



ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTAINMENT REPORT
AREA COMMITTEE



Hermitage Academy

June 2024

School information/school context:

Hermitage Academy is a six year non-denominational comprehensive secondary school, located in Helensburgh, in Argyll and Bute. The current building was completed in 2008 and provides exceptional accommodation indoors and out to meet a huge variety of needs for our ever-growing range of courses.

At the 2023 census, the school roll stood at 1284 pupils, it was 1254 in 2022. The FTE staffing complement is 89.74. The percentages of pupils accessing free school meal entitlement is 10.6%. Hermitage Academy serves a geographically diverse area, and a broad range of families in terms of socio-economic status and employment. The catchment includes both urban and rural areas and many families are also employed by the Ministry of Defence, in a wide range of occupations. Hermitage Academy has excellent links with all associate Primary Schools which are: Arrochar, Cardross, Colgrain, Garelochhead, Hermitage, John Logie Baird, Kilcreggan, Luss, Rhu, Rosneath and St Joseph's.

Hermitage Academy's vision states: "Hermitage Academy aims to provide an education for all our young people which will enable them to: achieve their potential, experience success and be well prepared for life beyond school."

We are fully committed to Argyll and Bute Council's strategy, Our Children, Their Future, focusing on respect, openness and fairness. Our priorities take into account the main aims: Raise educational attainment and achievement for all; Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people; Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed; Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life; Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement; Strengthen leadership at all levels.

In 2021 all stakeholders were involved in establishing and refreshed set of vision and values for the school and these are summarised in "We ARE Hermitage" – Ambition, respect and equity. At Hermitage Academy, the priority is to ensure these are more than words and are embedded in all of our planning, research and support.

In 2022 Hermitage Academy became the first school in Scotland to gain national recognition at gold level for the Investors in Young People programme. The report paid particular attention to our commitment to upskill younger staff, empower them to take ownership over their career development and to enable their voice to have an impact.

In 2022 Hermitage Academy also became the first Secondary school in Argyll and Bute to be awarded with Unicef UK's Rights Respecting School Award at Gold: Rights Respecting. The assessors praised the entire school community and highlighted that it was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Section 1 S3 ACEL Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

School	Level	% Achieved			
		Reading	Writing	L&T	Numeracy
Hermitage Academy	Third Level or better	96.0	95.9	95.9	92.7
Argyll & Bute	Third Level or better	88.5	86.9	89.0	86.0
Hermitage Academy	Fourth Level	73.0	72.9	70.5	65.2
Argyll & Bute	Fourth Level	54.4	51.4	53.8	56.4

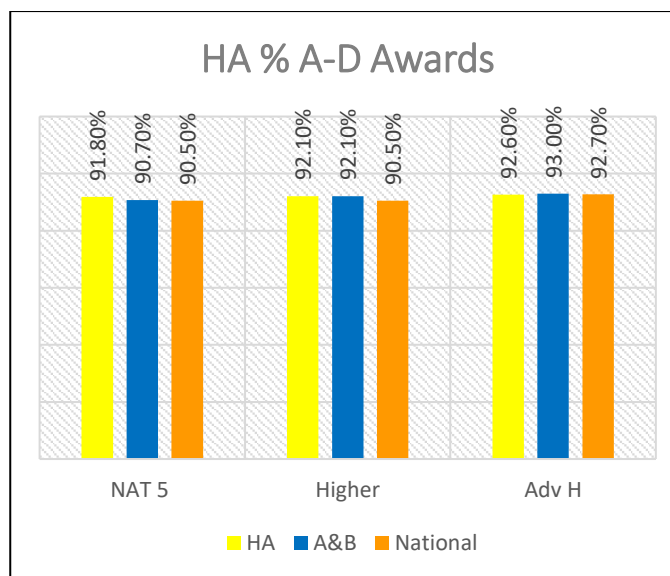
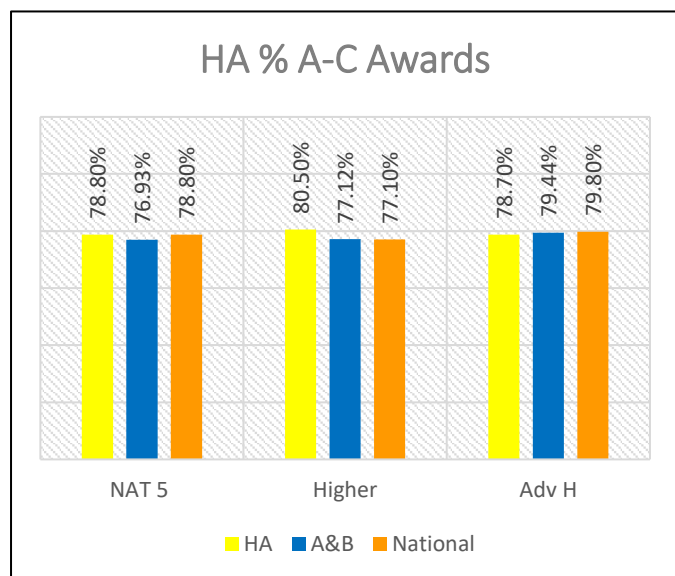
Evaluative Comment

Overall attainment in Literacy and Numeracy levels for session 22/23 is very positive in comparison to Local Authority figures.

As highlighted as green in the table above, 100% of measures are higher than Local Authority averages.

