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Our School

Balfron High School is a high achieving secondary school with a roll of 894 pupils and 66.6FTE teaching staff (including 9 probationers) and a number of support staff. We are located in rural West Stirlingshire, and work closely and productively with our seven associated primary schools situated in the satellite villages of Balfron, Buchlyvie, Drymen, Fintry, Killearn, Kippen and Strathblane.

The Senior Leadership Team consists of the Head Teacher and three Depute Head Teachers. Each DHT leads one of our three Houses - Campsie, Endrick & Lomond. The extended Leadership Team has seven curricular Principal Teachers and six Principal Teachers with Pastoral/ASN responsibility. In 2022-23, to support our improvement priorities, we also had Project Leads with responsibility for Pedagogy, DYW, PEF & Equity, Family Learning, Targeted Support.

The school offers a broad and balanced <u>curriculum</u>. From S1, pupils follow a programme of study that reflects the principles of <u>Curriculum for Excellence</u>. We continue to review and develop the experiences of young people in the Broad General Education (S1-3) drawing on experiences and outcomes from a range of curricular areas. Option choices are taken annually from the end of S2. Pupils in S3 study 11 subjects, 9 of which are elective specialisation courses. In S4 pupils narrow to a maximum of 7 certificated subjects. Using data and feedback, this will be under review during session 2023-24.

We have a strong and high profile Parent Council who provide an effective and supportive vehicle for partnerships with parents and carers. We have a strong group of partners who support the school community part-time. These include colleagues from Stirling Council's ASN outreach team, a Youth Worker, Campus Police Officer and Educational Psychologist. We have excellent support from our Skills Development Scotland Careers Officer who is based in the school and very much part of our team.

Our Context

Most of our young people live in <u>SIMD</u> areas 7-9. Following a dip, we have recorded an increase in placing requests from West Dunbartonshire in the last few sessions. We have approximately 4% pupils in receipt of FME. 36% of our young people have a recorded Additional Support Need. A core feature of our purpose is to work together to provide a warm, inclusive ethos for all where everybody has opportunities, and is supported, to find their thing. Parents, carers and partners are invited to review the full range of most up to date data along with our school profile provided by Education Scotland on <u>Parent Zone</u>.



Vision



In the most challenging of times, it is particularly important that we provide a **caring**, **inclusive** and **high achieving** school environment where young people have a **safe**, **positive** and **meaningful experience**. We have **high expectations** and are ambitious for all of our young people. We understand that young people and staff will do best when equipped with the **resilience** and **mind-set** to **contribute confidently** and **compassionately** in this modern, ever changing world. We recognise that the right blend of **knowledge**, **skills**, **attributes and qualifications** will provide the foundations for our young people to succeed in life beyond school.

Values



Our values were reviewed in 2023-23. Parents, pupils and staff were surveyed. Overall, there was an acknowledgement my most that our school values are fit for purpose and reflective of the ethos and behaviours that we work hard to promote. There were many additional suggestions (illustrated on the right) that will be followed up in 2023-24 that will lead to shaping a new school motto.

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Classroom values and expectations

Post pandemic, we recognised that many young people need help to re-integrate positively to the school environment. We reviewed and updated our <u>relationships policy</u> and simplified our approach to maximise consistency across the school. Following staff training and based on the work of Paul Dix, a whole school approach to reinforcing positive behaviour that young people has been implemented. Young people are encouraged to be **Ready, Respectful & Safe**



Attainment Data 2022-23

We analyse data from a range of sources and through a range of lenses to give a full picture.

Breadth & Depth Over Time

To move to a positive destination in further or higher education, most young people require five qualifications. In 2023, we note a significant dip in the number of S6 who have secured five or more highers. While the destinations of those young people have been positive, nonetheless, we recognise that this is an important exit statistic that is a priority for improvement in 2023-24. Overall, using this data, our S4 and S5 cohorts performed in line with and better than expectations.

Cohort	S4, 5+ @ level 5 (N5)	S5, 5+ @ level 6 (Higher)	S6 accumulate (5 Highers)
S4 (2023)	67%	2024	2025
S4 (2022)	74%	38%	2024
S4 (2021)	65% (ACM)	30%	48%
S4 (2020)	79% (PJ)	38% (ACM)	58%
S4 (2019)	61%	42% (PJ)	60%
S4 (2018)	64%	35%	58%
S4 (2017)	64%	39%	56%
S4 (2016)	62%	40%	57%
S4 (2015)	60%	40%	55%
S4 (2014)	56%	38%	54%
S4 (2013)	52%	31%	52%

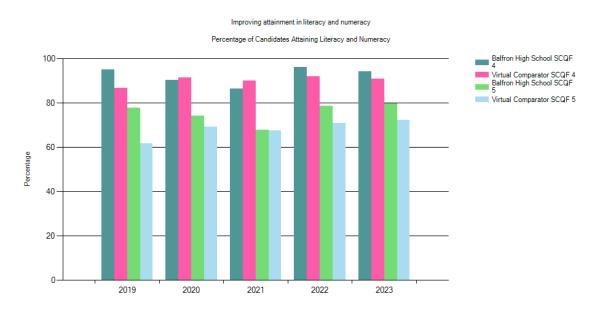
Notes to support data interpretation:

