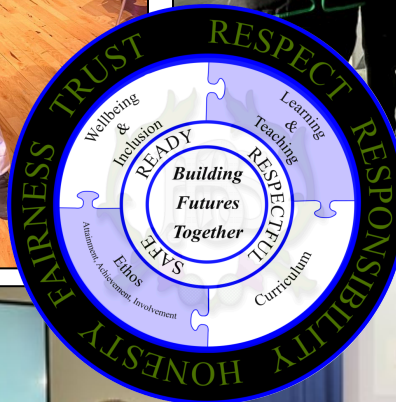




Balfour High School

Standards & Quality Report 2024

Reflecting on Session 2023-24



Building Futures Together



Balforn High School Standards & Quality Report 2024

Building futures together

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Balf High School is a high achieving secondary school with a roll of 893 pupils and 66.6FTE teaching staff (including five probationers) and 16 of support staff. Located in rural West Stirlingshire, we work closely and productively with our seven associated primary schools situated in the villages of Balf, 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 five Principal Teachers with Pastoral/ASN responsibility. In 2023-24, to support our improvement priorities, we also had three Project Leads, one with responsibility for Pedagogy, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF).

The school offers a broad and balanced [curriculum](#). From S1, pupils follow a programme of study that reflects the principles of [Curriculum for Excellence](#). 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. In 2023-24, pupils in S3 studied 11 subjects, 9 of which are elective courses. In S4, pupils narrowed to a maximum of 7 certificated subjects. Using data and feedback, this was under review during session 2023-24 and S3 curriculum is subject to change for 2024-25.

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 range 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 [SIMD](#) areas 7-9. Following a dip, we have recorded an increase in placing requests 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 [Parent Zone](#).

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Vision - Building Futures Together



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 2022-23. 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 have influenced our new school motto *Building Futures Together*.



Classroom values and expectations

In the years following the pandemic, we recognised that many young people need help to re-integrate positively to the school environment. We reviewed and updated our [relationships policy](#) and simplified our approach to maximise consistency across the school. In 22-23 following staff training and based on the work of Paul Dix, a whole school approach to reinforcing positive behaviour was implemented. Young people are encouraged to be **Ready, Respectful & Safe**. Following on from that recognising that some young people struggle to regulate their behaviour, all staff undertook Crisis Prevention Institute Training in 2023-24.

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Attainment Data 2023-24

We analyse data from a range of sources and through a range of lenses to give a full picture. The following pages give an overview of attainment at N5 and Higher over time along with Insight data for 2023-24. This shows our school performance relative to Stirling, the national picture and our virtual comparator.

Breadth & Depth Over Time

To move to a positive destination in further or higher education, most young people require five qualifications. In 2024, we note improvement in S5 and S6 results at Higher level following a school improvement priority to increase this outcome. While results at Higher improved, we noted a dip in S4 results at National 5. 2023-24 saw the reintroduction of investigations into courses. This component has been highlighted for improvement across the curriculum in 2025.

Cohort	S4, 5+ @ level 5 (N5)	S5, 5+ @ level 6 (Higher)	S6 accumulate (5 Highers)
S4 (2024)	61%	2025	2026
S4 (2023)	67%	36%	2025
S4 (2022)	74%	38%	54%
S4 (2021)	65% (ACM)	30%	48%
S4 (2020)	79% (PJ)	36% (ACM)	58%
S4 (2019)	61%	42% (PJ)	60% (ACM)
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:

- 2020 - First year of S4 seven subject model in S4
- 2020 - Assessment by Teacher Professional Judgement (PJ)
- 2021 - Alternative Certification Model (ACM)

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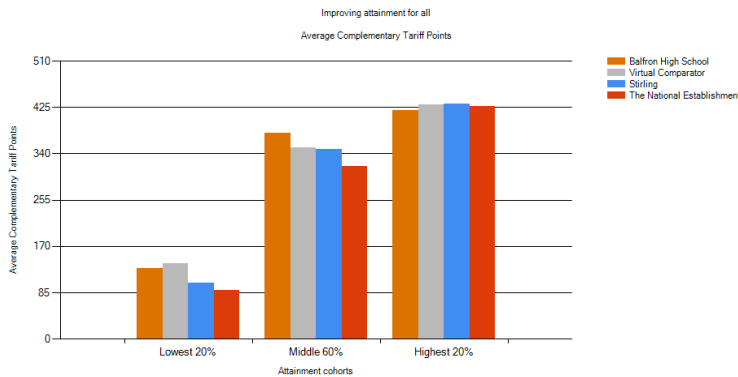
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Improving Attainment for All: S4 - 2023/24 (Balforn = orange; Virtual Comparator = grey)



