

**Balfron High School
Stirling Council**

15 March 2005

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1. Background

Balfron High School was inspected in November 2004. Subjects included in the inspection were English, mathematics, physics and S1 science, and geography. The school is a non-denominational secondary school serving Balfron and other villages in the surrounding rural area of West Stirlingshire. Through a public finance initiative, Stirling Council and a commercial construction company provided a new school building which opened in August 2001. The school provided a very high standard of accommodation and an excellent learning environment for staff and pupils. Over a quarter of pupils attended as a result of parental placing requests. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 959. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was well above the national average.

Members of the inspection team analysed responses to the questionnaires issued to samples of pupils, parents and carers, and to all staff. They also met the chairperson of the School Board and interviewed groups of pupils and staff.

At the time of the inspection, the school was in the early stages of implementing a substantial change in the management and promoted posts structure. This change was designed to promote a more holistic approach to support for pupils through revised remits for senior managers and the newly-appointed principal teachers, which included a pastoral support role. Staff had been fully consulted on the implementation of the new model, and parents and pupils had been kept well informed about how it would affect them.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The overall high standards of attainment at all stages.
- The quality of the learning environment provided by the excellent accommodation and facilities.
- Many examples of very effective teaching including the use of information and communications technology (ICT) and co-operative learning strategies.
- The commendably wide choice of courses, particularly at S5/S6.
- The leadership of the headteacher and the strong support of senior managers and promoted staff in managing effectively a period of substantial change.
- The partnership with parents, support agencies and the wider community.
- The valuable contribution of senior pupils to the life of the school and the welfare of younger pupils.

3. What are the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff?

Less than half of the sample of parents surveyed responded to the questionnaire. Of those who did, almost all felt that they were made to feel welcome in the school and that staff responded well to any matters of concern they raised. They were satisfied that teachers set high standards for their children's education and treated their children fairly. They considered that the school had a good reputation in the local community. Some would like to have a clearer idea of the standard of work the school expected from pupils. Almost all pupils enjoyed being at school and were positive about most aspects of their experience there. They felt that teachers expected them to work to the best of their abilities and helped them with difficulties in their learning. While most felt safe and secure at school, some did not think that the school was good at helping to sort out any worries they had. Almost all staff liked working in the school. They felt that pupils were enthusiastic about learning and there was mutual respect between staff and pupils. However some teaching and ancillary staff felt that communication and the school's approaches to dealing with indiscipline could be more effective. Less than half of the ancillary staff who responded felt that their training time was used effectively. Further details about what most pleased parents and carers, staff and pupils, and what they would most like to see improved, can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

4. How good are learning, teaching, attainment and achievement?

In evaluating the overall quality of learning, teaching, attainment and achievement, HM Inspectors observed aspects of learning in the inspected departments and more widely across the school. They also reviewed the extent to which the structure of the curriculum addressed pupils' needs, and they analysed pupils' performance in national examinations (see Appendix 3).

The curriculum, learning and teaching

The overall quality of the curriculum was very good. The curriculum for S1/S2 was broad and balanced across an appropriately wide range of subjects. The school had successfully developed rotations of subjects in some areas of the curriculum in order to reduce the number of teachers pupils met in a week. At S2, the organisation of classes was helping to improve the pace of learning in English language and mathematics. Across S1/S2, pupils' skills were being developed by a course in ICT. At S3/S4, almost all pupils studied eight courses at Standard Grade or equivalent. A number of subjects had used curriculum flexibility effectively to offer courses at Intermediate 2 level in place of Standard Grade with a view to increasing challenge and raising attainment. Alternative curricular choices, including life skills and European citizenship studies, were meeting more effectively the needs of a small number of pupils who did not study a foreign language. At S5/S6, the school provided pupils with a commendably wide choice of courses appropriate to their needs and enabling progression from their courses in S4. Almost all pupils studied a combination of five subjects at Intermediate, Higher or Advanced Higher levels. From S3 to S6, pupils were able to specialise in specific subject areas such as the sciences. Productive links with further education colleges enabled many pupils to study courses using distance learning. Pupils at S6 were developing their ICT skills through the European Computer Driving Licence programme. At all stages, a number of cross-curricular developments had been introduced to improve skills in numeracy, literacy, ICT and personal study, and to promote healthy lifestyles.