- 2019 Final year of S4 six subject model
- 2020 First year of S4 seven subject model in S4
- 2020 No last minute withdrawals due to lockdown
- 2020 Assessment by Teacher Professional Judgement (PJ)
- 2021 Alternative Certification Model (ACM)



Literacy & Numeracy

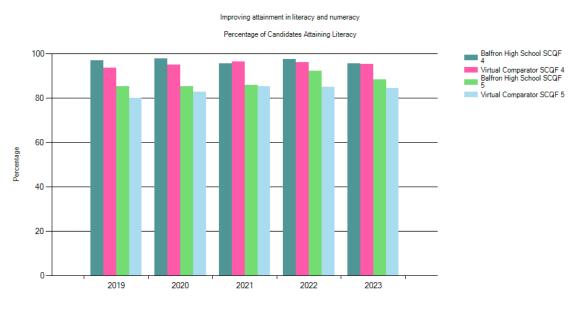
Improvement in literacy and numeracy is a priority in the <u>National Improvement Framework</u>. Overall, **S4 pupils** at Balfron High School performed significantly above the national average and our <u>virtual comparator</u> at level 4 and level 5:



• The focus for 2023-24 is to ensure ALL pupils achieve a literacy and numeracy qualification. This will include ensuring pupils are assessed at level 2 and 3 where appropriate and holding evidence from S3 for those at risk of absence.

S4 Literacy

S4 pupils attained slightly greater than our virtual comparator (VC) at level 4 and greater than the VC at level 5:

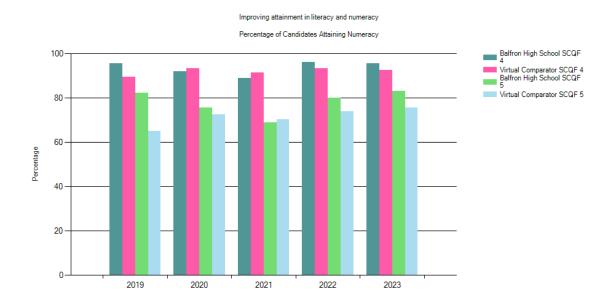




Standards and Quality Report 2022-23

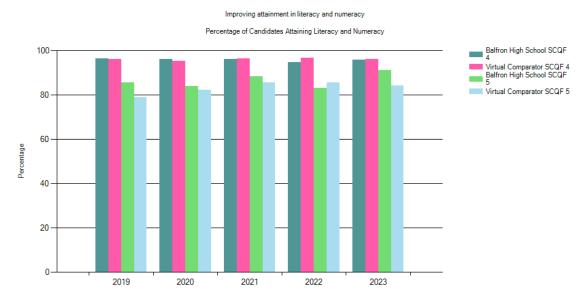
S4 Numeracy

S4 pupils attainment in numeracy is greater than our virtual comparator (VC) at level 4 and level 5:



S5 Literacy & Numeracy

We noted an increase in the number of pupils in S5 attaining level 5 literacy and numeracy:



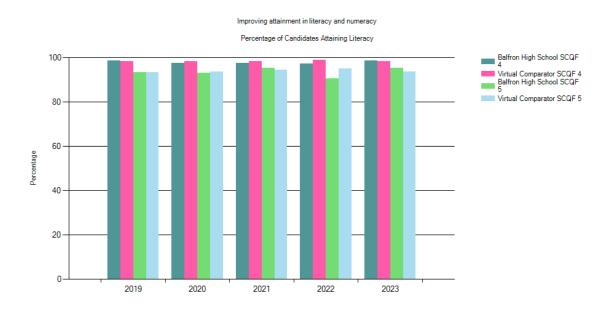
 The focus for 2023-24 is to check and target pupils who have returned for S6 who have not yet achieved at these levels.



Standards and Quality Report 2022-23

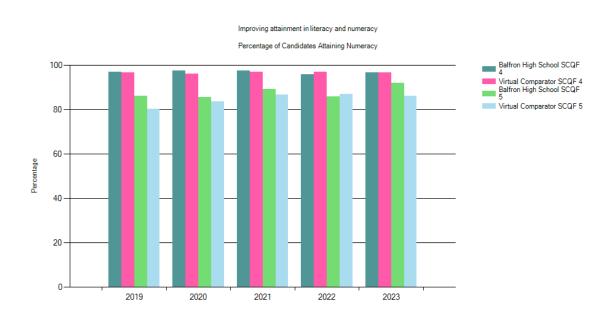
S5 Literacy

Almost all pupils in S5 achieved level 4 or better. We noted an improvement in the number of pupils who achieved level 5 in S5. This was greater than our VC:



S5 Numeracy

Almost all pupils in S5 achieved level 4 or better. We noted an improvement in the number of pupils who achieved level 5 in S5. This was greater than our VC:

