

St Columba's High School, Gourock.

Standards and Quality

June 2016



Background Information

St Columba's High School is a Catholic school serving the South West of Greenock along with the town of Gourock and villages of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. We occupy a modern school campus with a capacity for 625 pupils overlooking the Firth of Clyde. The school roll has increased steadily in recent years and in session 2015-16 was 601. We have close links with our local parishes and associated primary schools. The school is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers in order to ensure that every one of our pupils develops his or her full potential.

Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is part of the every-day life of our school. We continually seek to identify our strengths in order to build on these as well as to plan for further improvements. We do this by collecting and analysing data and where possible compare this to national data for similar schools. This includes

- Detailed analysis of pupil attainment in National Qualifications examinations.
- Analysing the progress of individuals and groups of pupils in detail and on a regular basis. This involves monitoring pupils' work from day to day.
- For the senior phase we use national performance information. This is referred to as "Insight" data and it allows us to compare school performance in key areas to schools locally, nationally and to a "Virtual Comparator" school.
- In the Broad General Education we use information from standardised tests called "PiPs" to set targets and expectations for every pupil. We then monitor each pupil's progress against these expectations.
- We regularly analyse pupil attendance and exclusion data along with leaver destinations.

In addition to using data, we regularly look at key aspects of school life, and this includes a systematic programme where learning and teaching is observed across the school. Learner views are gathered through individual conversations, through structured focus group discussions and through the use of questionnaires. Similarly we consult with our parents through opportunities for written feedback, the use of regular questionnaires and through formal consultation with the Parent Council.

The information gathered is compared to examples of best practice provided by Education Scotland. Decisions regarding further improvement are then based on the outcomes of these discussions.

The Report

There are 6 sections to this report.

Section 1 summarises the outcomes of the planned improvements we put in place last session and how these have impacted on our learners and their learning.

Section 2 is a report on key aspects of our attainment for the most recent session for which information is available (2014-15).

Section 3 provides a summary of our findings on the quality of learning and teaching.

Section 4 summarises the key findings of our consultations with learners, parents/carers and staff.

Section 5 summarises the personal achievements of learners in St Columba's High School along with relevant awards and accreditation.

Section 6 a statement on how the school is promoting equality.

Section 1 - How we improved our school.

(See appendix 1 for detailed audit and evidence)

Priority	Progress
Improve the use and impact of data analysis (Insight) to support improved attainment.	Very strong progress has been made. Insight data is being used by all teachers to analyse performance and plan improvements at whole school, department and individual staff levels.
More systematic tracking of individuals and groups linked to effective interventions.	We have made more effective use of data including baseline information (PiPs) and data relating to disadvantage (SIMD) to identify individuals and plan necessary support.
Review arrangements to ensure progression in learning through the Broad General Education for all learners.	Very strong progress has been made. All teachers have used the relevant progression frameworks and engaged in professional dialogue to agree standards and expectations at key points through the Broad General Education.
Support improvements in literacy through the use of “Reciprocal Reading”.	Strong progress has been made with members of the working group trialling the approach with targeted groups of pupils. This is now ready to be extended to more areas of the curriculum.
Develop the capacity of teachers to engage in evidence led improvements to outcomes for learners.	Very strong progress. Four of our teachers undertook the “Uplifting Leadership” programme and each completed a case study focusing on improving outcomes for specific pupils. This methodology is ready to be shared with colleagues.
Ensure the full entitlement to universal support through implementation of a tutor group system	Progress remains at the early stages . The group now intends to pilot a mentoring system on a trial basis with a small group of pupils.
Further implement the authority “Better Relationships, Better Behaviour” policy.	Steady progress. The working group has developed a strategy aimed at phasing out the use of detentions as we progressively develop restorative approaches to school discipline.

Section 2 – How good is our attainment and positive outcomes for our learners?

Positive leaver destinations -

This refers to the percentage of learners who on leaving school go on to Higher or Further Education, Training, employment or recognised voluntary activity.

Almost all learners who left St Columba's High School in the session 2014/15 went on to a positive destination. This was true of those who left at the end of S4 and S5 and S6. Indeed the proportion of those who left at the end of their S5 and moved into a positive destination was much greater than that of our Virtual Comparator.

Improving attainment for all -

This is the attainment of learners, separated into three groups, the 20% of learners in the school who achieved the fewest qualifications, the middle 60% group and the upper 20%, those who achieved the highest qualifications.