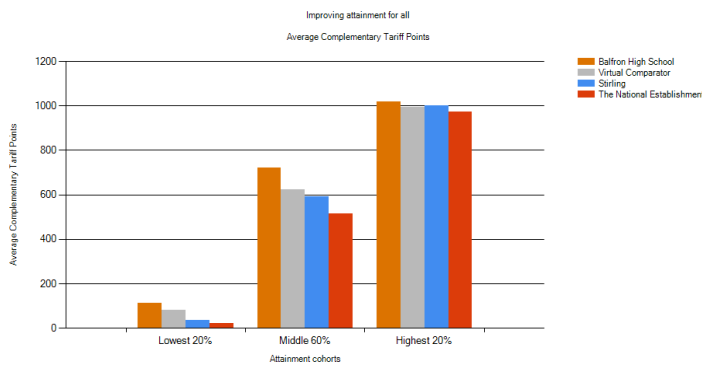
Highest 20% - 420 maximum points in current model (84 x 5As). Would need to present pupils early at Higher to match or exceed our Virtual Comparator. 21 pupils achieved seven A grade passes

Middle 60% - 378 average complementary (equivalent to 2As & 3Bs). The middle 60% outperformed the VC, Stirling and National averages.

Lowest 20% - 130 average (roughly equivalent to 4 x N4 passes).

An ongoing focus is the drive to attain five best qualifications for all pupils.

Improving Attainment for All: S5 - 2023/24



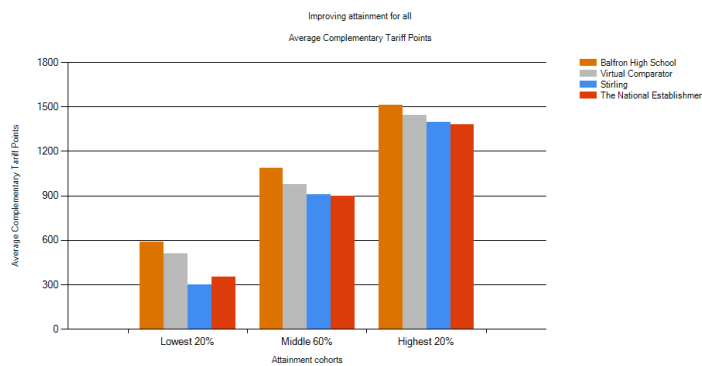
All cohorts outperformed the Virtual Comparator (VC), Stirling & National averages

25 Pupils achieved 5 As at Higher

Strong performance from middle 60% ([720 tariff points](#)) Equivalent to 4 Highers @C + 1 N5 A

›

Improving Attainment for All: S6 - 2023/24 (cumulative - what qualifications did S6 leave with?)



Overall value of S6 and attainment in S4-6 is higher than VC in all cohorts.

Increase in number of early leavers impacted the lowest 20%

Strong ethos of leadership activities, buddying, supporting in classes.

Increase work experience linked with bespoke timetables.

Ongoing focus is on course completion in S6.

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Literacy & Numeracy (*Balfrom = dark aqua & green; virtual comparator = pink & light aqua*)

Improvement in literacy and numeracy is a priority in the [National Improvement Framework](#).

Overall, **S4 pupils** at Balfrom High School performed in line with our [virtual comparator](#) at level 4 and slightly above at level 5:



There has been a strong focus on ensuring our young people secure a literacy and numeracy qualification. Where a young person did not attain level 4 or 5, Level 3 was secured in almost all cases. We will continue with our focus on prioritising any returning learner who has not yet secured a literacy or numeracy qualification.

Showing improvement from 2023, overall almost all S6 pupils left Balfrom High with a literacy and Numeracy qualification at level 5.