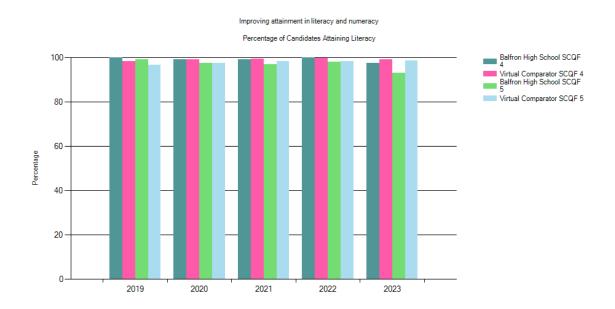




Standards and Quality Report 2022-23

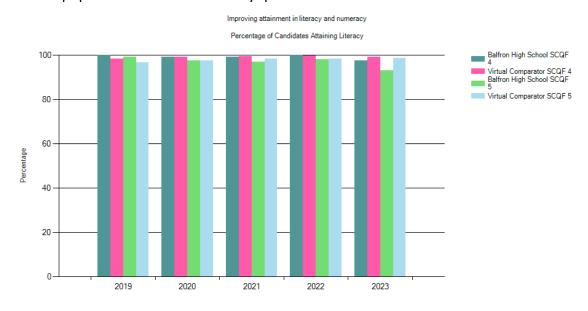
S6 Literacy & Numeracy

We noted a slight dip in the numbers of pupils who attained level 4 or 5 by the end of S6. This has been highlighted as are area for focus 2023-24:



S6 Literacy

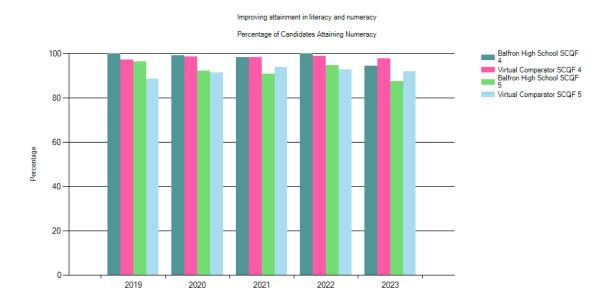
Almost all pupils in S6 left with a literacy qualification at level 4 or better:

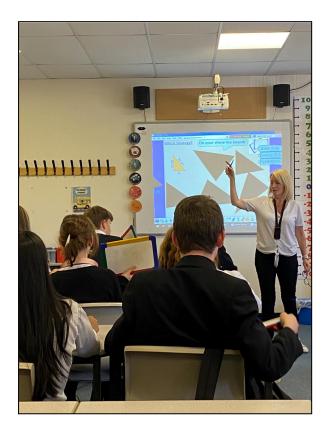


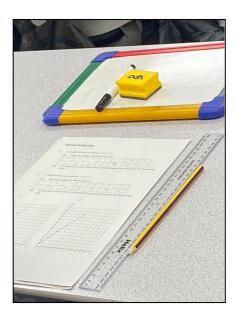


S6 Numeracy

We noted a decrease in the number of pupils who achieved level 4 and 5 in S6. The statistic is below the virtual comparator and an area for priority in 2023-24:









Improving Attainment for All - by year group

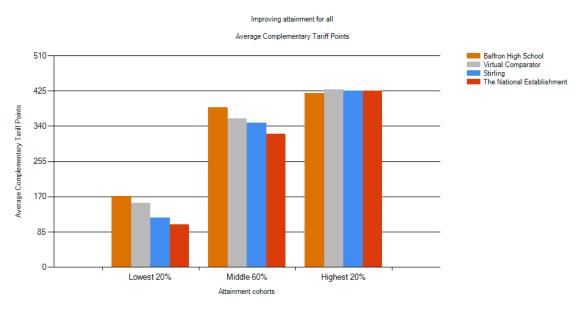
This data, from Insight, provides a benchmarking measure of the average complementary tariff score (best five results) for the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% of attainers within a cohort/year group.

To support the work of class teachers, two Project Leads were appointed (for the 2nd year) to focus on a universal programme of study support based on Science of Learning for young people in S5 and S6. All staff received training on the Science of Learning throughout the year. Interventions were also delivered by PTs PS/ASN.

We have four tracking periods prior to final examinations/assessments throughout the year for all pupils S4-6. Information is shared with young people and parents/carers. Following the first two tracking periods, individuals were identified and targeted for small group support by the two project leads. Parents/carers were invited to attend a session to share work being done with young people and to provide support for parents.

Filter: **S4**; Annual; complementary Tariff points; **All** (154 pupils)

The lowest 20% and middle 60% of learners had greater attainment than our VC, Stirling schools average and the national average. The highest 20% achieved the equivalent tariff points from five As at National 5. **35 pupils** achieved seven As at National 5.