*The school's performance in this area is **very good** with attainment of all groups across fourth, fifth and sixth year at least in line with attainment of equivalent groups in our Virtual Comparator*. Major strengths include our middle and highest achieving fifth year groups performing much better than similar groups in our Virtual Comparator. The lowest achieving group in fifth year had higher attainment than the similar group in the Virtual Comparator as did the middle and highest achieving groups in fourth year.*

Attainment of learners who left school at the end of their fourth, fifth or sixth year was in line with that of similar groups in our Virtual Comparator.

Literacy and Numeracy

*Attainment in literacy and numeracy is **very good** across all years from fourth to sixth year. For most measures our learners' attainment was greater or much greater than that of our virtual comparator.*

The attainment in literacy and numeracy of pupils who left school in session 2014/15 was in line with that of our Virtual Comparator.

*The Virtual Comparator is a measure used by Education Scotland to make judgements about school performance. It is expected that schools perform at least in line with their Virtual Comparator. Where performance is greater than the Virtual Comparator, this means that pupils in an establishment are performing better than similar pupils across Scotland.

Attainment versus Deprivation

This compares the attainment of pupils from areas with differing levels of deprivation ranging from those in areas of highest deprivation (SIMD 1) to those who live in areas with lowest levels (SIMD 10). Performance of pupils in each of the SIMD groups is compared with how pupils who live in similar areas attain nationally.

*By this measure our attainment is **good**. Learners who left school last session, across the SIMD groups, performed in line with young people from similar backgrounds nationally. This includes those young people from our most disadvantaged areas. A small number of learners from SIMD 6 areas however, achieved much less than learners from similar areas nationally.*

Breadth and Depth

This concerns the number and level of qualifications passed by learners compared to those of our Virtual Comparator.

*Our overall attainment is **very good**. We have raised attainment continually over time across all year groups. From fourth to sixth year the attainment of our learners is much better or better than attainment in our Virtual Comparator. By the end of fourth year, over half of our learners (51%) achieved five National 5 awards (A-C). This compares very favourably with the 35% of learners who achieved this in our Virtual Comparator. This very strong performance continued into fifth year where the percentage of learners achieving 5 or more Higher Grade passes (21.2%) was almost twice that achieved in the Virtual Comparator (11.8%). The percentage of learners achieving 5 or more Higher Grade passes by the end of sixth year rose to 29.4% compared to 22.7% in our Virtual Comparator.*

A supplementary report on attainment for the session 2015/16 will be published when figures are available in September of this year.

Section 3 - How good is the quality of our learning and teaching? - QI 2.3

Almost all of our parents/carers are satisfied that their child is making very good progress in their learning. Of the 220 parents from across all year groups who replied to this question, 212 agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case. The pattern of responses was consistent across all year groups. All parents who responded agreed or strongly agreed that their child is encouraged to work to the best of their ability in school.

<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Pupils have a consistently high quality learning experience across their subjects and courses.</p> <p>Pupils spoken to across year groups and in a range of classes report that they enjoy learning. They find their learning experience challenging and are very positive about support provided by their teachers.</p> <p>Teacher use learning intentions to very good effect in almost all classes. Most incorporate Higher Order Thinking into these learning intentions. Learners are confident about their progress in developing these skills and can give examples of developing and using them in their learning.</p> <p>Teacher explanations and instructions are consistently clear across the school.</p> <p>Approaches to questioning were strong and encouraged active participation by learners.</p> <p>There are very good opportunities for all learners to engage in a variety of learning activities across the curriculum. These include problem solving, practical activity and group and paired work.</p>
<p>Evidence</p>	<p>Classroom observation reports.</p> <p>Discussion with individual learners as part of learning and teaching.</p> <p>Results of discussion with learner focus groups.</p>

Next steps	<p>There is a requirement for more effective structure to paired and group working in some classes.</p> <p>Increased emphasis on recap/reviewing learning periodically at the end of activities/lessons.</p> <p>More effective approaches to differentiation.</p> <p>Pupils who were spoken to during learning and teaching were very positive about teacher feedback on strengths and next steps. This was consistent with what was observed in most classes. One of our focus groups however considered the quality of teacher feedback needs to be more consistent from teacher to teacher.</p>
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Section 4 - What our parents/carers tell us.