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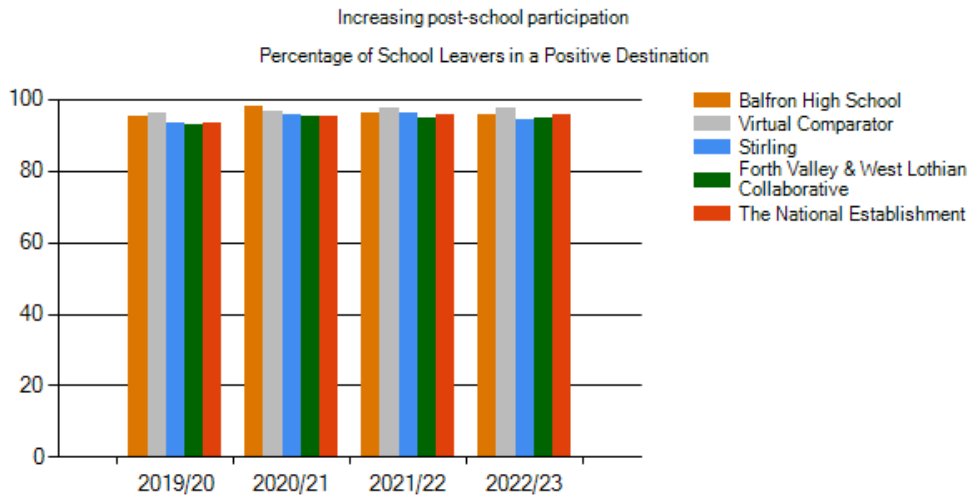
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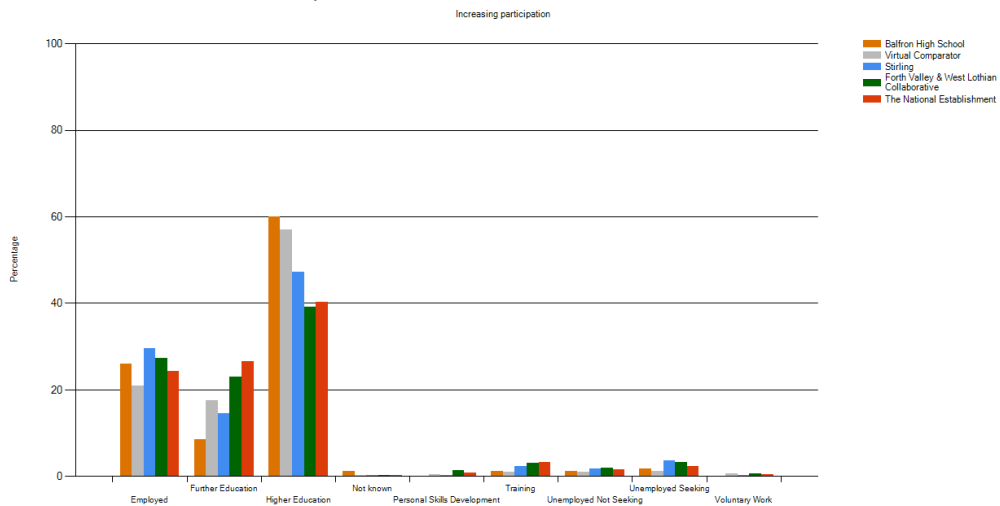
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Leaver Destinations 2022-23



Leaver destinations for 2024 will be published in February 2025 and updated in next year's plan. Our Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) team is working closely with Skills Development Scotland to ensure that all leavers have been supported to find a suitable and positive destination. 96% of all leavers, S4-6, in 2022/23 transitioned to a positive destination.



The breakdown is as follows: 26% to employment; 8% to Further Education; 60% to Higher Education; 1% to training. There is an increase in the number of young people going straight to employment from school from the previous year. The number of learners going to Higher Education remains greater than our comparators.

Further Education uptake is significantly lower than our comparators. Transport to college for most young people remains a challenge. We will continue to focus on linking with colleges in Glasgow in addition to Forth Valley. These are more accessible for young people from the western villages of Balfion, Killearn and Strathblane.