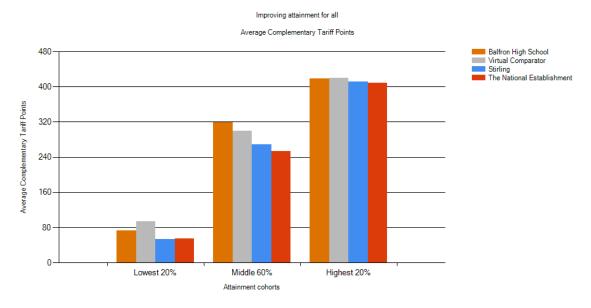


To match/exceed VC - early level 6 present in a subject would be required. There is no advantage to an individual who wants to go to university to do this. Where this is an option, a conversation with individuals to consider and agree the optimum time for presentation.

We aim to ensure all new S4 learners (2023-24) have secured at least 5 pieces of attainment.

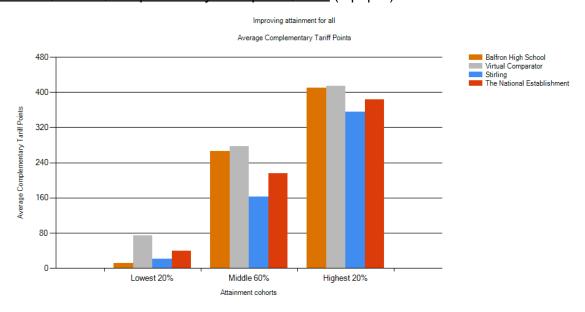


Filter: **S4**; Annual; complementary Tariff points; **ASN** (58 pupils)



There are two time periods where evidence is gathered, as per policy, to ensure that individuals have entitlements in place. Arrangements to support young people in classes and with assessments and exams are in place. Increased focus on the use of ICT to support individuals is in place where appropriate. With staff, the ASN team track S4 into S5 pupils with focus on supporting the lowest 20%

Filter: **S4**; Annual; complementary Tariff points; **FSM** (6 pupils)

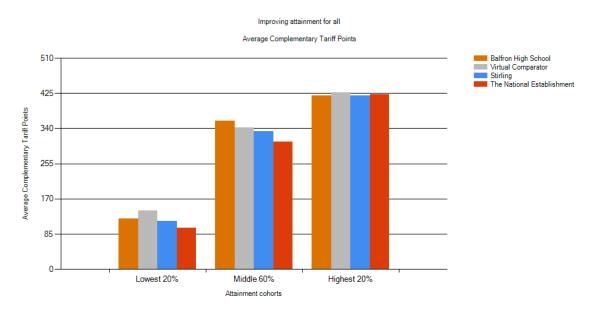


Our equity team provide 1-1 coaching for pupils and track to ensure that the hidden costs of the school day do not provide a barrier to young people on Free School Meals. 1-1

At House Meetings, the leadership team will check that individuals are accessing courses at appropriate levels (SLT/PTs/PT Equity).



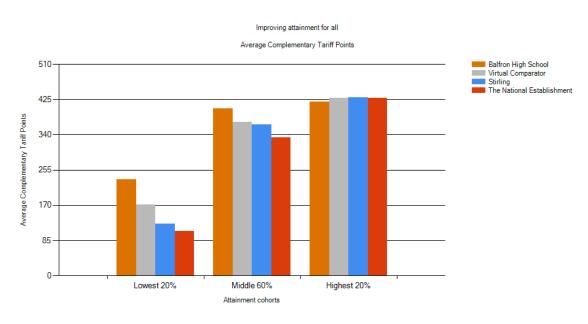
Filter: **S4**; Annual; complementary Tariff points; **Males** (72 pupils)



Males in the middle 60% and highest 20% attained well. It is useful to note that 420 points is equivalent to five As at N5.

We note that the boys in the lowest 20% of this cohort attained as well as those on average in Stirling and greater than the national average. However, falling below the VC, we will target lowest 20% boys who stay at school for S5 (all staff)

Filter: **S4**: Annual: complementary Tariff points: **Females** (82 pupils)

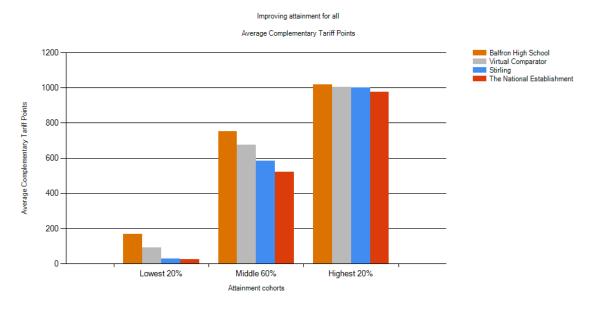


S4 females attained well in all three cohorts. 420 points is equivalent to five As at N5. In general, we note that girls out-performed boys in S4.