The overall quality of teaching was good, and there were many examples throughout the school of very effective practice. Most teachers provided a good variety of approaches and activities and maintained an appropriate pace of learning, sometimes by setting time limits on particular activities. They explained ideas and instructions clearly and used questioning effectively. Many teachers made very good use of ICT facilities to provide more stimulating experiences for pupils and to involve them more actively in their learning. Following a whole-school focus on co-operative learning, a number of staff were employing the techniques very effectively to develop pupils' ideas and reinforce learning. In some lessons, however, where the emphasis was on teacher-led approaches, pupils were too often passive and had too few opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. In most classes, pupils were well motivated, co-operative and remained on task. Teachers generally used praise well, supported individuals and groups through regular interaction and provided helpful feedback to pupils on their work. In a number of classes, particularly at S1/S2, work was not appropriately challenging for all pupils. The school had a range of effective strategies in place to prepare primary pupils for their transition to secondary school and to support them in their first few weeks. A number of departments had established good initiatives to promote continuity in pupils' learning from P7 to S1. However, in some subjects, staff did not take enough account of pupils' prior learning.

Attainment and achievement

The overall quality of attainment was very good at all stages. At S1/S2, pupils were making good progress in their coursework in almost all classes. Over the past three years, attainment in mathematics and in reading in English had shown improving trends. Attainment in writing had also shown some improvement, but had dipped in 2004. In each of these subject areas, an increasing proportion of pupils were exceeding appropriate national levels by the end of S2.

The following comments are based on SQA data for the period 2002 to 2004.

At S3/S4, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more awards at grades 1- 2 or their equivalent at Standard Grade, was consistently well above the national average. It was much better than in schools with similar characteristics in all key attainment measures. At S5/S6, the proportions of pupils achieving three or more, and five or more Highers at grades A-C by the end of S5 were consistently amongst the top 10% of all schools nationally. Attainment by the end of S6 also showed similar high standards. Performance in these measures was much better than for schools with similar characteristics. Pupils at S5/S6 were also presented for a range of Intermediate 2 and Advanced Higher courses. On average over the past three years, around two-thirds of pupils presented gained grades A-C, although there was significant variation in performance across the different courses and in different year groups. There had been some reduction in No Awards in the past year, but there was scope for further improvement.

Information on the subjects inspected is given later in the report. Significant features of attainment in the subjects not inspected were as follows.

- At S4, pupils' performance in chemistry, biology and German was notably better than in their other Standard Grade subjects over the past five years. Pupils performed notably less well in Standard Grade computing studies than in their other subjects.
- At S5/S6, pupils performed better in chemistry than in their other Higher subjects.

In addition to maintaining high standards of attainment, the school provided a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop skills and demonstrate achievements in a variety of contexts. Many pupils had benefited from opportunities to take part in local field trips, conferences, residential experiences and foreign visits and exchanges. A large number took part in very popular shows, concerts and other musical events. With the support of parents and staff, many pupils participated successfully in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. The school sports co-ordinator had encouraged large numbers of pupils to participate in a wide range of sports. Pupils had achieved success in a variety of individual and team sports, including some who were national champions in their chosen activities. Well-supported clubs enabled pupils to develop their interest and skills in, for example, music, art, ICT and chemistry. Pupils and staff had worked together on recycling and environmental activities and the school had gained the Bronze Award in the Eco Schools programme. With support from an environmental agency, they were now working to complete an audit of energy use and of the environmental impact of the school.

Many senior pupils made valued contributions to the life of the school and the welfare of younger pupils through willingly undertaking a range of additional responsibilities and duties. These included providing peer support such as paired reading, mentoring or 'buddying' younger pupils and engaging regularly with them in form classes. The charities committee co-ordinated a range of activities which had raised substantial sums of money for charitable causes.