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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	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
S4	1.82%	6.45%	4.52%	5.93%	3.68%
S5	23.93%	16.88%	14.84%	19.25%	14.49%

Young people are supported through the PSE curriculum, Apprenticeship Week, Career Ready Programme (S5), UCAS exhibition, UCAS/FE application evening, Forth Valley College Schools Programme, Balfour Future Pathways Events (pictures below), SEC Careers Event, Keeps, Engineering for the Future for Girls, talks and trips.

Summary of Focus Following 2024 Results Publication

Measure	Key Actions
Attainment for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued focus on drive for best five Changed curricular structure to 8 subjects for S3 (2024-25) Secure evident for least confident secure early Provide course recommendations based on prior attainment Small numbers dual entered to secure successful qualifications At risk TSP categories highlighted for support and action after each tracking period
Attainment v deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted 1-1 support in line deciles 1-5 and with Pupil Equity Fund Plans Regular tracking to allow for early interventions Link with Integrated Pupil Support Worker to improve attendance
Literacy & Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track and target early leavers Target those in S6 who have not achieved best possible literacy/numeracy awards
Increasing Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with SDS, to maximise positive destinations post school Build connections with Glasgow colleges



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Wider Achievement at Balfion High School

We are very proud of the wide range of activities provided for young people at Balfion High School by staff, parents, young people and partners. We have a strong commitment to extracurricular sport and physical activity with 54% of young people across the school regularly taking part in 2023-24:



Achievements are captured in many ways throughout the session from highlighting successes on X, our Parent Padlet, [What's Going on at Balfion](#), celebration boards, the internationalist boards, tannoy announcements and in our [BHS Landing Page](#) for pupils.

Our full range of extra curricular activities can be found on our website. An annual Freshers Fayre runs at the start of each year to raise awareness of opportunities and encourage sign-up.



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Here is a small sample of some of the wider achievements captured across the school:



- First entire Learning Community to achieve Sports Scotland Gold Flags
- Core Reading Schools accreditation
- Introduction of [S6 Barista Skills](#)
- SEET Our World Languages participants
- International trips to the Ardeche (S2), Austria (S5/6), Barcelona (S5/6)
- S3 trip to the Yorkshire Dales
- GCHQ National Language Competition participants
- First Balfour High Pupil Parliament
- Law Society's Donald Dewar Debating Competition runners up
- First S1 [STEM Solve for Tomorrow](#) competition
- Dynamic Youth Awards for Paired Reading with Drymen Primary pupils
- Annual Burns Night delivered by Hospitality Class and Head Prefects
- Gold Languages Employability Award
- S3 Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- School Show - Disco Inferno
- Balfour High S3 winning team Team hosted the national YPI Awards
- Extensive Inter-House programme including sports, academic & creative
- [Science week activities](#)
- [S4 Outward Bound](#)
- Green Flag achieved again. Eco group launched The Big Plastic Count.
- Live-N-Learn led S3 workshops on Developing Entrepreneurial mindsets
- S1 Body Works Expedition with the Glasgow Science Centre
- Advanced Higher maths pupils led World Pi Day events for S1 pupils
- Pupil led assemblies Eg period awareness, YPI, Reading Schools,
- [School Show - Disco Inferno](#)
- Girls Rugby team won the treble for the third consecutive year
- RUTS Moto learn
- Partnership with FEL Scotland
- S2 Football Team Runners-up in East Stirlingshire Cup
- Growth of [choir](#), [orchestra](#), wind, [string](#), [rock](#) bands
- S3s graduate Columba 1400 and Mark Brown Leadership programmes

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Priority 1: Increased focus on the quality & consistency of learning and teaching

