Pupil Support. In S1-4 pupils had a planned period of PSE delivered by their Form Class Leader (S1-3) with sexual health supported by PTs PS. Training was provided for Form Class Leaders through meetings. S5/6 PSE was delivered through

inserts and ran in partnership with outside agencies including LGBT, Rape Crisis, Youth Services and the Police. A health day was run for S6 pupils with partners as part of their entitlement. Activities were selected in response to pupil feedback and key community priorities included yoga, pilates, healthy eating, suicide prevention, drug and alcohol awareness and input from LGBT.

**Enterprise & Employability**

In addition to a block of Business Enterprise and promoting global citizenship, all S1 pupils took part in Microtyco in Form Class time last session. Coordinated by Lead Learner Enterprise, this was well supported by S1 Form Class Leaders.

Almost all S4 pupils took part in a successful work experience. An S2 Future Pathways and S5/6 Careers event was successfully delivered. Partners from the world of work, universities and colleges attended offering information, advice and support to young people. There was a discrete Enterprise and Employability class in S5/6. These pupils set up and took part in a work experience in January/ February 2014.

## Personal Support

Personal support at Balfron High is a strength of the school. It is founded on positive relationships and a commitment by staff to deliver the Form Class Leader role to a high standard. All young people are known well by their Form Class Leader who delivers universal and targeted support to those at stage 0 and stage 1 of staged intervention. Our five PTs Pupil Support and PT Staged intervention had responsibility for pupils on stage 2 and stage 3/ 4 respectively. They met regularly with pupils in their caseloads and coordinated annual reviews with parents and outside agencies where targets were set and reviewed. S6 pupils contributed in each House to S1 activities in Form Class time.

Through House meetings and staged intervention, PTs Pupil Support identified and provided targeted support to young people on Stage 2 in partnership with colleagues, parents and partner agencies. PT Staged intervention provided targeted support for young people on stage 3 and 4. SQA exam analysis shows that the interventions and support put in place for many of these pupils contributed to a significant increase in grade from prelim to final exam.

## Additional Support Needs

### Pupils on staged intervention 2014-15

The school is well supported by our Support for Learning Team of 2.5 classroom teachers and 7 Support for Learning/ SEN Assistants.

In 2014-15 approximately 276 young people had recorded additional support needs covering all aspects of potential barriers to learning. Of this group, 43 required additional support planning to detail and coordinate the support required.

Within that total of 276 young people with Additional Support Needs on staged intervention, in 2014-15 there were 10 pupils who were Looked After and Accommodated.

| | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. S4 pupils | 23 | 17 | 11 | 0 | 51 |
| No of S5 Pupils | 24 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 38 |
| No of S6 Pupils | 20 | 17 | 5 | 0 | 42 |

Of the young people in the senior phase (S4-6), **131** were on staged intervention.

There were no pupils in 2014-15 requiring a Coordinated Support Plan (CSP).

7 young people have English as an Additional Language and there are 14 young people who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. There are also 68 young people who have dyslexia.

As well as supporting all young people with Additional Support Needs, the team also:

- coordinated a multi-sensory phonics-based ready programme for pupils mainly in S1 and S2, and in S3 in exceptional circumstances
- provided the 'Staged Intervention File' with individual pupil detail and strategies for staff to support those young people
- provided intensive class based support for 114 young people: 20 in S1, 22 in S2, 27 in S3, 34 in S4, 6 in S5 and 5 in S6
- provided and coordinated readers and scribes for all prelims and SQA exams for pupils who have this entitlement. In 14-15, 86 pupils benefited from arrangements
- provided lunchtime and interval support for vulnerable pupils, also offering the opportunity to join a lunchtime film club
- offered extensive support, advice and consultation for all teaching staff on supporting pupils with Additional Support Needs
- delivered CPL to staff on a range of barriers to learning/ASN

- raised awareness of dyslexia during dyslexia awareness week
- updated the school dyslexia policy
- organised visits for selected pupils to local businesses to support transition and confidence building
- completed training for Text-help: Read and Write Gold, a software package to support pupils with reading and writing difficulties
- provided current research findings on ASN topics to all staff as and when they became available
- carried out extensive and thorough assessment for dyslexia and dyscalculia, as per Stirling Council policy
- provided one-to-one support from support for learning teachers for 15 pupils
- designed and piloted a joint project with targeted pupils in partnership with Stirling Low Carbon Future and local businesses and farms.

## Partnership Working

In addition to extensive links through curricular areas, the school works in partnership with a team of extended professionals:

- Psychological services
- Social Care
- CAMHS
- Speech & Language Therapist
- School Nurse
- Youth Services
- Inclusion Support Worker
- Community Police Officer
- Young Carers
- Positive Changes
- Barnardo's
- Fire and Rescue
- Art Link
- LGBT
- Care Visions
- SEBN Inclusion Support
- Skills Development Scotland
- Allied Health Professionals eg occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, dietetics
- ASN Outreach
- Robin House
- Children's Reporter
- Freagarroch (Drug & alcohol support)
- Action in Mind (Mental Health)
- Music therapy
- Central Scotland Rape Crisis

## Monitoring and Tracking

**Attainment Data**

- We have devised a robust system for collected attainment data on S4 – S6 to allow us to monitor and track progress across all subjects. We have been able to identify our key groups and plan interventions at weekly house meetings.
- In Literacy and Numeracy we received standardised benchmarking data INCAS. A DHT has interpreted data and shared with maths colleagues.