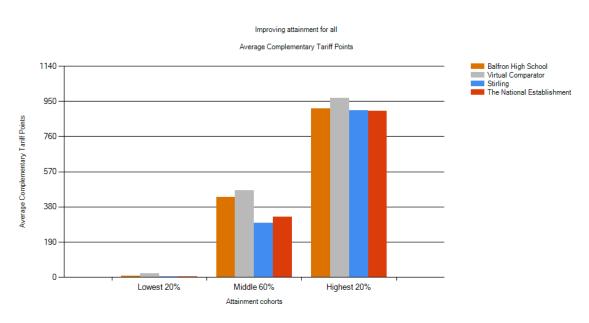
Filter: S5; Annual; complementary Tariff points; All (148 pupils)

The highest 20% achieved 1020 tariff points. This is equivalent to each of them achieving five As at Higher. **28 pupils** achieved five As in 2023.



Tracking data indicated that this was a high attaining cohort - check all new S6 have maximum Higher attainment opportunities to ensure improvement in S6 breadth and depth in 2023-24

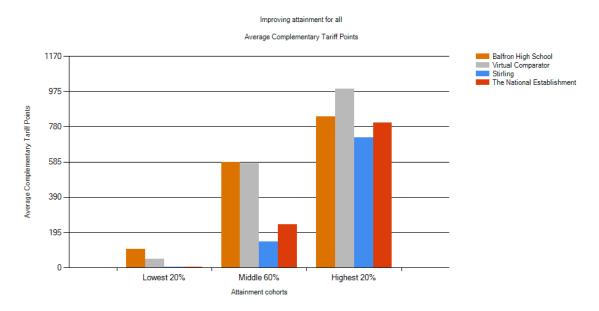
Filter: **S5**; Annual; complementary Tariff points; **ASN** (44 pupils)



We provide increasing opportunities to support access to the curriculum for those who struggle to physically attend classes. Eg virtual access through Google Meet and Google Classroom.

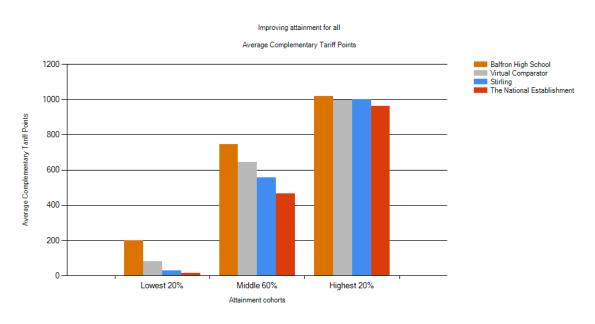


Filter: **S5**; Annual; complementary Tariff points; **FSM** (6 pupils)



We recognise that poverty can be a significant barrier to achievement in a wide range of complex ways. We work hard to know our learners well and ensure that we minimise costs and maximise support. Our Equity Team provide 1-1 coaching for pupils and track to ensure that the hidden costs of the school day do not provide a barrier to young people on Free School Meals.

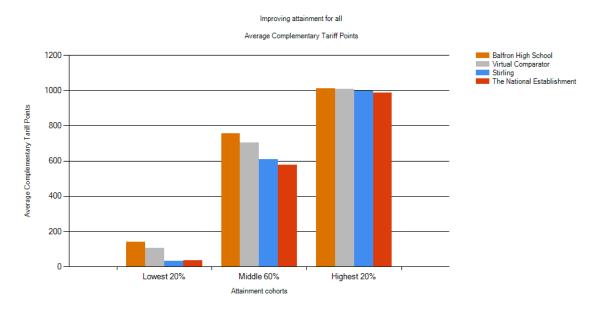
Filter: **S5**: Annual: complementary Tariff points: **Males** (71 pupils)



We note that males at Balfron outperform males in the VC, Stirling average and the national average. This cohort delivered strong performance against all comparators.

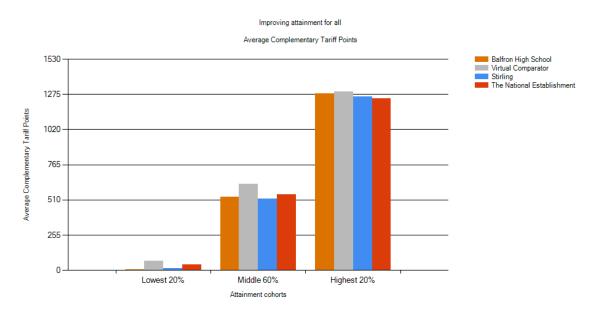


Filter: **S5**; Annual; complementary Tariff points; **Females** (77 pupils)



We note that females at Balfron outperform females in the VC, Stirling average and the national average. This cohort delivered strong performance against all comparators.

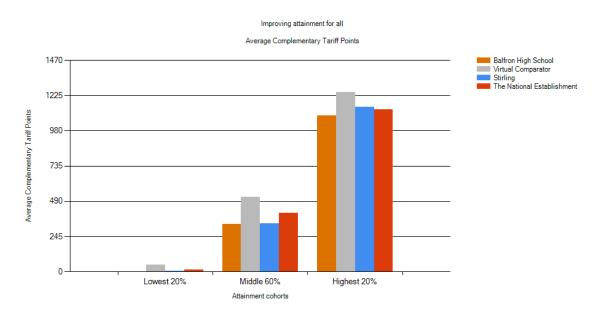
Filter: S6; Annual; complementary Tariff points; All (128 pupils)



Attainment of S6 lower than VC. We noted higher absence rates in S6 than the rest of the school. We noted that pupils with the fewest courses were more likely to drop out or under attain. We will undertake a review of curricular pathways for all S6 pupils and expectations of S6.