Our progress 23-24	Impact
Increased familiarisation and use of the BHS Learning & Teaching Toolkit & Lesson Observation Schedule	All teams used the format for observations and referred to the toolkit in Team Meetings. Feedback from Leadership Team highlighted strengths, commitment to approach and areas for improvement (24-25) Links to toolkit resources helpful.
Observations, what next? Created to review and collate strengths and areas for improvement	All teams completed. 54 lessons observed and reviewed by PTs. Staff feedback that they would welcome more time for observations. Areas highlighted for improvement collated and will influence in-house CLPL programme 2024-25.
Improved approach to Open Doors Days.	Discussion time built-in to include receiving PT to allow for first hand, immediate feedback. Reports co-created and shared with teams along with video clips. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health (not PE) ● Flexible Learning ● Languages (not ML) ● Expressive Arts ● Maths ● Social Subjects ● Technologies ● Science, PE & Modern Languages to be prioritised (2024-25)
All teaching staff joined a learning & teaching working group to develop one area that was shared at the May 2024 Pedagogy Festival	Working group leads appointed to guide and support all staff to identify 'plus one' Increased use of BHS Learning & Teaching Toolkit to support research, discussion & planning Successful Pedagogy Festival in May 2024
Continued focus on cross curricular peer observations	Almost all staff took part in Tri-Learning where the focus was on 'plus one'
Increase staff confidence in using whole student response systems including mini-whiteboards	CLPL Session delivered and reviewed. Observations demonstrated increased frequency and confidence of use.

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In-house CLPL sessions created for all Teams to work through at Team meetings	PTs requested input on Plenaries following review of observations.
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Priority 2: Increased focus on the wellbeing and inclusion of learners & staff

Our progress 23-24	Impact
Pilot Health & Wellbeing Tracking with S1	Tracking completed for S1. Pilot reviewed and to be rolled out with S2 next session.
Equally Safe at School implemented	Increased confidence among staff in understanding issues relating to gender based violence Increased awareness of learners following surveys, assemblies and PSE input.
We have improved approaches to reporting, recording and monitoring racism	Approaches influenced by input from collaborative approaches with young people.
Our anti-bullying policy was updated	Increased understanding of policy and rates of reporting
Evidence collated to secure Silver Award for work done with Young Carers. Continued strong partnership with Stirling Young Carers.	Higher profile of what it means to be a Young Carer. Wider understanding (young people and staff). Increased number of young people coming forward and being supported as young carers.
We have conducted a full review of attendance policy and procedures to address increased non-attendance.	Improve tracking of non-attendance. Communication with parents/carers reviewed. Appointment of an Integrated Support Worker to liaise with families and support return to school.
All staff undertook Safety Intervention Training	Staff better equipped to manage dysregulated behaviour. All staff have increased understanding and confidence in crisis prevention and in responding to dysregulated behaviour.

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Priority 3: Review and improve the curriculum better meet learner needs

Our progress 23-24	Impact
We conducted a whole school review of the school day to ensure best use of contact time across the school.	Alternative, time efficient models have been identified to review in 2024-25
We offered an increased range of courses in the senior phase. We will continue to develop next session. Link with other schools/ Lewis Paterson advice.	Level 5 Barista Level 4 & 5 (Year 2) ELCC Level 4& T&T Level 4 Cycle Maintenance Motorbike Maintenance Level 5 Visual Communication Level 6 Refereeing with Sports Leadership Level 5 Criminology plans for 2024-25
We reduced the number of subjects studied in S3 to increase the depth of study	In 2024-25 S3 pupils will have more time in their NQ courses. We believe that this will improve learner engagement and increase learner confidence and depth of learning.
To improve S6 engagement, all S6 pupils have to undertake four courses.	Positive destinations for S6 at 96% Employment (17%) - above the virtual comparator Higher Education (72%) - above the virtual comparator Further Education (6%) - below the virtual comparator and an area for improvement.

Priority 4: Increase attainment & achievement by improved tracking & targeted interventions

Our progress 23-24	Impact
We held regular meetings with PTs to review Pupil progress & attainment data. We met with Lewis Paterson (Scottish Government) to provide training.	Staff confident in understanding and tracking pupil progress. Strong understanding of the link between curricular pathway and attainment. Focus on progression rates from N5 to Higher in 2024-25
We have begun to consistency and use of BGE	We have an up to date Moderation & Verification

