



Balfon High School

Standards & Quality Report 2025

Reflecting on Session 2024-25



Building Futures Together
Find your thing



Balfon High School Standards & Quality Report 2024-25

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Balforn High School is a high achieving, rural secondary school with a roll of 894 pupils and 64FTE teaching staff (including five probationers) and 16 of support staff. Located in West Stirlingshire, we work closely and productively with our seven associated primary schools situated in the villages of Balforn, 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 Middle Leadership Team has seven curricular Principal Teachers and five Principal Teachers with Pastoral/ASN responsibility. In 2024-25, 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. Following consultation with staff, young people and parents, in 2024-25, our model was updated to promote depth and to maximise learner achievements. Pupils in S3 studied 8 subjects that had a pathway to certification, 6 of which were elective courses. In S4, pupils narrowed to a maximum of 7 certificated subjects. In addition, pupils have a core entitlement to PE, RME and PSE.

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 regularly on a part-time basis. These include colleagues from Stirling Council's ASN outreach team, Youth Services, Campus Police Officer and Psychological services. 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. There is an increasing number of learners who live in SIMD area 1 and 2. This is as a result of an increase in placing requests in the last few sessions. We have approximately 5% pupils in receipt of FME. 38% 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,**

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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](#).

Vision - Building Futures Together



In a complex and changing world, 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 our community and beyond. We work hard to ensure that our learners have the right blend of knowledge, skills, attributes and qualifications that provide the foundations for success beyond school. We all recognise that we have a **central role in building the futures of our young people.**

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 2024-25

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 2024-25. This shows our school performance relative to Stirling, the national picture and our virtual comparator.

Breadth & Depth Over Time *(data from Insight includes all SCQF results; % based on S4 roll)*

In order to move successfully to a positive destination in further or higher education, most young people require five qualifications. In 2025, we noted improvement in S4 level 5 results and S6 accumulated results at Higher level following a school improvement priority to increase this outcome.

To improve attainment for S4 pupils and provide the time to add depth to learning, following consultation, we changed our curricular model in 2024-25 to give S3 pupils increased time.

Our analysis has helped us identify a focus on the investigation/portfolio components of most courses to improve attainment further. In 2025-26 we are using enhanced support for aspirational course choice, tracking and interventions to further improve the percentage of pupils who leave with 5 Highers.

| Cohort | S4, 5+ @ level 5 | S5, 5+ @ level 6 (Higher) | S6 accumulate (5 Highers) |
|-----------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| S4 (2025) | 76% | 2026 | 2027 |
| S4 (2024) | 73% | 39% | 2026 |
| S4 (2023) | 73% | 39% | 60% |
| S4 (2022) | 78% | 39% | 58% |
| S4 (2021) | 72% (ACM) | 33% | 57% |
| S4 (2020) | 79% (PJ) | 40% (ACM) | 64% |

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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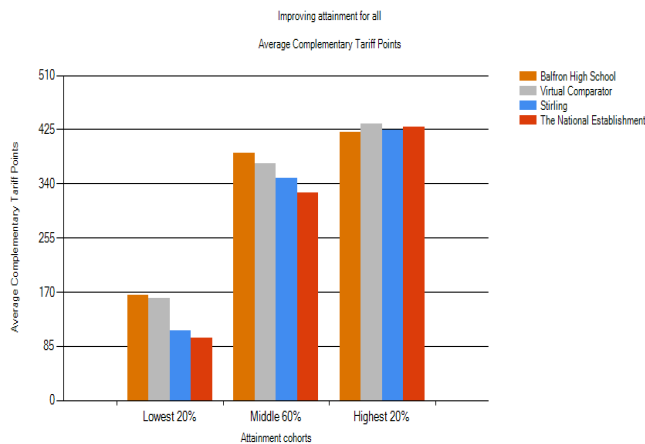
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Improving Attainment for All: S4 - 2024/25 Annual Complementary Tariff Points (Balforn = orange; Virtual Comparator = grey)