English language

Learning and teaching

Teachers varied their approaches well and explained new work clearly to their pupils. A few teachers used direct teaching methods very effectively to engage pupils and extend their learning. In almost all classes, pupils were hardworking and concentrated closely on their assignments. They had some good opportunities to learn independently by making use of ICT to find and use information. In a small number of classes in S5/S6, a few pupils did not co-operate with teachers in their learning. Teachers generally met the needs of their pupils well, especially at S3/S4. The department was currently reviewing the nature and delivery of courses from S1 to S4 to increase the pace and challenge of learning, and ensure a more consistent approach to homework.

Attainment and achievement

By the end of S2, almost all pupils achieved appropriate national levels of attainment in listening and talking. Most achieved, and an increasing proportion exceeded, these levels in reading and writing. Attainment in reading had improved recently. At Standard Grade, the proportion of pupils achieving Credit awards was well above the national average. At S5/S6,

the proportion of S5 pupils presented for Higher was well above the national average and the proportion achieving A-C grades was above the national average. The proportion achieving A-C grades was in line with the national average for Intermediate 1 and below the national average for Intermediate 2. Almost all of the relatively small number of S6 pupils presented for Advanced Higher had achieved an A-C grade.

Other features of pupils' attainment and achievement included the following.

- Many S1 pupils had recently participated enthusiastically, and in many cases to a high standard, in a national competition for story writing.
- Some S5/S6 pupils who were members of the Slavic society were developing their awareness of the culture, language and literature of Slavic countries, in part through an active link with a school in the Ukraine.

Mathematics

Learning and teaching

There had been considerable disruption to staffing in the mathematics department in recent months. Together with a lack of clear guidelines for teachers, this had resulted in a significant variation in the quality of teaching and in the continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The most effective teachers were making very good use of ICT to explain concepts and ideas. They questioned pupils very well to check their understanding and to keep them actively involved in their learning. However in many lessons, pupils' learning experiences were more passive. They had few opportunities to work together in class and were not involved in monitoring their own progress. While most pupils were well behaved and hardworking, a few were not engaged in their learning and were disruptive in class. Tasks and activities were generally well matched to pupils' needs from S2 to S6. However in S1 classes, teachers did not build effectively on pupils' prior learning with the result that the needs of many pupils were not being well met.

Attainment and achievement

By the end of S2, most pupils were reaching appropriate national levels of attainment, and over a third of pupils were exceeding them. These proportions had been steadily increasing. At S3/S4, the proportion of pupils gaining Standard Grade awards at all levels was consistently above the national average. In S5/S6, the proportions of pupils gaining grade A and grades A-C at Higher had recently improved to above national averages. The proportion of pupils gaining A-C grades at Intermediate 2 was well below the national average. Of the few pupils presented for Intermediate 1, the majority were gaining A-C grades. Performance at Advanced Higher varied too much, with the majority of pupils in 2002 and 2003 gaining no award. However in 2004, almost all pupils had gained A-C grades.

Geography

Learning and teaching

Teachers shared the objectives of lessons with pupils. They provided clear explanations and instructions and used questions effectively to help develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. They were beginning to make increasing use of ICT to help improve the

quality of pupils' learning experiences. Most lessons were well planned and conducted at a brisk pace. At all stages, pupils worked very well in class, particularly in group activities and where they were encouraged to be actively involved in lessons. Homework was well planned and linked closely to the units of study. Staff did not always plan tasks sufficiently well to ensure appropriate levels of support for all pupils. The department did not take sufficient account of pupils' prior learning.

Attainment and achievement

At S1/S2, pupils were developing a good knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts across a suitably wide range of contexts. At S3/S4, presentations for Standard Grade geography were well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving grades 1-2 was generally well above the national average but had dipped slightly in 2004. At S5/S6, the proportion of pupils presented for Higher geography was well above the national average and had risen in recent years. Overall, the proportion of pupils achieving grade A and grades A-C at Higher was above the national average. At Intermediate 2 level in travel and tourism, the majority of candidates achieved A-C grades. Too few pupils presented for Advanced Higher achieved A-C grades.

Other features of pupils' attainment and achievement included the following.

- The standard of organisation and presentation of pupils' work was good at all stages.