Listening and Talking at level 4 and numeracy at level 3 have been areas for development within the school over the past year and we are particularly delighted to see the improvement of performance in these areas.

Section 2 National Qualifications 2023 – Percentage of Awards – A-C and A-D



Evaluative Comment on NQ Attainment – comparisons, strengths and areas for development:

At National 5 both A-C and A-D pass rates are above both Local Authority and National measures.

At Higher both A-C and A-D pass rates are above both Local Authority and National measures.

At Advanced Higher A-C and A-D pass rates are below the Local and National measures.

National 4 pass rate sits at 100% for 2023 presentations.

We continuously work to improve the quality of pass and this is demonstrated by the positive percentage of As and Bs gained by our young people at all levels.

Section 3 Insight Data

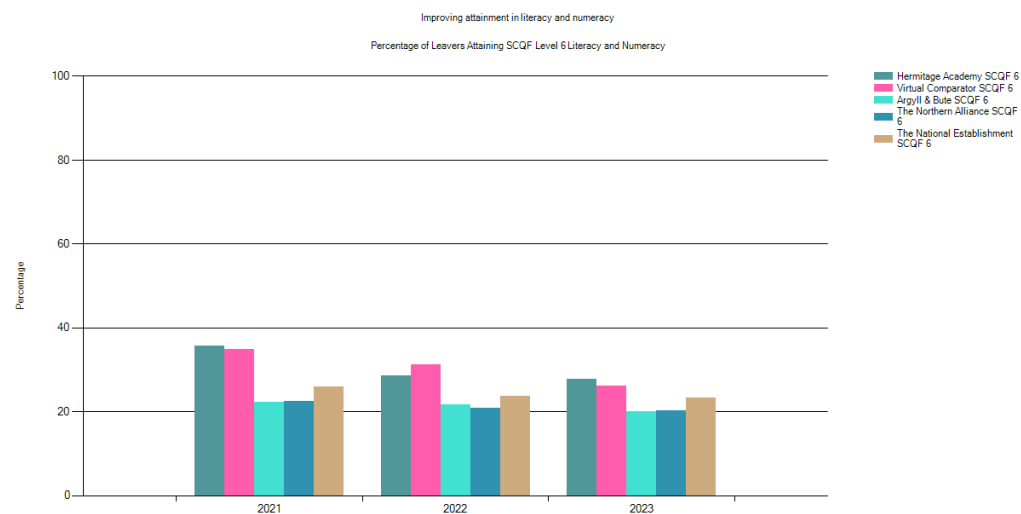
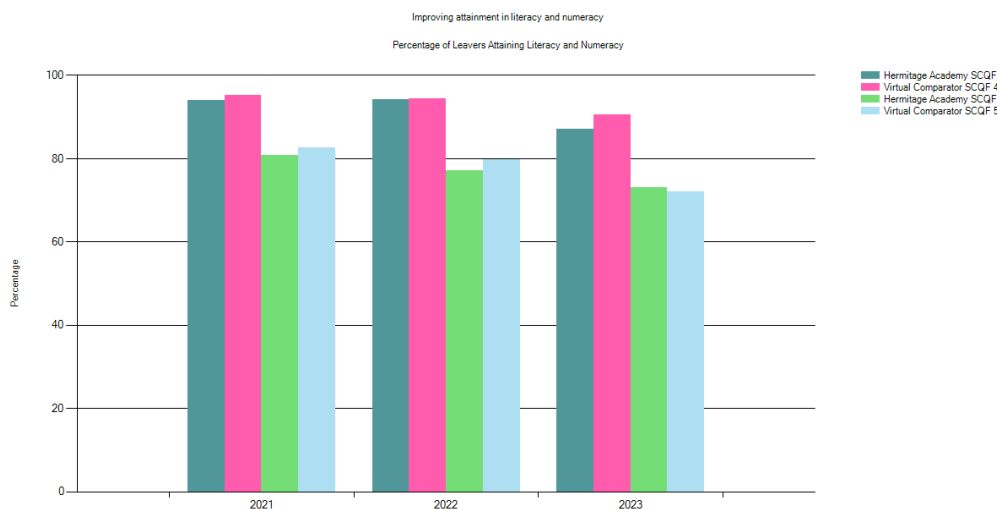
What is Insight Scotland?

Insight is a professional tool, aimed at teachers and other staff. It is used to help secondary schools and local authorities identify areas of success and where improvements can be made for pupils in the senior phase. The dashboard has four measures:

- Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy (presented below as separate Literacy and Numeracy graphs)
- Increasing Post-School Participation
- Improving Attainment for All
- Attainment Versus Deprivation