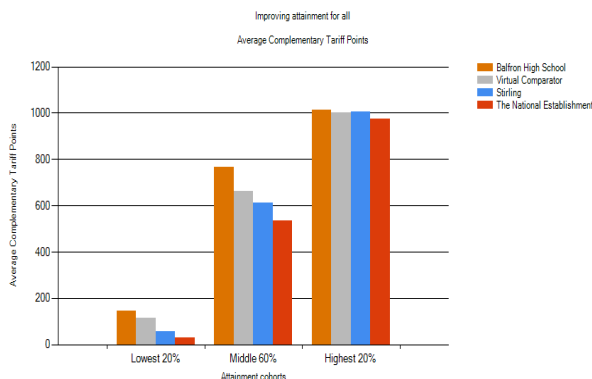


Highest 20% - 420 maximum tariff points in current model (84 x 5As). We would need to present pupils early at Higher to match or exceed our [Virtual Comparator](#) (VC). 29 pupils achieved seven A grade passes - eight more than last session

Middle 60% - 378 average complementary [\(equivalent to 2As & 3Bs\)](#). The middle 60% outperformed all comparators.

Lowest 20% - 166 average complementary tariff points (equivalent to 5 National 4 passes) signals Improvement from last session, now outperforming the VC for lowest 20%

Improving Attainment for All: S5 - 2023/24 - Annual Complementary Tariff Points

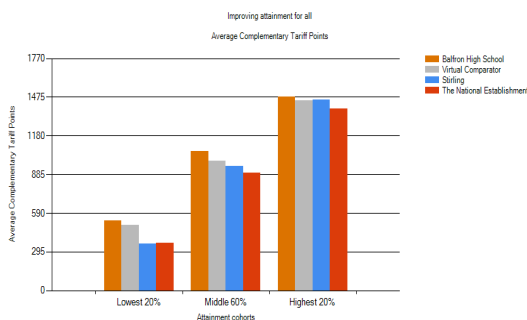


All cohorts outperformed the Virtual Comparator (VC), Stirling & National averages

19 Pupils achieved 5 As at Higher.

Strong performance from middle 60% ([767 tariff points](#)) Equivalent to 4 Highers @B + 1 N5

Improving Attainment for All: S6 - 2023/24 -Cumulative Tariff Points - what did S6 leave with?



Overall value of S6 and attainment in S6 is higher than VC in all cohorts. A range of Level 6 and Advanced Highers (AH) are offered. AH success has a positive impact on pupil transition and tariff points.

Strong ethos of leadership activities, buddying, supporting in classes. Work experience linked with bespoke timetables to support transition beyond school to all destinations.

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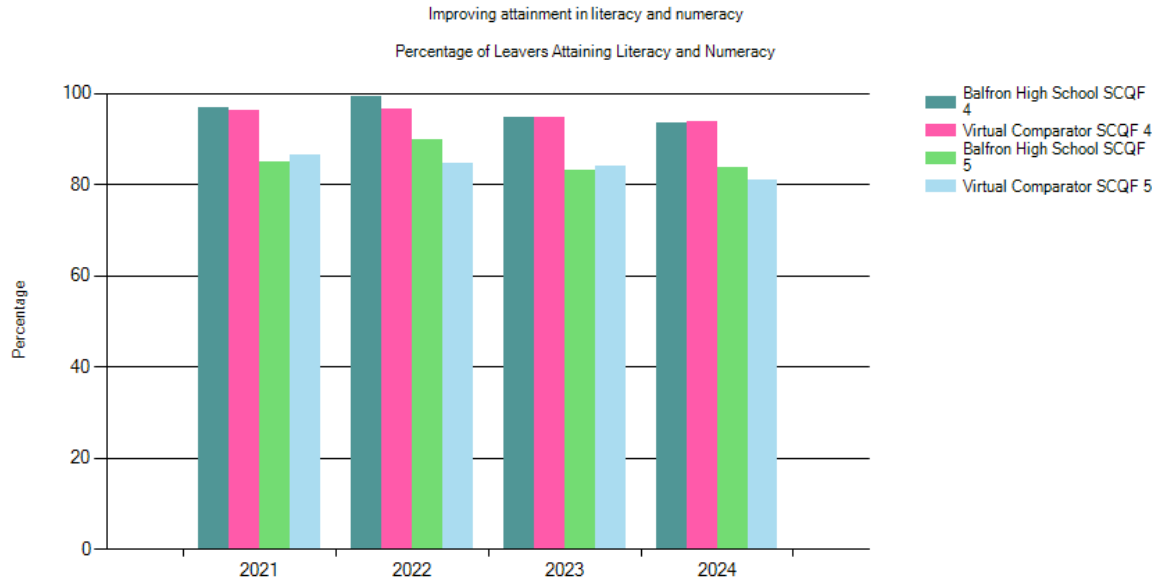
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Action for Improving attainment for all: An ongoing focus is the drive to attain five best qualifications for all pupils; course completion in S6.