Physics and S1 science

Learning and teaching

Teachers planned lessons carefully and provided clear explanations and instructions. However, they did not always share lesson objectives with pupils or review what they had learned at the end of lessons. Throughout the department, there were many examples of teachers using ICT very effectively to enhance pupils' learning experiences. In a number of lessons, teachers made very good use of co-operative learning strategies to develop pupils' understanding of physics ideas and concepts through group discussion. Pupils responded very well to these approaches. Pupils were well motivated and co-operated well with staff and with each other when engaged in group activities. They carried out practical work responsibly and effectively. Teachers met pupils' needs well at all stages. At S1/S2, activities to develop pupils' thinking skills provided additional challenge in science courses. Team-teaching arrangements were providing opportunities for the sharing of good practice amongst staff in the department.

Attainment and achievement

Overall, most pupils in S1/S2 had a good knowledge and understanding of key concepts and ideas in their coursework. While most were developing good reporting skills and presented written work well, in a few classes standards of presentation were not consistently high enough. At S3/S4, the proportion of pupils achieving grades 1-2 at Standard Grade was in line with the national average. The quality of awards had improved recently with a greater proportion achieving grade 1. At S5/S6, presentations at Higher were above the national average, and the proportion of S5 pupils achieving grade A and grades A-C had shown improvement in 2004, when they were well above national averages. On average, only around half of those presented for Intermediate 2 from 2002 to 2004 had gained A-C grades.

At Advanced Higher, around two-thirds of pupils had gained A-C grades. At both Intermediate 2 and Advanced Higher, too many pupils gained No Award.

Other features of pupils' attainment and achievement included the following.

- Many pupils used the Internet and other ICT resources confidently to revise coursework, to analyse data or to research and present information for group projects.
- Over the past two years, three senior pupils had gained places at the Scottish Space School Conference at Strathclyde University and one had been selected to visit the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Centre in Houston, Texas.
- A group of senior pupils assisted a physics teacher with running a successful science club for pupils in the local primary schools.

5. How well are pupils supported?

Arrangements for ensuring the care, welfare and protection of pupils were good overall with some very good aspects. The recently implemented structures for improving pupil support took full advantage of the layout of the building by helping pupils and staff develop a greater sense of identity within the three 'houses' and nine 'home areas'. The school had well-established procedures for dealing with bullying, informing pupils about drugs misuse and promoting race equality. All staff were familiar with child protection arrangements. The revised arrangements for pastoral care, which had been phased in at S1/S2 from the start of the current session, ensured that form class leaders and pastoral care staff knew their pupils very well. They responded quickly to concerns about pupils. Along with senior prefects, staff were readily accessible to pupils who required advice and support. Pupils appreciated the level of care they received and felt safe and secure. However, some at S3 to S6 did not fully understand the shared approach to pastoral care and were not always clear about how they could obtain support and guidance. The school promoted healthy lifestyles through, for example, actively encouraging healthy eating and involving pupils in a wide range of sporting and other extra-curricular activities. In a particularly commendable initiative, a group of S5/S6 pupils had established the 'Living Room' which provided a forum for discussion and advice for pupils in S1 to S4 on a range of health and welfare issues.

The quality of the personal and social education programme (PSE) was very good. It covered key aspects of pupils' development in relation to healthy lifestyles, substance abuse, sexual health and personal relationships. At S1, pupils set personal and social targets in consultation with their form class leader and parents. At S5/S6, pupils were given opportunities to select the topics and speakers for their PSE programme. They co-operated well with staff in organising a successful 'ethics day' to explore moral and social issues in the wider community. Some senior pupils had recently taken part in a lively radio discussion about the rights of young people. In consultation with pupils, staff evaluated the PSE programme to ensure that it met the needs of pupils effectively. The school provided very good opportunities for pupils to develop self-esteem and active citizenship skills through participation in a Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, work experience, the pupil councils and the prefect and 'buddy' systems.