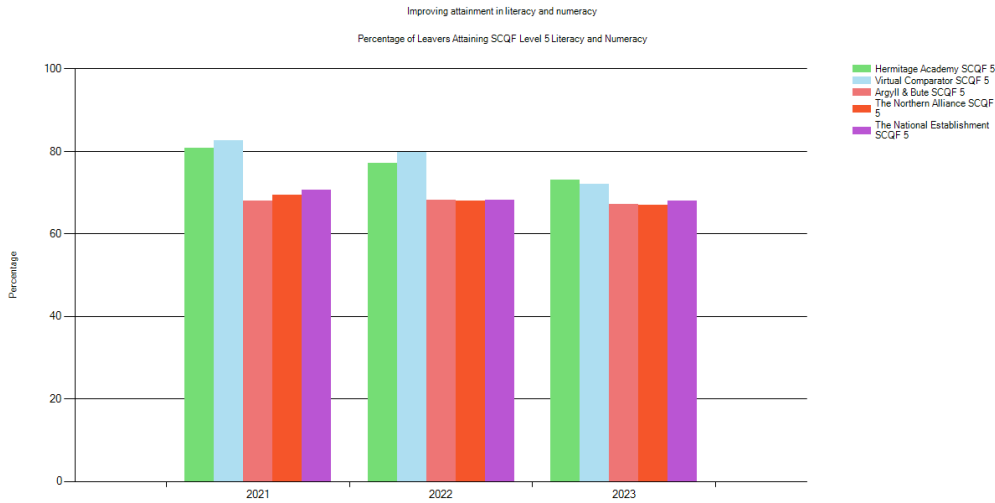
The school's data below is compared to what is termed *The Virtual Comparator*. The virtual comparator consists of a sample group of school leavers from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the school leavers from the school in question. This allows the most accurate and meaningful comparison of attainment data.

3a Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy



Evaluative Comment

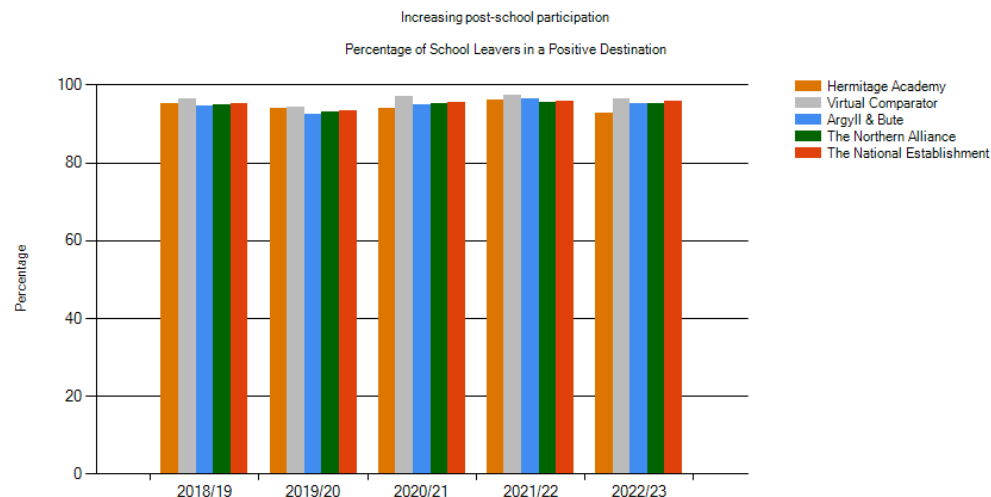
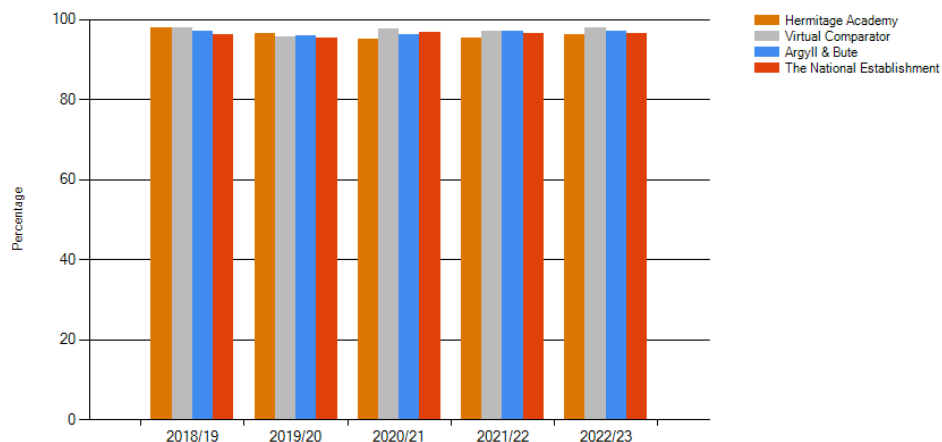
The percentage of our young people who leave school with both literacy and numeracy at level 4 is above the Local Authority average and below the virtual comparator in session 2022-23. The percentage of pupils leaving Hermitage Academy with both Literacy and Numeracy at level 5 is above the Virtual Comparator value, local authority average, Northern Alliance average and national average in all measures.



Evaluative Comment

The percentage of our young people who leave school with both literacy and numeracy at level 6 in 2022-23 is above the Virtual Comparator value, local authority average, Northern Alliance average and national average in all measures.