S4-6 Literacy & Numeracy (Balfon = dark & light green; virtual comparator = pink & light blue)

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



Overall, **pupils** at Balfon High School performed very slightly below the [virtual comparator](#) (VC) at level 4 and line with our at level 5 and slightly above at level 5.

A noted improvement in attainment at level 5 was recorded in 2025. Driven in partnership between English, maths and pupil support staff, 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.

We also recognise the need to increase the number of learners who continue to secure level 6 in literacy and numeracy.

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

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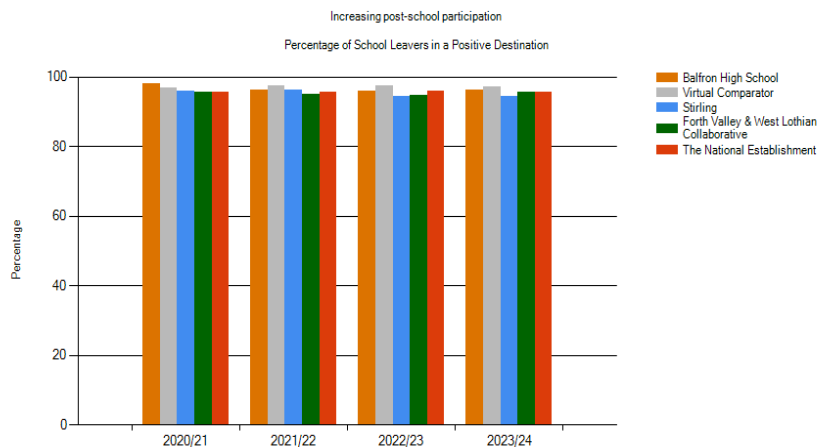
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Leaver Destinations 2023-24



Leaver destinations for 2024 will be published in February 2026 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 2023/24 transitioned to a positive destination.

At the end of S4, most pupils (89%), more than the VC, returned to school for S5. A few left to go to employment (4%; above VC) or further education (3%; significantly below the VC).

At the end of S5, most pupils (78%), more than the VC, returned to school for S6. A few left to go to employment (7%; in line with VC) or further education (4%; significantly below VC).

At the end of S6:

- 14% of leavers went straight into employment (below the VC)
- 5% of leavers went to further education (significantly below the VC)
- 77% of leavers went to higher education (significantly above the VC)

Further Education uptake continues to be significantly lower than our comparators. Transport to college for most young people remains a challenge. Partnership links are being forged with colleges in Glasgow for S5/6 pupils in 2025-26.

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 | 2023-24 | 2022-23 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2019-20 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| S4 | 10% | 1.82% | 6.45% | 4.52% | 5.93% |
| S5 | 22.4% | 23.93% | 16.88% | 14.84% | 19.25% |

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, Balforn Future Pathways Events (pictures below), SEC Careers Event, LEAPs, Engineering for the Future for Girls, talks and trips.

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Summary of Focus Following 2025 Results Publication

| Measure | Key Actions |
|--------------------------|---|
| Attainment for all | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued focus on drive for best five Increased focus on tracking and interventionsImplementation of new tracking system Focus on Moderation Cycle in BGE BGE & Senior Phase assessment review, planning & moderation |
| 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 equity group tracking to allow for early interventions that are monitored Link with Integrated Pupil Support Worker to improve attendance Review of strategy to improve attendance |
| Literacy & Numeracy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BGE tracking and targeted intervention to maximise attainment Track and target early leavers for best secured literacy/numeracy attainment Target those in S6 who have not achieved best possible literacy/numeracy awards |
| Increasing Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with SDS and partners, to maximise positive destinations post school Build connections with Glasgow colleges Increase skills for work courses in senior phase Implement achievement tracking and celebration system |



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Wider Achievement at Balforn High School

We are very proud of the wide range of activities provided for young people at Balforn 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 2024-5:



Achievements are captured in many ways throughout the session from highlighting successes on X, our Parent Padlet, [What's Going on at Balforn](#), celebration boards, the internationalist boards, tannoy announcements and in our [BHS Landing Page](#) for pupils. We de-activated our X account during the session to ensure safeguarding of our young people. We conducted a consultation on communication. As a result we invested in The Parent App, to provide a centralised and focused vehicle for parents to more easily access information that they need. March 2025 saw the first Balforn Highlights for parents and carers. This has been shared monthly.