The school provided very effective curriculum and vocational guidance for pupils. In S2 and S4 to S6, pupils and their parents were given helpful information on course choices including advice from staff, as appropriate. Pupils from S2 onwards were well supported in making

informed decisions about career options. Arrangements for providing vocational guidance for pupils were very good. Pupils had ready access to the up-to-date careers area, including computer-based sources of reference. All S4 pupils participated in a well-structured programme of work experience. The careers adviser provided valuable support to pupils at all stages. There were very good links with employers, local businesses and a wide range of universities and colleges.

The recently-appointed principal teacher of learning support had made an impressive start to developing the role of the department within the school. However, there remained some significant weaknesses. Some staff were still unclear about the role of their specialist contribution to support for pupils within the revised structure. They did not yet evaluate the quality of programmes that they offered. Learning support teachers provided effective support for pupils with communication and language difficulties. They offered some joint working with subject teachers to develop the curriculum in order to meet pupils' needs. Class teachers valued the support provided by learning support teachers and the experienced support from learning assistants. A number of S6 pupils gave valued assistance to younger pupils through, for example, paired-reading activities. Pupils with a Record of Needs received regular reviews of their progress. However, targets set within individualised educational programmes (IEPs) for pupils with identified learning needs were not sufficiently specific or measurable. This made it difficult for staff to evaluate pupils' progress towards achieving their targets.

The deputy headteacher with responsibility for pupil support and the principal teacher played a strong role in ensuring effective links between the school and a range of external agencies. They worked closely with inclusion support workers, the literacy outreach teacher, psychological services and health care professionals. The school was committed to developing the role of class teachers within the 'house team' approach to support the needs of all pupils. It was well placed to develop further its inclusive approach to supporting pupils with a wide range of additional support needs.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Quality of accommodation and facilities

The school had outstanding accommodation. The new building was very well designed to promote the effective delivery of a broad, modern curriculum and to meet the educational needs of pupils and the wider community. Extensive consultation involving staff, pupils and other stakeholders during the planning phase had helped to ensure that appropriate, high quality, specialist facilities were available in all departments. A particular strength was the quality of provision for ICT, including ready access to modern computers for staff and pupils throughout the school, and interactive whiteboards installed in every classroom. Open learning areas adjacent to classrooms encouraged staff and pupils to use the accommodation flexibly to promote group work and independent learning. Members of the local community made regular use of the school's facilities, such as the swimming pool, indoor and outdoor sports areas, ICT suites, the theatre and spacious atrium for educational and recreational use in the evenings and at weekends.

Ethos

There was a quiet, orderly and purposeful ethos throughout the school. Staff made visitors feel welcome. Pupils and staff identified strongly with the school and were pleased to work there. The morale of most staff and pupils was high. However, a number of staff had yet to be persuaded of the effectiveness of the revised arrangements for supporting pupils and dealing with indiscipline. The school was currently reviewing the policy on promoting positive behaviour to ensure more consistent approaches amongst staff. Overall, relationships between staff and pupils were relaxed and positive and pupils were well motivated and well behaved. The tradition of high attainment and success, the first-class learning environment and teachers' high expectations all had a positive influence on the school's ethos of achievement. Most teachers used praise effectively to encourage and motivate pupils. Individual and class points systems were used to reward pupils' good efforts, and their achievements and successes were recognised on display boards, news bulletins and daily announcements. A sense of equality and fairness was evident throughout the school. Studies within PSE, religious and moral education, and social subjects helped raise pupils' awareness of issues of race and gender equality.

Partnership with parents and the community

The school had very good partnerships with parents, outside agencies and the wider community. The School Board was very supportive and had played an active role in helping parents to understand the recently revised management structure. The school communicated regularly with parents and had sought their views on issues such as school uniform and the new form class structure at S1/S2. As part of the induction arrangements for the new S1 intake, almost all parents had attended interviews with form class leaders. Several parents assisted with extra-curricular activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and sports coaching. Through productive liaison with local primary schools, there were very good arrangements for pupils transferring into S1 and a number of valuable curricular initiatives which helped improve continuity of learning. The headteacher had been proactive in developing links with the local community. She had arranged a successful seminar involving pupils and a range of community agencies to explore issues relating to the needs of young people in one of the local villages and to seek ways of resolving areas of concern.