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data to inform planning	Policy covering BGE & Senior Phase. All teams have a subject policy which supports SQA standards in the Senior Phase and are updating their approaches in the BGE 2024-25.
We used our tracking data to focus on ensuring that senior phase pupils achieved 5 national qualifications.	S4 - 81% S5 - 93% S6 - 94%
We increased the numbers of young people who were dual entered.	Science/social subjects/ Business. This provided a safety net for less secure learners.
We receive £25, 725 Pupil Equity Funds and use it in the following targeted way	
Targeted H&WB interventions	5 learners (S1-S4) achieving a SCQF level 3 Cycle Maintenance qualification. 8 learners (S1-S3) achieving SCQF level 3 Dynamic Youth Award qualification (Ready to Write)
Targeted literacy interventions	Almost all (90%+) of readers reading for enjoyment on a weekly basis by June 2024. Almost all (90%+) paired reader programme pupils recording improvement in reading age scores between Nov - Jun 2024. All (5) HS Learners achieve Dynamic Youth Award certification by June 2024
Targeted numeracy interventions	Almost all (90%+) will record increased understanding of numeracy language by March 2024. Almost all (90%+) reducing requirement for calculator use of calculator assessments by June 24
Continued promotion of Reading and silver accreditation Reading School activities	Young people benefit from Reading Cafes, visiting authors, peer reading
Targeted family learning activities	We delivered two x Reading Cafe sessions We deliver four Good Food Cooking sessions

Priority 5: Increased focus on pupil voice

Our progress 23-24	Impact
We launched the Pupil Parliament with increased leadership opportunities: Head prefects, House Captains, Cost of the School Day, Climate Ambassadors, LGBTQI+, Sports Ambassadors, ASN	Pupil Parliament ran twice in the year. Positive feedback from Young people. Suggested more frequent (half termly) with opportunities for discussion following sharing. The parliament will

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ambassadors & more	become a feature of our self evaluation and participation model.
We relaunched our pupil led Charities committee	Supported: Children in Need, Unicef, Start Up Stirling, Save the Children.



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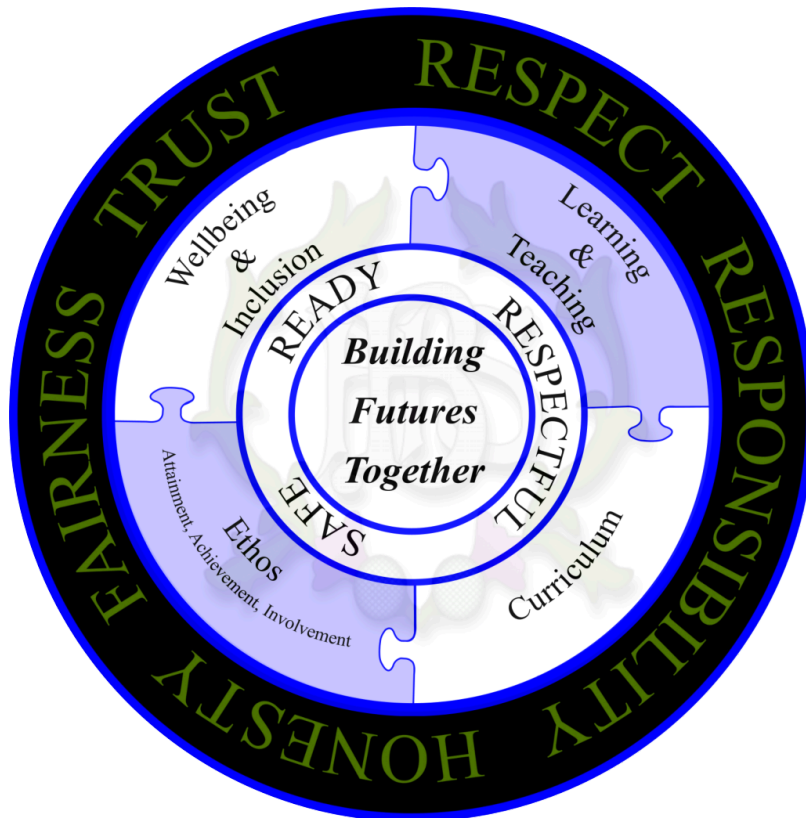


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2024-25 Improvement Priorities

- Increased consistency in high quality Learning & Teaching
- Improved Wellbeing & Inclusion of all young people
- Increased offer in Curriculum Pathways
- Improved Attainment & Achievement (5@ all levels, & progression)



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