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

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A key and important message across our school is for young people to '*find your thing*'. We recognise and celebrate individuals progress and achievements, knowing and embracing that everyone is different. To this end staff and young people plan and provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to participate, contribute to and lead.

Following a successful grant application, in April we were given the keys to a brand new mini-bus that was gifted by the Paul Trust. S5 Graphics pupil, Shona Hyde designed the graphics for the bus. This is allowing us to access more events while keeping costs down.

Here is a small sample of some of the wider achievements captured across the school in 2024-25:



- [S1 Teambuilding days](#) at Auchengillan
- Introduction of [Roofing course](#)
- Paired Reading at Drymen Primary School
- 16 [Columba 1400 Leadership Academy](#) graduates (S3)
- S3 Future Assets at JP Morgan
- [S6 Barista Skills](#)
- [STEM Ontrack](#)
- Male Mental Health Day
- Sportability Awareness
- AH Geography field trip to Arran
- [Choir trip to Lockerbie Manor](#)
- International trips to watersports Spain(S2), ski trip to Austria (S5/6), History trip Barcelona (S5/6), Science trip to London (S5/6), S5/6Camps International trip to Zanzibar
- S3 trip to the Yorkshire Dales
- [Pupil Parliament](#) & [Pupil Council](#)
- Sports Council
- Fit for Girls workshop
- Active Girls Day
- Climate Ambassadors
- [Dance Leadership](#)
- Outdoor Learning - Green Routes & Forrest Schools
- 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

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- [Lego Robotics](#)
- S3 [Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards](#)
- School Show - Grease
- [Dance-a-thon](#)
- S1 Micro-tyco
- S2 YPI
- Extensive Inter-House programme including sports, academic & creative
- [S4 Outward Bound](#)
- Live-N-Learn led S4 Study Skills workshops
- S1 Body Works Expedition with the Glasgow Science Centre
- Advanced Higher maths pupils led World Pi Day events for S1 pupils
- Pupil led Equalities assemblies
- AH History Remembrance Assembly
- MVP
- Rotary Young Musician of the Year
- SAMH Peer Educators training
- [The Great Balforn Bake Off](#)
- Podcasting with Creative Stirling
- Girls Rugby team won the treble for the third consecutive year
- Partnership with FEL Scotland
- S2 Football Team Runners-up in East Stirlingshire Cup
- [Growth](#) of [choir](#), [orchestra](#), wind, [string](#), [rock](#), [Jazz](#) bands
- Contributions to Speak Up Stirling



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

| Our progress 24-25 | Impact |
|---|---|
| Review and update Learning & Teaching Policy to reflect recent improvements and aspirations. | Draft completed and collaboration on draft to inform final version. Clarity of purpose and expectation for learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers understand and demonstrate common purpose. |
| All staff undertook research on 'plus one' in working group time. Working groups planned and delivered findings and impact at Pedagogy Festival May 2025 | Successful Pedagogy Festival Increased teacher confidence in their focused area of pedagogy. Research has informed practice. Almost all staff share findings at the festival (those who work that day), others link their research in a shared document. |
| Developed new observation sheet reflecting feedback from last session | Observation sheet updated and piloted. Feedback shared at Leadership Team meeting. |
| Using feedback from teams, areas of expertise and provides input for Teams. | Resource shared via email and posted on L&T website |
| Continued to support revised format of Open Doors - session with hosting PT linked to L&T website resources and report | All PTs have increased experience of observing with HT and colleagues. This has allowed for moderation of observations based on QI 2.3. |
| Plus one research was the focus of tri-learning observations and discussions. | Almost all staff participated in tri-learning visits. Receiving staff share and reflect on 'plus one' area and seek feedback from peers. |
| Increased opportunities for active learning in all classrooms | Weekly Active Learners: Active thinkers CLPL delivered themed around Co-op Learning New Google Classroom 'Active Learners' Observations showed an increase in active learning in lessons. |