58 parents/carers of first year pupils completed and returned our survey on their child's wellbeing in our school. The responses were

All parents/carers are confident that

- St Columba's High School is a safe environment for their child.
- Their child is respected by their teachers and by other learners.
- Their child is achieving well in school.
- The school sets high standards for pupil learning and behaviour and encourages their child to be a responsible member of our school community.
- Their child has a sense of belonging and is included in the life of the school as well as in important decisions which may affect him or her.

Almost all parents/carers are confident that

- Their child is cared about, nurtured and supported in the school (57/58)
- Their child has opportunities to be active and to take an active part in school life (56/58)

Most parent/carers are confident that

- Their child is supported to make healthy lifestyle choices (54/58).

Next steps - The school will continue to work with our learners to improve the wellbeing of all and to support healthy lifestyle choices

The focus of the questionnaire for third year parents/carers was the quality of information provided to parents and support given to our young people. 37 completed survey forms were returned. Responses were

All parents/carers agreed or strongly agreed that

- The school provides very good information about progress including each pupil's strengths and what they need to do to improve.
- There is very good information about the choices on offer (for the senior phase), and the different pathways available to each learner.
- Parents had very good opportunities to be involved in decisions about course choices.
- Learners are encouraged to work to the best of their ability.

Almost all parents agreed or strongly agreed that

- Their child is making very good progress in his or her learning (36/37).

Section 5 - Personal achievements

In addition to the highest level of attainment, we are committed to providing a wide range of opportunities for personal achievement to all of our learners and to encouraging the widest possible participation in these activities. Some of the achievements are accredited and result in certificates and awards. Others are less formal in nature. All opportunities do however encourage our young people to develop their interests and talents to the fullest and to adopt an active and fulfilling life-style.

Achievement awards

Pope Benedict XVI Caritas Award - 22 of our S6 student achieved this award. It is available to S6 students and takes a snap-shot of a young person's faith witness in one year. It is built on the learning and reflection that each has experienced over the course of time within school. The award encourages young people to recognise that they are part of a community of living faith and to consider how they can share their gifts and talents with the wider Church in the future

Duke of Edinburgh's Award - We offer this award in partnership with Inverclyde Community Learning and Development and the Inverclyde Duke of Edinburgh's Team. All third year pupils participate in the programme and this session 79 out of 101 learners were successful in completing all units and achieved Bronze awards.

Many of our learners who achieved the award last session or previously progressed to Silver and Gold Awards.

French for Life and Work Award - All third year learners (101) achieved this SQA accredited award for their work in modern languages.

ASDAN Awards - ASDAN offers a range of nationally approved qualifications based around the development of personal, social and employability skills. The modules completed included – Communication, Community, Sport and Leisure, Home Management, The Environment, Numeracy, Health and Survival, World of Work, Science and Technology, The Wider World, Anti-sectarianism, Health and Well-being.

The courses were completed in partnership with - Inverclyde Community Development Trust (Heritage Section), Inverclyde Community Development Trust (Anti-sectarian Section), Inverclyde Community Learning and Development (Youth Service)

8 pupils achieved Gold Awards, 1 pupil achieved a Silver level award, and a further 8 pupils and 2 members of staff gained Integrative Complexity Award from Inverclyde Community Development Trust.

4 pupils gained Short Course Awards in Personal, Health, Social Education; Football Research and Presentation Skills; Financial Education; Beliefs and Values; Experience of Work.

Saltire Awards - These were achieved by all third year learners as a result of their participation in the youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI). To achieve the award, learners worked in groups to research local charities and voluntary organisations. They then made contact with their chosen organisation and found out more about their work. Each group then made a presentation to their peers about their chosen charity. The group who were judged to have made the strongest case for their charity were awarded £3,000 from the YPI foundation to donate to their chosen. The successful group donated the £3,000 to Inverclyde Children in Poverty.

Achievement in RE and developing in Faith

We are committed to developing our learners in faith and actively seek opportunities to promote Gospel values through celebration and worship, and through service to the common good. Our school chaplain Fr Dr John Bolland celebrates holy mass each Tuesday at lunchtime and this is very well attended by both pupils and staff. Throughout session 2015-2016, large numbers of our learners represented the school at Paisley Diocesan events. This included the vocations retreat and mass at St Mirin's Cathedral and the St Vincent de Paul conference in Paisley. In addition a group of four senior students attended the Diocesan pilgrimage to Poland to follow in the footsteps of St John Paul II. Some 30 third year learners also went on a school pilgrimage to Rome. Six senior students are currently signed up to join an estimated two million young Catholics at World Youth Day in Krakow, a highlight of which will be the presence of Pope Francis who will celebrate holy mass.