- All teaching staff used on track/off track data at key points in 2014-15 with young people in the senior phase. This was linked to information sharing with parents and interventions as appropriate.
- Monitoring and Tracking of pupils' effort/ behaviour/ homework was completed for all pupils on a monthly basis last session.

**Interventions**

- **Curricular Support** - Increased programme of support not just with a focus on those under performing but for those who could improve grades/levels. Increased participation by pupils and staff (Class teachers and Form Class Leaders)
- **Live N Learn** – Study skills workshops were delivered to all S4 and 5 pupils in October. Evaluations showed that pupils felt that the sessions were useful practically and motivational.
- **Supported Study** – There is no budget to fund Supported Study. However staff continue to regularly give up lunchtimes and after school sessions to provide supported study sessions to group and individuals.
- **Contact with Parents** – Attainment Alert Letters were sent to parents of all pupils in danger of underachieving. Form Class leaders are encouraged to share all information at early staged with parents and carers.

# How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

## Continuous Professional Learning

All teaching staff are involved in Continuing Professional Learning throughout their teaching career and all staff also have an entitlement to a Professional Review and Development interview every year at which plans are drawn up to help ensure that every teacher is supported in their professional development. Balfron High staff have been involved in running in-school CPL opportunities for their fellow teachers. Feedback from staff highlights that they appreciate opportunities to share practice and ideas.

A member from every curricular area in each team, attends regular network meetings coordinated by Stirling Council.

1 member of the Science Team attended SSERC courses. The team benefited from resources and additional funding given on completion. These were used to support new experiments in the Broad General Education courses.

Bringing an expertise in understanding standards, many teaching staff are SQA markers, verifiers and assessors including recently appointed nominees

In house Assessment CPL ran for probationers, new staff and as a refresher for experienced teachers. Two sessions ran and between sessions, staff undertook opportunities to integrate AifL strategies.

Many staff have also attended a variety of in-service courses run by Stirling Council and other outside bodies. As a school we see the impact that these learning opportunities are giving to our staff and in turn our pupils. A programme of twilights and lunchtime workshops are run for probationers and new staff throughout the year.

**Learning and Teaching**

Teachers and support staff in the school view learning and teaching as critical, core business and are striving to deliver the highest standards.

There has been a focus on consistency across the school in terms of learning and teaching. Evidence from observed lessons, Team open doors observations, teacher questionnaires and parental feedback highlighted that a focus on meeting learning needs would lead to further improvement.

A continued focus was on cooperative learning. Almost all staff have now been trained or refreshed in the last two sessions. CPL sessions were run at Balfron High in partnership with Stonelaw High School, Bearsden Academy and McLaren High School (above).

**Quality Assurance**

**Classroom Observations**
2014-15 continued to focus on QI 5.3 Meeting Learning Needs. All staff took part in these visits. SMT and PTs Learning and Teaching/Pastoral Care visit teachers in their Home Area. All visits are written up and followed up with a professional dialogue. Where concerns arose, support was put in place and further visits took place. Each Principal Teacher saw every member of their team at least once, wrote up the lesson and fed back. Informal peer visits take place in every team. Dr Appelquist, DHT, analysed formal feedback and highlighted patterns of assessment for learning and cooperative learning.

**Open Doors Visits**
From February, the Head Teacher embarked on open doors observations in English, Maths, Modern Languages, Physical Education, Science and Social Subjects home areas. 56 episodes of learning were observed with a focus on 5.3, Meeting Learning Needs. Evidence from lessons was recorded and feedback given to each team.

**Questionnaires**
In May 2015 all pupils, all parents, teaching staff and support staff were invited to give feedback to the Head Teacher through questionnaires on Survey Monkey. There were 202 responses from pupils, 112 responses from parents/carers, 62 from teachers, and 11 from support staff. This was significantly less of a return compared to the last two session.

Pupil questionnaires were analysed by the Head Teacher and Head Prefects. Key themes were identified and fed back to pupils at year group assemblies. The action points identified by the pupils were shared with staff (and pupils at subsequent assemblies) and influenced the improvement plan for 2014-15.

The Head Teacher fed back on parental responses to the parent council. Themes were identified and strategies for improvement discussed. Priorities have been shared in the Highlights newsletter.

Data from **all** questionnaires, and subsequent areas for improvement were shared with the Leadership Team. Data was compared with comparator schools. The issues raised and identify strategies and tasks that would support improvement. These have been included in the School Improvement Plan 2014-15.