7. Improving the school

The headteacher had been in post for two years. In that time, she had demonstrated very good qualities of leadership during a period of substantial change in the school. She had a clear vision for the school which focused on improving the quality of pupils' learning and raising further the already high standards of attainment and achievement. She had given a high priority to promoting effective learning through the increased use of inter-active ICT facilities and co-operative learning strategies. She had ensured that staff were supported in developing these skills through well-planned, high quality training and improved ICT resources in every department. She was strongly committed to implementing the revised management structure as a means of extending the responsibilities of promoted and unpromoted staff to provide more effective support and guidance for pupils. She had involved staff fully in discussing the implementation of the new model and had gained the confidence and support of most teachers. The three depute headteachers brought a wide

range of professional skills and experience to their areas of responsibility. They were very supportive of the headteacher and staff and were positive about their revised remits, which they fulfilled with evident commitment and enthusiasm. Collectively, with the headteacher, they formed a strong and effective management team. The recently-appointed principal teachers had made a very good start to developing their roles in promoting effective learning and teaching and providing support for staff and pupils within their 'home areas'. Those principal teachers who had retained their previous remits were committed to improving the work of their departments.

The school's approaches to quality assurance were good and improving. The headteacher had taken a number of steps to establish a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. She had developed, in consultation with staff, a self-evaluation schedule which outlined clearly their individual and collective responsibilities and set out timescales for the various stages in the programme. All staff were involved in using national quality indicators to evaluate the work of the school with a particular focus on key areas identified by a school improvement group. The outcomes of these audits provided evidence of good progress in addressing previous development targets and identified priorities for future improvement. It also provided a sound evaluative basis for the school's Standards and Quality Report. Senior managers and principal teachers had well-defined roles and responsibilities for quality assurance, which included the monitoring of learning and teaching through a programme of classroom visits. They were still at an early stage in implementing these duties. Senior managers had established a systematic approach to monitoring pupils' progress and attitudes to learning in S1 and S3. They had also introduced more rigorous tracking of progress and attainment for a targeted group of S4 pupils. The positive impact on these pupils' attainment had encouraged the school to extend these arrangements to all senior pupils in the current session.

As a result of the clear vision and direction of the headteacher, the commitment and support of the management team and improvements to quality assurance and self-evaluation procedures, the school was well placed to take forward further improvements.

The school and the education authority should take action to continue to maintain, and where appropriate raise further, standards of attainment and achievement of all pupils. To help them achieve this, they should take account of the need to:

- address the weaknesses in learning support noted in this report;
- continue to promote consistently high standards of learning and teaching through the sharing of existing best practice; and
- continue to work with all staff to implement successfully the new management structure to ensure that it achieves its aims of improving support for pupils and raising achievement.

What happens next?

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents and carers. Within two years of the publication of this report parents and carers will be informed about the progress made by the school.

Donald Vass
HM Inspector

15 March 2005

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be very good

- Overall quality of attainment: S1/S2
- Overall quality of attainment: S3/S4
- Overall quality of attainment: S5/S6
- Structure of the curriculum
- Personal and social development
- Curricular and vocational guidance
- Accommodation and facilities
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Equality and fairness
- Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community
- Leadership
- Effectiveness and deployment of staff with additional responsibilities

We judged the following to be good

- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experiences
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Pastoral care
- Climate and relationships
- Self-evaluation

We judged the following to be fair

- Learning support

We judged the following to be unsatisfactory

- No aspects were found to be in this category

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

<p>What pleased parents and carers most</p>	<p>What parents and carers would like to see improved</p>
<p>Almost all thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children enjoyed being at school and found work stimulating and challenging; • the school had a good reputation in the local community; • they were made to feel welcome in the school; • they found parents' evenings helpful and informative; • staff treated children fairly and showed concern for their care and welfare; and • teachers set high standards for pupils' attainment. <p>Most thought the school was well led.</p>	<p>Some thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school did not explain how they could help with their children's homework or make it clear what standard of work it expected from pupils; and • they did not have a clear idea of the school's priorities for improvement.
<p>What pleased pupils most</p>	<p>What pupils would like to see improved</p>
<p>Almost all thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they enjoyed being at school; • they got on well with other pupils; • teachers expected them to work to the best of their abilities and helped them when they were having difficulties; and • the school helped them keep safe and healthy. <p>Most thought that the behaviour of pupils in the school was good.</p>	<p>Some thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers did not listen to them or treat them fairly; and • the school was not good at helping them if they had something which worried them.
<p>What pleased staff most</p>	<p>What staff would like to see improved</p>