In October our sixth year students went on residential spiritual retreat in the north of England while a group of young people from the NET Ministry team led a day retreat experience for all of our first year pupils.

Achievement in Art

Two St Columba's learners (Chloe Chalmers and Olivia Devlin) achieved silver and bronze medals in the prestigious Kelvingrove Art competition. Lauren Mulaghton was highly commended and six other learners received commendations for their entries.

Learners' experience of Art was also enhanced by a number of field trips and visits. This included second year learners visiting the Alexander Goudie Gallery in Ayr, third year learners visiting local galleries to experience the work of local artists and senior students visiting Kelvingrove Galleries and Scotland Street School.

Achievement in English

Success in public speaking continued this session with a record 3 teams entered into the Associated Speakers Club of Great Britain competition. One of these teams won the Inverclyde heat and went on to represent the authority in the regional final.

Our lunch time readers' group continues to grow and now has 14 regular members drawn from first to third year. Highlights of the year included the group attending a national Scottish Book Trust event and awards ceremony.

Enhancements to classroom learning included an author visit to the school to speak with our fourth year learners. Forty eight of our National Qualifications learners took the opportunity

to visit Eastwood Theatre to see a production of a novel they had been studying in class which was "Sailmaker" by Alan Spence.

Our second year learners enjoyed studying Robert Burns' masterpiece "Tam O'Shanter" and participated on a field trip to Alloway in Ayr to see where Burns was born and to visit the location where his epic poem took place. The Burns theme was continued when four of our learners took leading roles in the annual Greenock Burns Club' Burns Supper for local schools. Ross Gillan was impressive in his delivery of the Immortal Memory and Hannah McGill entertained the audience by singing one of Burns' songs. Jennifer Gray and Emma Lafferty recited some Burns poetry.

Achievement in Mathematics.

A team of third and fourth year learners entered the Enterprising Maths Challenge competition. Matthew Anderson, Anna Dunsmuir, Adam Heron and Zara Weir came first in the Inverclyde section of this competition.

Second, third and fourth year learners were entered into the UK Mathematics Challenge at junior and intermediate levels. The school enjoyed great success with many entrants gaining bronze, silver and gold awards. One of the Gold recipients was Taylor Kennedy who also received a best in school award at intermediate level.

Achievement in Modern Languages.

Our first year learners had the opportunity to enter a competition to create their own Facebook page using only French. There was a very high standard of entry and as a result there were 16 prize-winners.

There was also a very successful European evening with pupils from across the year groups involved in showcasing their language skills through singing, drama and other performance. Our associated primary schools made excellent contributions to the event with drama and video productions.

First year enjoyed a traditional French Christmas celebration at their Fete de Noel. This included singing French Christmas Carols and even a French "Hokey Cokey".

Our second year pupils produced their own film to illustrate the traditional ties between Scotland and France in the "Auld Alliance", while third year learned about life in the French speaking Democratic Republic of Congo with a particular emphasis on Fair Trade. This included writing letters to the DRC embassy in London campaigning for the rights of all children to an education.

Fourth year Spanish learners enjoyed sessions with a native Spanish speaker from Columbia, in South America. These sessions brought together culture, geography and social justice in Columbia.

Senior Spanish students enjoyed a trip to a Spanish restaurant in Glasgow where they were able to use their language skills to converse with staff and order food in Spanish.

Twenty four of our Fourth, fifth and sixth year language students acted as language leaders throughout the session. The group were involved in organising events for younger learners and supporting them in class. Several of our language leaders worked with pupils in our associated primary schools to help develop their enthusiasm for speaking other languages.

Achievement in Science

Our senior science ambassadors participated in a science transition event for the pupils in primary 7 in our associated schools. 22 fifth year students delivered a full day of science activities to the younger pupils. After the school day it was the turn of teachers from local primary schools to experience the activities.

There were several opportunities for pupils to go to the Glasgow Science Centre. 17 second year learners attended a “bloodhound” event, where the learning was based on forensic science. Another group of second year attended engineering event based around the attempt to break the world land speed record. This involved designing and making a rocket propelled model car and the St Columba’s group’s car turned out to be fastest.