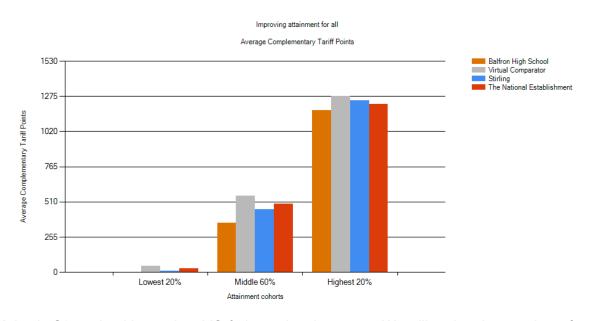


Filter: S6; Annual; complementary Tariff points; ASN (41 pupils)



Attainment of S6 lower than VC & the national average. We noted a rise in the number of withdrawals from courses from S6 pupils post-prelim.

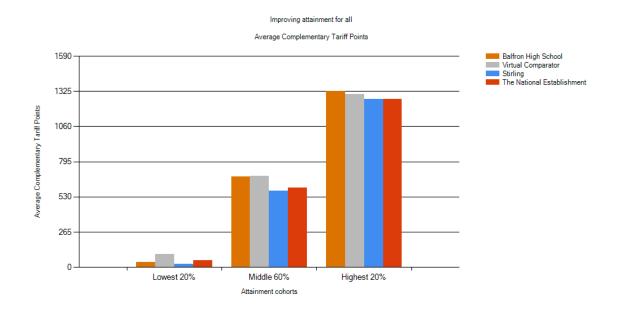
Filter: **S6**; Annual; complementary Tariff points; **Males** (58 pupils)



Males in S6 attained lower than VC & the national average. We will undertake a review of curricular pathways for all S6 pupils and expectations of S6 during session 2023-24. This has been raised by parents in a school survey and by staff in surveys and meetings.



Filter: S6; Annual; complementary Tariff points; Females (70 pupils)



Attainment of S6 females is in line with or above the VC & the national average in middle and highest 20%. Attainment of the lowest 20% girls below VC and national average and an area for improvement.

Curricular teams are reviewing their offer in the senior phase to maximise opportunities for the lowest 20% of learners.



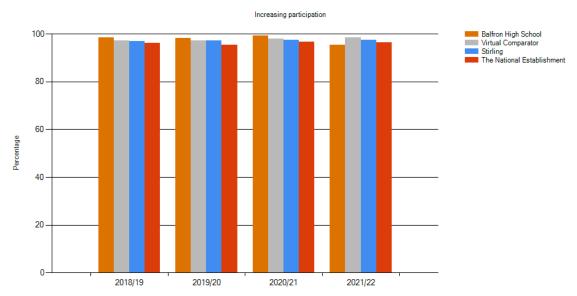




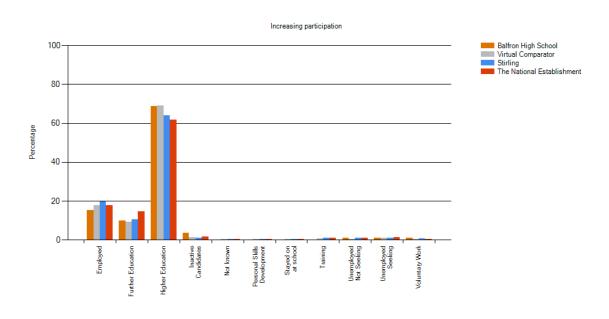
Leaver Destinations 2021-22

Leaver destinations for 2023 will be published in February 2024 and updated in next year's plan. Our DYW team is working closely with Skills Development Scotland to ensure that all leavers have been supported to find a suitable and positive destination.

For the first time, in 2021 our destination dipped below our comparators. Plans are in place to ensure that leavers destinations are tracked and recorded by the DYW and SDS team.



In 2022, 68.75% of our S6 leavers went to Higher Education. 15.18% went straight to employment and 9.82% went to Further Education. We noted an increase in those going to Further Education from previous years. For the first time this was slightly greater than the VC:





Patterns of early leavers over time

The table below shows the percentage of each year group who left by the end of that session. On average 20-25% of young people leave before the start of S6.

Leavers	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
S4	6.45%	4.52%	5.93%	3.68%
S5	16.88%	14.84%	19.25%	14.49%

Young people are supported with planning for their transition through the PSE curriculum, Apprenticeship Week, Career Ready Programme (S5), UCAS exhibition, UCAS/FE application evening, Forth Valley College Schools Programme, Balfron Future Pathways Events (pictures below), SEC Careers Event, Engineering for the Future for Girls programme, and many other activities, talks and trips.