<p>All thought that staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • worked hard to promote and maintain good relations with the local community; • set high standards for pupils' attainment and provided constructive feedback to them about their work; and • were aware of the school's procedures for child protection and showed concern for pupils' care and welfare. <p>Almost all felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bullying was dealt with effectively; • pupils were enthusiastic about learning; • there was mutual respect between staff and pupils; and • pupils' successes were regularly celebrated. 	<p>Some staff would like to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better communication between senior managers and staff; • more opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process; and • more regular discussion on how to achieve the school's priorities. <p>A significant minority of staff did not feel that indiscipline was dealt with effectively or that standards for pupils' behaviour were consistently upheld in the school.</p> <p>A majority of ancillary staff did not feel that their training time was used effectively.</p>
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Appendix 3 Attainment in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Qualifications

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:

7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C
 6: Higher at A-C
 5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2
 4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4
 3: Access 3 Cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6

Percentage of relevant S4 roll achieving by end of S4

		2002	2003	2004 ¹
<i>English and Mathematics @ Level 3</i>	Balfron High	96	94	98
	Comparator Schools ²	97	96	96
	National	91	91	91
<i>5+ @ Level 3 or Better</i>	Balfron High	97	96	98
	Comparator Schools	97	96	96
	National	91	91	91
<i>5+ @ Level 4 or Better</i>	Balfron High	92	88	92
	Comparator Schools	90	88	88
	National	77	76	76
<i>5+ @ Level 5 or Better</i>	Balfron High	57	52	53
	Comparator Schools	46	47	46
	National	34	34	34

Percentage of relevant S4 roll achieving by end of S5

		2002	2003	2004 ¹
<i>5+ @ Level 4 or better</i>	Balfron High	93	93	90
	Comparator schools ²	90	91	90
	National	78	78	78
<i>5+ @ Level 5 or better</i>	Balfron High	71	68	67
	Comparator schools	60	62	61
	National	45	45	45
<i>1+ @ Level 6 or better</i>	Balfron High	66	62	62
	Comparator schools	56	53	50
	National	39	39	38
<i>3+ @ Level 6 or better</i>	Balfron High	41	40	43
	Comparator schools	37	33	34
	National	23	23	22
<i>5+ @ Level 6 or better</i>	Balfron High	23	22	19
	Comparator schools	15	14	14
	National	9	10	9

Percentage of relevant S4 roll achieving by end of S6

		2002	2003	2004 ¹
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Balfron High	73	75	71
	Comparator schools²	63	64	62
	National	46	47	47
1+ @ Level 6 or better	Balfron High	68	71	66
	Comparator schools	60	60	57
	National	44	44	43
3+ @ Level 6 or better	Balfron High	55	55	54
	Comparator schools	47	45	43
	National	31	31	30
5+ @ Level 6 or better	Balfron High	42	36	37
	Comparator schools	30	33	27
	National	20	20	19
1+ @ Level 7 or better	Balfron High	27	26	28
	Comparator schools	20	20	19
	National	12	12	12

¹ Pre Appeal.

² Comparator schools are the fifteen schools immediately above and the fifteen schools immediately below the school being inspected in terms of the percentage of pupils entitled to free meals (FME).

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Children's Services, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Argyll House, 3rd Floor, Marketgait, Dundee, DD1 1QP or by telephoning 01382 349999. Copies are also available on our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

If you wish to comment about secondary inspections

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of secondary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Dr Bill Maxwell, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to Hazel Dewart, Business Management Unit, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office or by telephoning 0131 244 8468 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4-6 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS. You can also telephone 0870 011 5378 or e-mail enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk.

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