3b Increased post-school participation



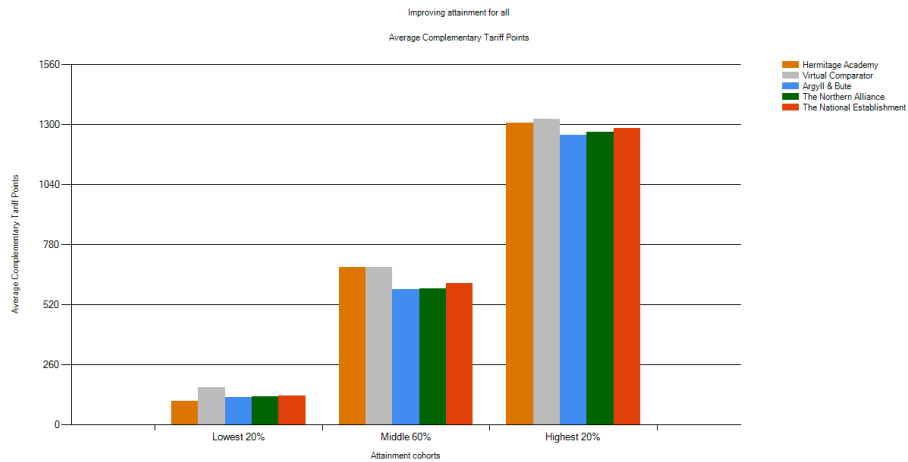
Evaluative Comment

Over the last three years the participation rate of our young people in senior school at Hermitage Academy has grown steadily. 94.9% in 2020-21, 95.4% in 2021/22 and 96.1% in session 2022/23.

Once a pupil has left school into a positive destination we work closely with SDS to ensure that this continues as a sustained outcome. The biggest challenges our young people face in sustaining their destination surround both long term non-attendance and the negative impact of poor mental health. This is the case with the 2022/23 cohort.

In addition to the bespoke support provided by House Teams in the school, the counselling service available to our young people and their families is becoming an increasing important resource that is utilised effectively on a regular basis.

3c Improving attainment for all



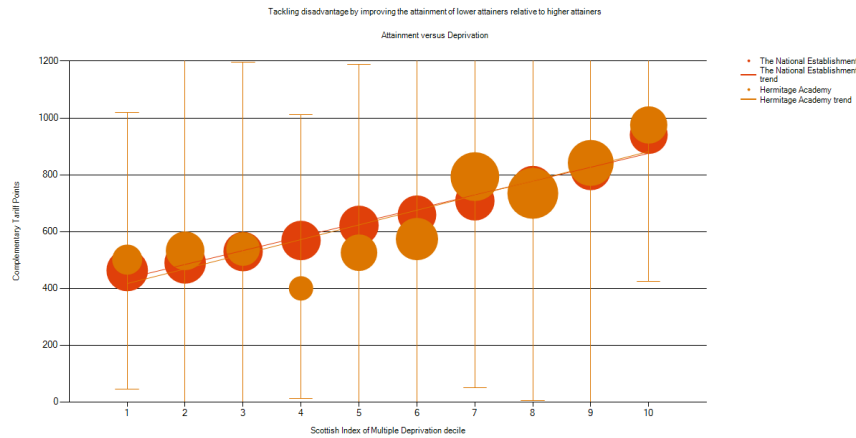
Evaluative Comment

The improving attainment for all measure is split into looking at groups of young people. Highest 20%, middle 60% and lowest 20% of performers. The Hermitage Academy average for both highest 20% and middle 60% is higher than National, Argyll and Bute and Northern Alliance values. The school average also sits above the virtual comparator measure for the middle 60% of performers.

The lowest 20% value is below the Virtual Comparator measure and this is an established priority for the school through targeted intervention and support for identified groups of our young people. This includes long term non-attendance at school and the impact of poor mental health.

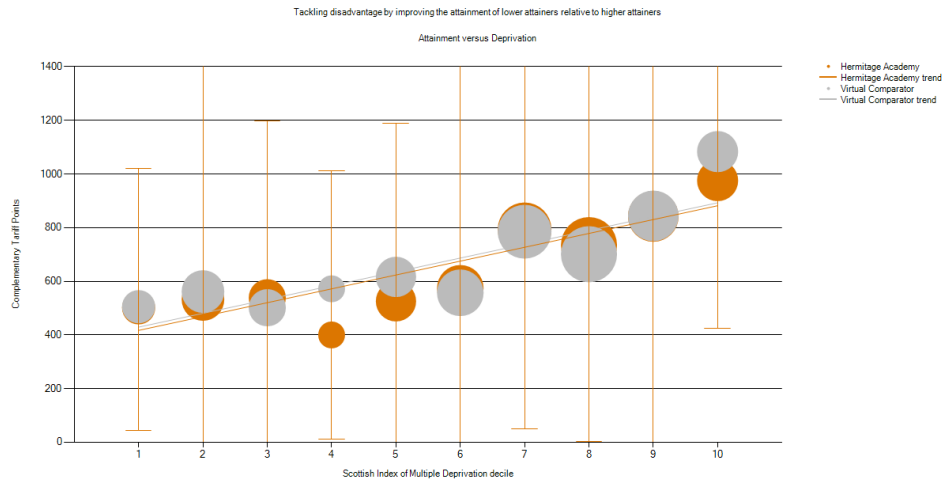
3d Attainment versus Deprivation

School against National



The Hermitage Academy average line runs consistently with the National trend across SIMD 1-10. Particularly strong figures are demonstrated at SIMD 1, 2, 7 and 10. We have used the information provided through insight to evaluate performance and identify areas for development across the deciles, in particular SIMD 4-6.

School against Virtual Comparator



The Hermitage Academy average runs in line with the Virtual Comparator average across SIMD 1-10. Particularly strong figures are demonstrated at SIMD 3 and 8. We have used the information provided through insight to evaluate performance and identify areas for development across deciles 4 and 5.