Mrs Gallagher’s science groups have been busy planning our new school garden. A group of fourth year students went along to Cornaleas on a field trip for some ideas. Another group was involved in astronaut Tim Peake’s experiment to measure the germination and growth of plant seeds that had experienced zero gravity in space.

Senior physics student Stuart Laing won a place at the prestigious Scottish Space School at Strathclyde University. Stuart will participate in space related learning during the summer break and hopes to be successful in winning a place on a study trip to NASA in Houston Texas in the USA.

Achievements in Music

Adam Stinson of S5 was the Rotary Club Inverclyde Young Musician of the year. Adam is a talented pianist but his success came as a result of his performance on Saxophone. Anna Kane was runner up in the vocal section of the same competition. Many of the school’s music groups and soloists also enjoyed great success at the Inverclyde Music Festival.

The school hosted the Gourock Schools and Churches Together community concert. Our concert band, string ensemble, brass ensemble, choirs and numerous instrumental and vocal soloists showcased their talents and provided wonderful entertainment.

The music department contributed greatly to church liturgy over the session. The brass ensemble played at St Mirin’s Cathedral as part of the Lenten Catechesis programme. School masses were also enhanced by the quality of musicianship and singing, culminating in the Mass of St Columba to celebrate our Patron Saint’s feast day.

This year’s summer school show was the musical “Oliver” which played to packed audiences throughout its run. The quality of performance was outstanding and the show received rave reviews from all who came along.

Achievement in Social Subjects

Two of our senior students visited Auschwitz as part of a programme organised by the Holocaust Memorial Trust. On their return from this visit, Kimberly Dodson and Kara Gillan prepared presentations and shared what they had learned with all learners at special year group assemblies.

In November the school marked Remembrance Day at special assemblies where third year History pupils shared their learning about the first world war with other year groups. A further 15 of our second and third year learners participated in a project with the RIG Arts Club. The group participated in a term long series of after school workshops exploring World War I poetry and literature.

Field trips included a day visit to Loch Lomond National Park by geography students and a modern studies visit to the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. In March 28 of our senior students spent a long weekend in London and the visit included a tour of the Westminster Parliament.

Achievement in Personal and Vocational Education

Fifth year ASDAN students participated in an anti-sectarian project. ASDAN students were also involved in hospitality and catering for the Gourock School and Churches Together community concert. A large group of ASDAN students attended the Sky Skills Academy where they learned about the media and celebrity culture and produced their own filmed news report.

Senior Accounting and Finance students enhanced their learning by going along to the National Accounting Conference and participating in the business related competition.

Achievement in physical education and sport

The school has a wide range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities for our young people. Sports clubs and teams include

- Badminton
- Boys and girls football across the age ranges.
- Netball.
- Boys and girls rugby.
- Basketball.
- Swimming.
- Cross country running.
- Rowing.
- Heptathlon.
- Dance.
- Athletics.

The S1/2 boys' rugby team won the merit league cup. The team was also top of the Inverclyde rugby league.

Hannah McGeehan took first place in the S1 Girls section of the Inverclyde Cross Country Championship. Ryan Brown was third in the S3 boys' event.

Sports ambassadors and sports leaders from S3-S6 organised a range of sporting events for pupils in St Columba's and those in our associated primary schools.

Outdoor Activities Group

This new group was introduced this session. There are currently over 50 active members drawn from first, second and third year. The group started with a kayaking and canoeing experience at Lochwinnoch Watersports Centre. They have also been learning map reading and navigation skills. The group were very active in fundraising and helping to decide on and plan their activities. The session ended with a highly successful outdoor adventure weekend at Lockerbie Manor outdoor centre.

Section 6 - Equalities Statement

St Columba's High School is a Rights Respecting School and is committed to ensuring the rights of all, particularly those of all young people. Our commitment to equalities comes directly from our Catholic faith committed as we are to Christian values. As a result, equality and non-discrimination is embedded in our curriculum. From time to time this is enhanced by events that emphasise particular areas of equality. This session we emphasised four relevant areas.

- A group of our senior students prepared for and attended an International Women's Event at Glasgow City Chambers. The event title was "Empowering Women through Education, Employment and Enterprise.
- Assemblies on Holocaust education.
- S5 ASDAN anti-sectarian project.
- During anti-bullying week we concentrated on raising awareness of homophobic bullying, in particular the use of homophobic language, and challenging this.