Priority 1: Improve the wellbeing of young people and staff

Our progress 2022-23	Impact
Discussion around the review and update of use and consistency of form class time	 Increased connectedness with learning observed Stronger relationships between FCL & FC and among FC Stronger House identity and contribution
Increased partnerships with external partners for input with young people & staff: Back on Side (All S1-6 boys) FV Rape Crisis / ESAS (S4 pupils) Endura Life Cycle Trust (6 groups) Humanutopia (all S3 pupils) Columba 1400 (16 S4 pupils) Stirling Senior Phase & Youth Participation Safer Drive, Stay Alive (S5) Oddball (S5/6 boys) Show Racism the Red Card Police Scotland (Pitch in Programme) Youth Justice (targeted pupils)	 Increased understanding of key themes that contribute to wellbeing Increased understanding of factors that affect victims Increased number of incidents reported Increased satisfaction with approaches to investigating & recording Increased levels of resilience and confidence reported
Increase opportunities for staff wellbeing activities: Mindfulness drawing - November Wellbeing Cafe launched in June Menopause Staff swimming offered three lunchtimes per week and gym available before school, lunchtime and after school. Staff volleyball Monday lunchtime. Suggestions from feedback for next session are planned	 Staff wellbeing given higher profile and protected time Increase in staff wellbeing levels Increased levels of staff feel valued Increased levels of staff feel more connected
Reinstated weekly Hot Chocolate with the Heads. Nominations and delivery (Thursdays at FC time in Strathendrick) • Added email to parents - positively received (feedback via email) • Reminders and easy access to to	 Increased number of pupils feeling recognised and celebrated Increased number of staff able to contribute Increased connection with parents/carers More positive reception by young



nominate would improve system	 people to celebrating success Increased shared understanding of success stories Additional opportunities to share stories of acts of kindness/ citizenship
Increased collaboration with Youth Participation Team to support the wellbeing of young people Targeted Group work with senior pupils S1 Nurture Group (20 pupils) Mental Health & Wellbeing (S1 group work - S Sabbir) Three S1 Groups following the Flexible Learning Nurture Groups (20 pupils). 18 young people benefitted from the input from the Youth Participation Team. Three young people went on to have 1-1 support on a weekly basis. The reports from the young people are that it increased their confidence/self-esteem and confidence, especially dealing with change in school, for example, transitioning into S2. Emma Harvey, Youth Services, has provided support interventions for young people linked to work with Youth Justice. Media Training for senior pupils	 Pupils shared increased levels of confidence Staff observed more settled behaviour Staff observed increased levels of confidence Staff observed increased positivity Increased levels of attendance Some S1 Nurture group pupils made new friends Some S1 Nurture group pupils liked having a safe place to go.





Priority 2: Pandemic Recovery - Continue to rebuild school culture & positive, values based behaviours

Our progress 2022-23	Impact
Improve communication with parents & carers: • Created 'What's Happening at Balfron' Padlet • Reviewed accessibility with Parent Council	 Increased and easier accessibility to information, and celebration of achievements at Balfron HS More efficient access to information - One click from information required
Formed digital Safety Group in collaboration with parents	Provided twilight open sessions for parents & regular digital safety tips: Smart with your smart phone
Recovery Post - Family Engagement provided universal and targeted support to parents and carers. Online and in-person sessions offered I am Gen Z (film & follow-up discussion) Healthy Use of Mobile Phones (in person) Supporting Young People's mental health (with Kooth) https://youtu.be/Hy9ASvpyMas Supporting wellbeing (with Educational Psychologist) https://youtu.be/yMujTXWLZ3s S1 Family Learning Events (in person)	 Increased levels of connectedness with parents and carers Increased levels of knowledge of what is happening for young people for staff Increased levels of understanding on how to support learners Increased positive relationships with parents/carers and staff
Reinstated focused programme of assemblies • Year Group & House	 Increased clarity of school vision and values Raised profile of issues relating to excellence and equity
Developed our understanding and addressed issues raised regarding respect, bias and discrimination In collaboration with senior pupils, an ethical conduct survey was created and completed by young people and staff. Responses shared with young people at assemblies and discussed at Form time, pupil council and focus groups Racism and sexism special assemblies and follow up delivered Staff training on bias for all staff	 Increased levels of understanding of issues regarding racism, homophobia and sexism Increased levels of reporting Increased confidence for discussion Staff confidence levels to deal with issues increasing



 In partnership with FV Rape Crisis, we enrolled in <u>Equally Safe at School</u> programme and all staff undertook initial training. ESAS lead teachers identified for 2023-24

Targeted improvement to **year group ethos** as follows:

- S3 Humanutopia
- S4 Columba 1400 programme and residential
- S5 & S1 Mentors for Violence Prevention (MVP)Training, assemblies and PSE delivery
- S6 Leadership & volunteering