Section 4 Wider Achievement Qualifications

National Certificates; Higher National Certificates; Scottish Vocational Qualifications; National Progression Awards; Skills for Work qualifications; Foundation Apprenticeships; Scottish Baccalaureate

Overall evaluative comment/narrative on Wider Achievement Qualifications in your school:

The introduction of a number of these awards, for example Musical Theatre, Criminology and lab skills has helped to provide appropriate breadth and depth to the learning pathways for our young people.

As part of the school improvement plan we are working with SCQF Partnership and have been accredited by them at bronze level. The next step is that departments are looking at appropriate pathways within their own areas to provide the opportunity to continue progression within the faculty. The most recent example of this is Creative Industries within the Art and Design Department.

During session 2022/23 we presented 22 pupils for their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze awards and this has led to a progression route for further pupils sitting Silver. This has also been a very positive aspect of our support for young people with additional support needs.

Section 5 Equity and Attainment – Evaluation of Key Factors

Factor in attainment						
Attendance	School Ave. Att. 22-23: 87.8%					
	Measure	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
	Attendance	92.63%	91.67%	90.83%	92.06%	87.8%
	Authorised Absence	4.82%	5.07%	6.01%	4.22%	6.51%
	Unauthorised Absence	2.52%	3.24%	3.11%	3.69%	5.65%
	Attendance Number of Pupils (%) - Authority Average	91.24%	90.30%	90.01%	90.05%	87.38%
	Attendance Number of Pupils (%) - National Average	Not collated	90.70%	Not collated	86.70%	Not collated

The table above demonstrates attendance rates for the previous five years. 2022/23 attendance demonstrates a levelling of the reduction in attendance highlighted last year. However, the trend over time demonstrated that 2021-22 was the lowest level for five years. This is mainly due to the increased trend in unauthorised absence, which mirrors the national picture.

Exclusion

No. of Exclusion Incidents 22-23: 15
 No. of Exclusion Openings 22-23: 55

Measure	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Exclusions:					
Exclusion Openings - number	120	88	143	168	80
Exclusion Incidents - number	31	29	46	47	17
Number of Pupils	25	23	37	30	16

The table above demonstrates a continuation of the significant reduction in both the number of young people excluded from school and the number of openings this relates to.

As a school we are managing exclusions in a shorter time frame for each incident and this is reflected in the reduction of openings by 32%.

Our whole school nurture approach and that of increased staff training in this area has improved relationships across this school.

Having achieved our Silver Nurture status we are now carrying out all the requirements for Gold and look forward to our next accreditation visit.

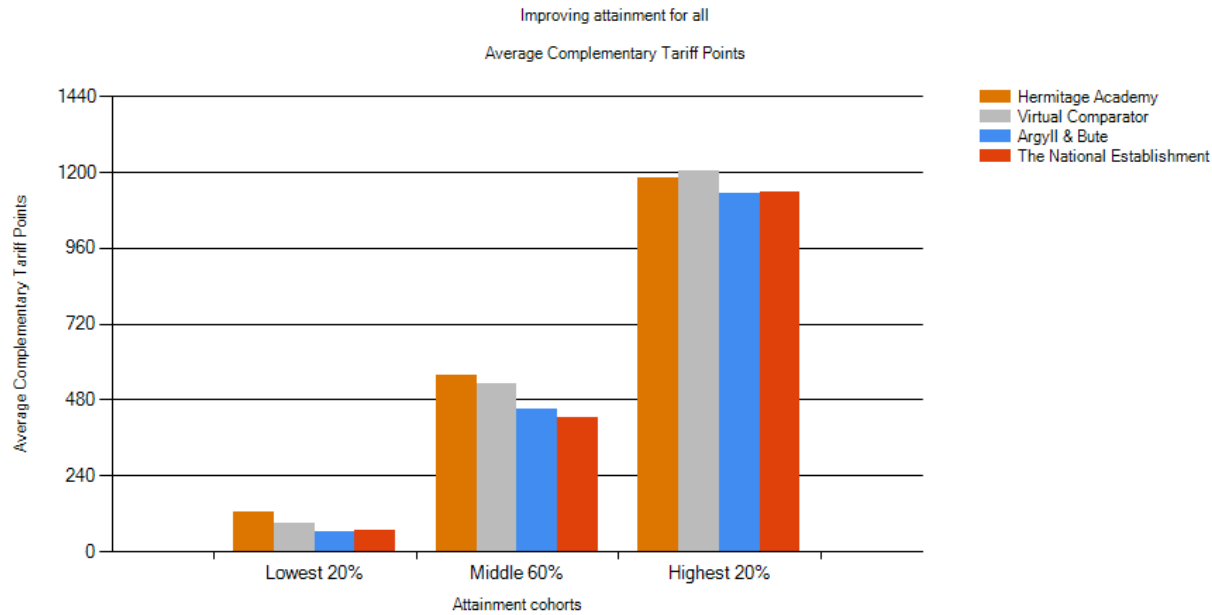
Additional Support Needs

2022-23: 37.67% of the school population

Performance of pupils with Additional Support Needs S4-6

The graph below demonstrates the default comparison of the performance of our young people who have additional supported needs. It highlights a positive picture of performance against the VC, Local Authority and National figures.