Support Staff responses were shared and discussed with the School Resources Officer. All data from questionnaires and subsequent action is accessible on the school website.

Pupils are regularly asked for views on their experience in all subjects and other aspects of school life.

**Pupil Voice & Focus Groups**
Pupil council was run by Head Prefects, supported by the Senior Management Team. The focus was identified from the responses to the pupil questionnaire in May 2014.

Each Team is using 'You said, We Did' posters to display updated feedback to pupils.

In partnership with Bellrock, a pupil focus group worked with the design team to choose colours and design of the swimming pool changing area. This was upgraded for pupils returning for 2014-15.

**Sampling Parental Views**
In addition to the questionnaire on Survey Monkey, all parents were given surveys at Parents Meetings last session to sample the quality of their experience. Form Class leaders followed up any issues raised about the progress of individual pupils and fed back to parents.

Parents were invited to attend S1, 2, 3 and 4 Form Class interviews. Feedback from evaluations showed that all parents found the meeting very useful and supportive.

Parents are invited to attend an open drop-in session with the Head Teacher every 4-6 weeks. On average 6 parents attend each session.

**Behaviour & Discipline Data**
Patterns in behaviour and discipline data are highlighted and interventions agreed at House meetings on a weekly basis. Follow up is reviewed. Merit and demerit data is reviewed and shared with all staff every 6 weeks. Interventions are agreed in line with the updated promoting positive behaviour policy. Communication with parents on merit data was prioritised. Rewards for positive behaviour were highlighted and celebrated at termly assemblies.

# Ethos

**Values**

The school's values of fairness, honesty, respect, responsibility and trust are becoming more embedded and regularly referred to by staff. The school badge was amended to include the values. Bins with the updated badge are in the school campus and in the local community. Young people and staff have the opportunity to wear an enamel school badge. Pupils can earn the badge by being awarded merits or by doing something outstanding for the school.

**Uniform**

Almost all young people wear full uniform every day. Where this is not the case, Form Class Leaders, PTs and DHTs are intervening early with parents to resolve this. There was focus on improving uniform by encouraging shirts, ties, tailored skirts and trousers. The instances of pupils wearing non-uniform items like hoodies, jeans and trainers has decreased. Following a full consultation and opportunities for pupils to comment on styles, blazers were successfully introduced for all pupils in August 2013 and remain a core item of the school uniform.

**Supervision**

Interval and lunchtime supervision by SLT in addition to SLAs has proved to be highly effective. Prefects from each Home Area help supervise at interval and lunchtimes. Bellrock and SLAs report that litter and instances of poor behaviour have reduced.

## Cleanest High School Award

Balfron High won the Stirling Council cleanest high school award in January 2015. This is a competition run by Stirling Council to encourage young people to use the bins in the local community. Councillor Danny Gibson made the presentation to the pupils (left).

**Partnership with Bellrock**

The school has a strong and positive partnership with the facilities management team at Bellrock. They provide high quality services to the school. Many employees are members of the community and invest positively in the school. The partnership with young people and staff is strong. Collaboration on projects that involve upgrade and improvement is a key feature. The recent project to improve the PE changing rooms was shortlisted in the category of 'Best operational Project 2015' at the Partnership Awards 2015 in London. Our young people provided a strong voice in working with Bellrock colleagues in the design of the changing rooms.

**Rights Respecting School**

The first stage of the Rights Respecting School journey took place in 2014-15. Senior pupils undertook positions as ambassadors and worked with Form Classes to identify the areas of the charter that the school would focus on. An S2 social enterprise activity saw money raised going to UNICEF.

**Pupil Leadership**

We have been working hard to increase the number of opportunities for young people to take leadership responsibility in the school. One example from 2014-15 is the appointment of Junior House Captains. Their role is to help increase participation in inter-house activities. The competition was tightly fought throughout the year and in a range of activities including sport, maths, lip syncing and many other innovative activities. Campsie won the House Cup in 2015.

## How do we ensure equality and inclusion and promote diversity across the establishment?

Balfron High has a positive ethos and community spirit built on strong, positive relationships and focussed on individual needs. The pastoral care and restorative approaches used in the school promote a climate where all are valued. All staff strive to treat pupils fairly and recognise that individual needs differ.

Balfron High is a very inclusive school with a strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity. Led by Principal Teachers and senior pupils, each home area carried out charity work relevant to the young people in the house.

A regular programme of assemblies took place in 2014-15. These are led by the Head Teacher, Depute Head Teachers, Head Prefects and House Captains (senior and junior).

At the beginning of each session, all staff have training/updates on equality and inclusion on the first in-service day.

Links with the local church and parents in the community have meant that Balfron High is regularly approached to provide a short experience of the curriculum to international pupils from other countries at the school.

Pupils at risk of missing out are identified early through transition information or partnership working. Their progress tracked and monitored through House meetings and staged intervention. High quality information is shared and interventions planned and reviewed.

The school promotes an understanding of equality issues through our ethos, assemblies, PSE, RMPS and Modern Studies.