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Priority 2: Increased focus on the wellbeing and inclusion of learners & staff

| Our progress 24-25 | Impact |
|---|--|
| Reviewed and developed strategies to improve boys' mental health & resilience | Increased number and variety of input, resources and events available to boys. Back on Side continue to provide a monthly drop in. SAMH S3 Mentors all trained and support in place for young people drop in. Young people presented in assemblies. Pupil led activities and wellbeing support at the Pod being organised for next session (2025-26). |
| Reviewed and developed strategies to improve mental health and wellbeing of all young people | Young people fed back that they are aware of how they can promote positive mental health. Young people can reflect on strategies that help positively impact wellbeing. Audit of opportunities to support mental health & wellbeing of all young people was carried out. Emotional wellbeing lesson introduced in S2 PSE. Wellbeing assessment will be rolled out to all year groups in session 2025-26. Young people are given opportunities and support strategies across the school, e.g. PSE lessons, SAMH mentors, school counselling, integrated support structure. |
| Reviewed and developed strategies to improve mental health and wellbeing of all staff | Range of activities and resources to support staff. All staff are aware of the support and activities available. |
| Reviewed and amended pupil support structures. PT Pupil Support Team reorganised in terms of caseloads. All 4 PT PSs have stage 2,3 & 4 young people. Impact increased equity and fairness between workload for each individual PT PS. Parent Council informed. Letters sent to all Parents of young people with ASN informing them of change. | Support structures are learner centred and clearly linked to Houses. Roles within the structures are clearly understood by pupils, parents and staff. |
| Reviewed Form Time structure and | All staff are clear about expectations to deliver high |

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| <p>programme.</p> <p>Decision made to keep Form Time to 25 mins 4 days a week. Discussion with the Leadership Team to plan Form Time.</p> | <p>quality form time. Resources are available to support Form Time. This will be a further area for improvement next session.</p> |
| <p>The HWB of S1 young people was tracked, monitored and interventions put in place.</p> | <p>Introducing the tracking of wellbeing has enabled staff to identify young people that are facing challenges, particularly those that parents had not informed us about. For example, it gave one young person a platform to share about difficulties at home due to a parental split. Next steps are to roll out to all other year groups in the next academic session 2025-26.</p> <p>We know and can demonstrate that our learners feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. We can show the impact of interventions that have been put in place.</p> |
| <p>Focused on improvement in attendance data.</p> <p>The attendance data shows an improvement in monthly attendance in comparison to the previous academic session. Continued focus on improving attendance statistics next session.</p> | <p>Increased attendance rates noted. Correct and appropriate codes are used in SEEMiS for all young people.</p> |
| <p>Targeted support for care experienced young people to learn, participate and flourish</p> | <p>Improved attendance for care experienced young people.</p> <p>Positive examination results for senior care experienced young people that impacted destinations positively.</p> |
| <p>Reviewed and updated school phone policy in line with Scottish guidelines.</p> <p>Consultation with staff, pupils and parents/carers. Agreed updated approach and update</p> | <p>All staff, pupils and parents are clear about expectations for mobile phone use in school. The policy puts young people's learning and wellbeing at the heart of changes to procedure.</p> |

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

| Our progress 24-25 | Impact |
|---|--|
| <p>Update curriculum rationale and course choice policy/procedures.</p> <p>Timeline for course choice changed to support appropriate and aspirational coursing. Rationale and Policy to be updated 2025-26</p> <p>Course Choice info to be updated during 2025-26 Template to be created for curriculum pathway from S1-6</p> | <p>The needs of learners are at the centre of our rationale, policy and approaches to course choice. Staff, parents/carers and young people are consulted and will be made aware of revised rationale and policy to support course choices.</p> |
| <p>Review and update school day timings and course allocations,</p> <p>Pupil, Staff and parent/carer consultation took place.</p> | <p>Maximised effective use of time.</p> <p>We still see some improvements required to ensure consistent use of form time or use the 100 minutes for curricular input. Further consultation with bus companies and local authority required in 2025-26.</p> |
| <p>Review course choice process - learner pathways for all.</p> <p>DHT consultation and planning with PTs.</p> <p>New courses: N2 Science & Environment, N3 &4 Science, N4 Chemistry; SCQF 5 Powering Futures to run with Criminology; N3 Literacy, SCQF Media and Communication; H Apps of Maths.</p> | <p>Increased progression from S3-6. Learners have high quality conversations with teachers based on data and aspirations.</p> <p>Further options needed for YP who are working between levels 1 and 4.</p> |
| <p>Increased partnerships to enhance senior phase offer</p> | <p>Pilot cohort, Women in Plant and Nat 5 Roofing (with Compass Roofing). Engagement with Build Your Future, Aggreko and TARFF has increased awareness, engagement and uptake of apprenticeship opportunities.</p> |
| <p>Increase Project Based Learning</p> | |