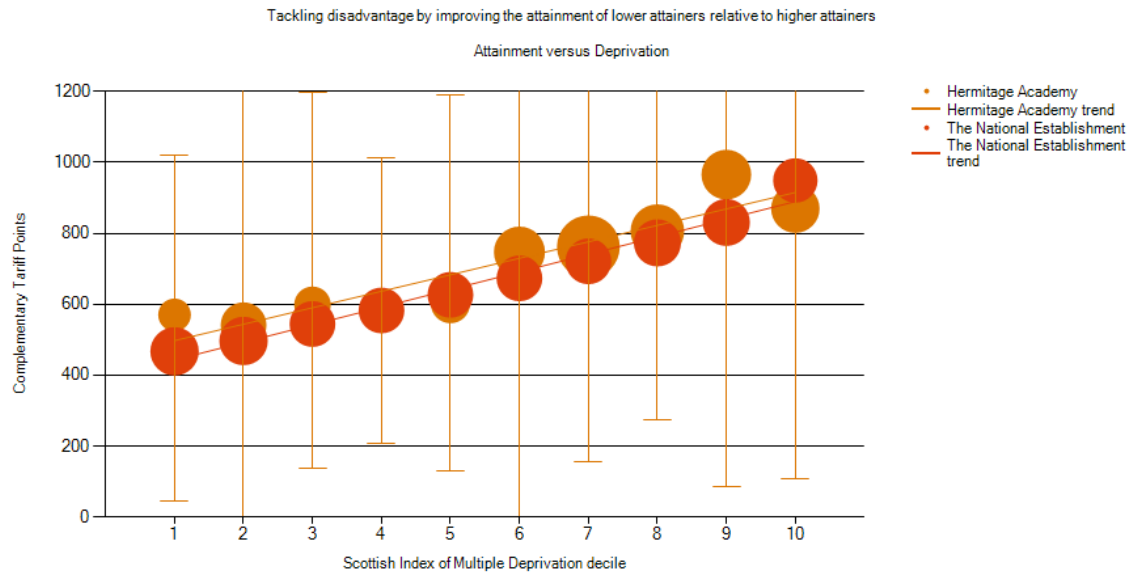
The selected year is 2023



SIMD

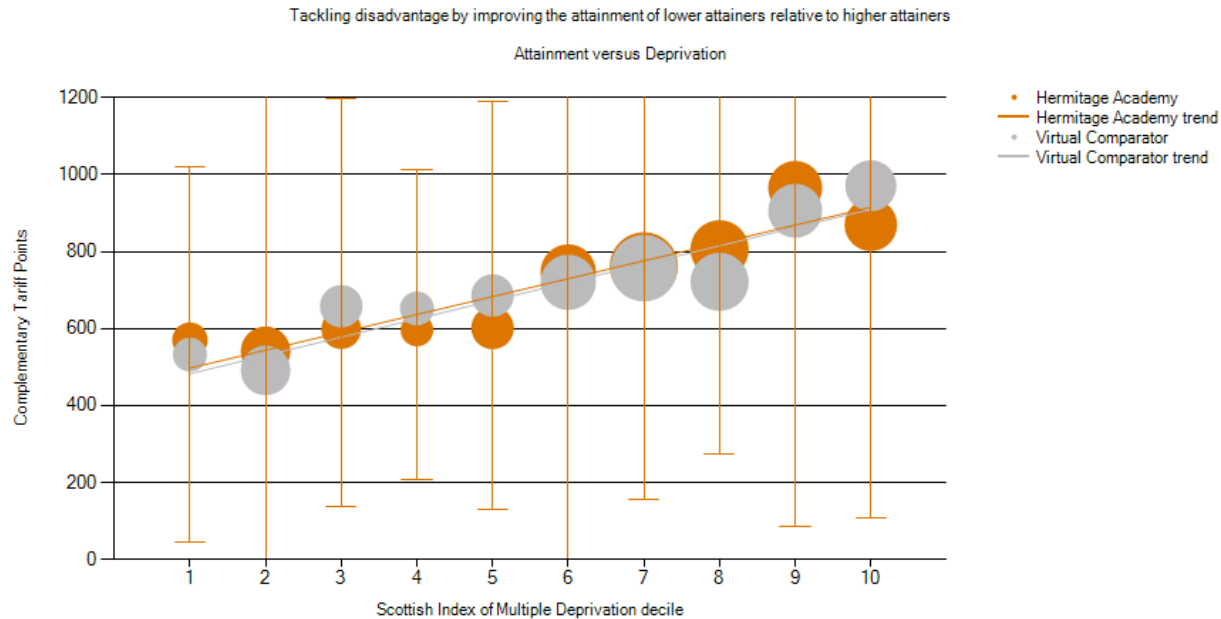
The graph below demonstrates school performance against National figures relating to SIMD deciles. It highlights that Hermitage Academy is consistently above the national trend line from SIMD 1-10.

The selected year is 2022/23



The graph below demonstrates school performance against VC figures. It highlights that Hermitage Academy is above the VC trend line from SIMD 1-10. It is particularly pleasing to see that the school adds the most value from SIMD 1-3.

The selected year is 2022/23



Drilling down into our own data we have been working with Principal Techers and subject staff to look at performance across the school against SIMD. The table in the SIMD attainment gap section demonstrates pupil performance by year group, stage and by vingintile. It has helped to inform very positive professional dialogue about barriers to learning and strategies to overcome these.