- Increased levels of respect recorded through Pupil council and ESAS surveys
- Increase in shared responsibility
- Increased connectedness
- Increased understanding of not being a bystander
- Increased understanding of contribution to school ethos
- Increase in willingness to report
- Increased satisfaction with the reporting process

Increase in excursions, extra-curricular and inter house offer:

- 22 sports clubs offered
- 18 general/academic clubs offered
- Weekly inter-house
- Young musician of the year
- First pantomime
- 1 international, 5 UK residentials, 53 day excursions and numerous sports fixtures
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils
- Increased sense of belonging to House
- Increased range of opportunities for pupils to develop skills, abilities, interests and friendships

The numbers attending inter-house dropped through the year. This will be a target for improvement in 2023-24







Priority 3: Increase focus on Learning, Teaching & Assessment



<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Our progress 2022-23	Impact
Re-appointed Project Lead for Pedagogy to support "Year of Challenge" Planned together (Project leads) Inservice, collegiate and twilight sessions delivered to staff Completed BHS pedagogy toolkit L&T department inserts Professional reading library Professional discussion group CLPL corner in Balfron Matters L,T A padlet Professional Learning Padlet	 Increased profile of L, T & A Culture of pedagogy observed and reported Reported increased skill levels of staff Increased confidence of staff Increased enjoyment highlighted by some staff Link to attainment improvements Increase in inhouse CLPL opportunities Increase in number of staff studying at Masters level
Reappointed and Project Leads for attainment. They delivered Science of Learning (SOL) Workshops for S4-5	 Increase profile of SoL amongst pupils - S2-S6 Increased understanding of the use and application of SOL approaches evident in observations and discussed among staff Awareness raised and evidence retrieval and interleaving practices observed in classroom observations More effective and efficient use of study skills - Senior Phase Uplift to learning lost during the pandemic
All teaching staff involved in tri-learning observations and discussions • Clear link with science of learning and peer observation visits	 Culture of pedagogy observed, discussed and shared Reported increased skill levels of staff Increased confidence of staff



The Head Teacher was accompanied by a PT to observe every department.

This allows practice to be observed and observations to be moderated.

Notes are taken and an overview shared.

For maximum impact, next session, the welcoming PT should be present at the discussion phase.

Observation summaries:

Languages

Mathematics

Health

Social Subjects

Expressive Arts

<u>Technologies</u>

<u>Science</u>

Flexible Learning



Priority 4: Support PEF and Promote Equity

Our progress 2022-25	Our progress 2022-23	Impact	
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PEF Priorities (£27,000):

- Increase engagement at school
- Literacy targeted interventions
- Cost of the School Day & Family Learning
- Coaching group for additional level of support to promote engagement.
 Senior phase target.
- Family Learning
- Pedagogy for Equity Effective L&T for equity
- Pupil Wellbeing
- Form class activity focused on reasons for Cost of Living
- Fundraising for Start Up Stirling & Balfron Larder
- Recruitment of pupil volunteers

All of our PEF work is targeted to support and remove barriers for our young people who are in receipt of FSM.

- Pupils have increased awareness of the factors affecting poverty
- Increased awareness of the costs of the school day
- Increased awareness of how to access support in school

Cost of the school day

Families First Programme

Families First SMS text service established. Services included:

- The Balfron High Larder (emergency food bank provision)
- Free school uniform
- Support when completing eligibility forms including Free School Meals or Educational Maintenance Allowance (for pupils over 16)
- Application support for NEC free bus pass scheme (for all young people 5 – 22)
- Equipment for additional activities (for example, sports kit for after school clubs)
- Free Swimming lessons for S1 S3 pupils (including kit)
- Free Period Product bulk orders
- Pop up shop
- Access to kit for all fund
- Cost of the school day <u>Impact Report</u> <u>for 2022-23</u>

poverty. Challenge Poverty

Literacy - Building Reader Confidence

Paired reader training for S3 - S6 FSM pupils

Whole school - built staff and pupil awareness of COSD and impacts of

Targeted support provided to S1 FSM pupils

Paired Reader Impact Report



Family Learning Sessions

- Good Food Cooking
- Targeted support for families in wellbeing
- Targeted support for families to engage with parents evenings
- Utilised 'Food for All Fund' grant to deliver cooking workshops - Jan/Feb 2023

Good Food Cooking Impact Evaluation

Pupil Wellbeing

- Endura Chills & Thrills programme
- External partner programme: Follow up programme with Active Stirling
- Support from COSD for equipment and clothing

Chills & Thrills - doc

Pedagogy for Equity

1 staff representative from all curricular teams engaging in Pedagogy for Equity session post Jan 23.

- Delivery of Pedagogy for Equity Session
- Twilight session for staff
- Adapt NIH info for Balfron
 Context (23/24 Planning link to new
 L&T working group design)
- That Reading Thing Training Phonics and decoding for young adults



School Improvement Priorities for 2023-24

Honesty Fairness

Resp Improved approaches to wellbeing & inclusion

Trust