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

| Our progress 24-25 | Impact |
|--|---|
| We held regular meetings with PTs to review | 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 2025-6 |
| We had a tight focus on the young people most at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy. DHT shared and highlighted learners most at risk for staff intervention. | Interventions such as individual support from English, maths and PTs PS/ASN, Easter School, supported study in place to maximise attainment. |
| Staff undertake professional learning through roles in the SQA and through faculty discussion. | Our understanding and application of standards in the senior phase is strong. Attainment outcomes for almost all pupils is very good. |
| We used SQA data (internal tracking and insight) to identify patterns and trends in course components that could be a focus for improvement. In some subjects we looked to improve investigations and project work. | S4 attainment increased. S5 attainment stayed steady. We are putting a focus on 5@ level 6 in session 2025-26 and considering development of SCQF courses that could improve pupil attainment. |
| We reviewed the impact of BGE tracking on appropriate course choice to analyse the link between likely and actual pathways. This led to a full review of BGE tracking and monitoring. | We recognised that we need a tighter approach to tracking progress within and beyond a level. We have bought a new system that will allow us to do this more effectively. Staff training began at the end of the session. Implementation 2025-26. |
| Connections made with Glasgow colleges. | A few young people have been able to access courses offered in the schools programme. |
| We receive £25, 725 Pupil Equity Funds and use it in the following targeted way | |
| Literacy Improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paired reader training for S2 - S6 FSM pupils Targeted support provided to S1 and S2 FSM pupils. Bespoke lessons Drymen Primary paired reader programme - school visits throughout the year | <p>Reading age scores have increased by 1 to 2 years for 6 out of 8 of the supported pupils.</p> <p>Increase engagement with reading</p> <p>4 BHS Learners achieve Dynamic Youth Award certification by June 2025</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'That Reading Thing' Phonics programme with BGE pupils who are Early/First Level Readers - roll out with additional staff | |
| Numeracy Attainment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S1 pupils: small group sessions on the 4 operations • S2 pupils: small group sessions on follow on from bespoke numeracy enhancement class • 1 period each week throughout the school year | <p>Supported learners feel more confident with numeracy work.</p> <p>Improvement in numeracy capabilities shown by learners.</p> |
| Physical activity (HWB): Healthy lifestyle and active travel - Partnership link established with Forth Environment Link. Weekly cycling skills class and delivery of SCQF level 4 Cycle Maintenance Course. | <p>4 learners (S2-S4) achieved a SCQF level 4 Cycle Maintenance qualification by June 2025</p> |
| Extraction from timetabled class/study periods to offer wellbeing intervention based on wellbeing needs (expected 1 period per week for at least 1 term). | <p>Targeted young people (S2/3) working on SCQF Level 2/3 Personal Achievement/ Development award units by June 2025</p> |
| <p>Study guides provided to senior phase learners who are at risk of not achieving in term 1.</p> <p>Delivered additional period for consolidation/catch-up to maximise attainment starting term 1.</p> <p>Ran one group study support in term 2 in preparation for prelim exams.</p> <p>Targeted support periods during study leave and exam leave (terms 3&4) from departments to maximise attainment.</p> | <p>Improved attainment from prelim to SQA results time.</p> |

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2025-26 Improvement Priorities

- **Increased consistency in high quality Learning & Teaching** - focus on improved tracking & feedback
- **Improved Wellbeing & Inclusion of all young people** - focus on mental health
- **Increased offer in Curriculum Pathways** - focus on BGE pathways & increased SCQF opportunities in the senior phase
- **Improved Attainment & Achievement** (5@ level 6, & progression & maximising attainment)



Honesty

Trust

Responsibility

Fairness

Respect



Balfon High School Standards & Quality Report 2024-25

Building futures together



Honesty

Trust

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Fairness

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