Free School Meal Entitlement

2022/23: 10.6%

The table below demonstrates information around free school meals for the previous five years. The number of pupils taking up the entitlement is higher than the 8.71% figure for last session. Our figure of 10.6% for 2022-23 is the highest over the five year trend.

One of the targets for our Family Liaison Officer over the past year has been to aid families who have not applied for the grant but that we know are eligible. Support with completing and submitting the paperwork for the grant has been very much appreciated by our families.

Measure	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Free School Meals (number of pupils)	108	97	98	132	107
Free School Meals (% of number of pupils)	8.57%	7.74%	8.05%	10.53%	8.71%
Free School Meals (%) - Authority Average	9.45%	11.31%	10.75%	12.29%	12.94%
Free School Meal - National Average for Secondary Schools (%)	14.40%	15.00%	15.60%	N/A	15.14%

Care Experienced (and previously Care Experienced)

2022-23: 4.8% of school roll

Pupil Equity Funding

Rangers FC Charity Foundation Programme

The Rangers Charity Foundation's Wider Achievement programme aims to re-engage young people who could benefit from a different learning environment than traditional school-based learning. One day a week for the full academic year, 12 pupils from Hermitage Academy travelled with school staff to Ibrox stadium where Rangers Charity Foundation staff led a variety of physical and academic activities. Pupils' love of football helped motivate them to achieve a range of qualifications including First Aid at Work (SCQF Level 6), First Aid for Mental Health (SCQF Level 5), Steps to Work Award SCQF Level 3/4, and Sport and Recreation: Personal Fitness (SCQF Level 4).

In addition to the academic qualifications gained, pupils were able to reflect on their aspirations and readiness for employment through a range of experiences including sports coaching of local Primary school pupils and workshops with industry partners including Timpsons and Skyrora.

Family Liaison Officer (FLO)

Our Family Liaison Officer is funded by PEF and they work with our most vulnerable young people to provide intense support to pupils and families. This helps to build close partnerships with agencies such as Social Work Services, local Foodbanks and Young Carers. Pupils and families are identified via the child planning processes and staged intervention.

As a result, pupils spend more time in class engaging with staff across the school, ensuring greater educational outcomes. Pupils and parents, have advised that they feel that the FLO knows them and their families well and will therefore report difficulties straight to them including lack of food, ability to buy uniform, shoes etc. Parents will also request support to complete benefit applications and free school meal entitlements.

As a result of these relationships, the young people in the families the FLO works with spend less time presenting with dysregulated behaviours, out of class, with an improved sense of self-worth and ambition as well as an increased understanding and use of self-regulation strategies.

The FLO has a bank of uniform items which are regularly issued to support young people and families to meet the requirements of the school's uniform guidance.

Numeracy

We have utilised Pupil Equity Funding to increase staffing across the Maths Department. This has allowed us to create small groups and one to one Numeracy time within the department to help provide additional support to young people who have been identified through our targeted intervention process. The increased staffing has helped our young people to engage with work that covers gaps in their learning from from periods of non-attendance at school.

Nurture Principal Teacher

Pupil Equity Funding helps to provide a S1 Weekly Nurture Group to support a successful transition from Primary to Secondary. Feedback from all young people and their parents has been incredibly positive, recognising that the Nurture sessions helped them to settle in and enjoy S1 at Hermitage Academy. The PT post also provides 1-1 bespoke Nurture Plans and makes sure that they are in place for young people requiring additional support to regulate behaviours, navigate social situations, and related therapeutic inputs.

Breakfast Club

Hermitage Academy whole school Breakfast Club is now very much part of our daily routine. All young people are invited to come along for free breakfast items such as toast, cereal bars, yogurts, as well as croissants and waffles at the end of month for a treat. This ensures all young people in the school, regardless of need or background are able to begin their day with a hearty breakfast in order to be able to focus on learning and teaching in the classroom. The universal offer removes any stigma which might be attached to receiving the breakfast.

Section 6 Other information

Our Children, Their Nurturing Education – Silver Award

Delighted to have attained the Our Children Their Nurturing Education (OCTNE), Silver Award. This was awarded by the Local Authority Educational Psychology and Nurture Team in recognition of the work undertaken by all staff across the school to become a 'Nurture Aware' Argyll & Bute school. We were assessed on the following aims:

- Creating safe, secure, flexible and caring environments where positive relationships are seen as being fundamental
- A whole school focus on wellbeing; social and emotional learning and the building of resilience
- An awareness amongst practitioners of the impact of adverse experiences and trauma across the whole school community (including staff and parents/carers)
- Assessment and planning that has a focus on what has happened to an individual rather than what is wrong with an individual Identification of developmentally appropriate supports that promotes self-regulation
- A range of universal whole school approaches that enhance the wellbeing of all children and young people alongside targeted support that is proportionate and meets the needs of children and young people.
- Senior Leadership Teams and practitioners who are reflective and supportive in their practice and recognise the importance of the wellbeing needs across the school community.

As a result, we have seen a 49% reduction in exclusions over the same period from the previous year and Education Scotland has indicated that all stakeholders have reported a significant improvement in relationships. We are very proud of the progress we have made on our Nurture journey and are focussing now on the Gold level accreditation - aiming to become 'Nurture Informed'.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

The Duke of Edinburgh programme at Hermitage Academy currently has 21 participants. 14 completing the bronze award and 7 completing the silver award. This session we have already completed a Silver expedition and will soon be completing our Bronze expedition. Our pupils are working hard to complete their volunteering, physical and skills sections and in doing so have contributed many hours of volunteering to both the school and local wider communities. This has included participants volunteering at Helensburgh Book Club, at a local animal rescue centre and at local youth clubs. This continues to build on the 338 hours of volunteering contributed by Hermitage Academy DofE participants to the local community in the 2022/23 session.

Our participants that have achieved the award have included their achievement in UCAS applications for Universities and Colleges and have outlined the skills and experiences they have gained through completion of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. We aim to continue to grow the programme within the school and offer as many opportunities as we can for pupils to achieve the award and contribute to the school and wider community.

Flexible Learning Plans

A Flexible Learning Plan (FLP) is a bespoke curricular experience for a young person who either is experiencing problems with school engagement or attendance, or has a specific career pathway which can be best supported through an out of school placement. Normally an FLP involves a young person spending part of each week on placement with a partner employer in a profession or trade which matches the young person's aspirations and interests.

For the other part of the week, the young person is in school focusing on a specific and targeted group of qualifications and accreditations, including literacy and numeracy and subjects which, again, align with the young person's wider interests and aspirations. FLPs are also used to enable some young people to access college courses alongside their in-school curriculum.

This year, we have had over 20 FLPs created for young people, partnering with employers including Eutopia hair salon, Tulloch Academy, Stewart's Travel, Blairvadach Outdoor Education Centre, Argyll Homes for All, Harley's Vanity Box, Unit 23 Skatepark, Hermitage Primary School, UHI Argyll, and Glasgow Clyde College. We have also partnered with Live Argyll who work with young people to gain accreditation for work placements through Employability awards.

For a majority of the young people involved, the flexibility offered through this approach has been of real benefit. Often, young people who find the traditional classroom setting difficult have thrived on placement and these help to confirm in young people's minds whether they are suited to this career path.

Focus West

We have been delighted to welcome Focus West from the University of Strathclyde into Hermitage Academy. Focus West have worked with our S4 cohort to deliver a range of activities and events to encourage and prepare pupils for Higher Education at college or university. This gives our pupils time to reflect on their prelim experience and begin to think about opportunities open to them beyond school. Focus West have also been working one to one with a targeted group of S5 and S6 pupils to support them with the UCAS application process.

Tullochan Training Academy

The school has been developing an exciting partnership with Tullochan Training Academy. Tullochan annually supports over 1000 young people aged 7-24 through a range of development programmes in Primary and Secondary schools alongside their post-school projects. There are a number of our senior pupils working in-school with the Tullochan Team focussing on identifying individual Skills and Qualities, Confidence Building and Building Self-esteem, Team Building, Goal Setting, Motivations to work, and Career Identification. These sessions are designed to empower young people and to ensure they have an understanding of how important future planning is. We also have some young people out on work placements with the Training Academy – such as Furniture Fix, The Design House, The Common Good Café and with Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust. We look forward to developing our partnership working with Tullochan Training Academy further in the future.

Space School

We were delighted that one of our S5 pupils Emily Nealon, was successful in her application to the Scottish Space School outreach programme at Strathclyde University. The programme provided attendees with an opportunity to learn from some of the world's leading figures in space travel, including NASA astronauts and engineers. Participants learned from staff at the University of Strathclyde who provided an insight into studying and working in the field of engineering, as well as hearing from colleagues from NASA. Emily gained one of eight places to fly to NASA, in Houston Texas to take part in their week long space school. A truly amazing experience.

Hi5 Scotland Awards

Our S1 pupils were awarded with a Hi5 Award Certificates from Youth Scotland after taking part in a variety of STEM Activities as part of the P7 Transition Hooked on Hermitage Project. S3 pupils were also awarded with Dynamic Youth Award Certificates as a result of their contribution to leading and creating the STEM experiment video resources to allow all P7 transition pupils and teachers to complete their Hi5 Awards digitally.

WEIR-WISE Programme: Discovering Engineering with S2 Girls

The Faculty of Engineering at Strathclyde University, in partnership with the Weir Group, offer the Young WEIR-WISE: Discovering Engineering with S2 Girls programme which has seen a number of our young people be inspired to discover the satisfaction behind a career in engineering. Over the years, our S2 STEM Ambassadors have attended this event virtually and in person to participate in a number of exciting STEM-based activities run by University of Strathclyde staff and engineers. Having enjoyed the hands on challenges and lectures provided by the programme, our S2 and S3 STEM Ambassadors have since lead STEM programmes targeted at S2 and S1 pupils to allow them the opportunity to explore all things STEM through various experiments and challenges. The challenges set and lead by our STEM Ambassadors have given a number of junior pupils the opportunity to complete a number of Young STEM Leader badges to celebrate wider achievement.

Mentors in Violence Protection (MVP)

70 of our S5 and S6 pupils received training and have qualified to become Mentors in Violence Protection (MVP). Lessons for our S1 pupils, led by our S5/6 mentors have been carried out recently and has very much supported our ambition of becoming a trauma informed school as part of our nurture journey.

Armed Forces Day

We held our annual Armed Forces Fayre at Hermitage Academy in June. Pupils were able to visit stalls and activities supported by the MOD and Police Scotland, Royal Navy PT Instructors, HMS Neptune Medical staff, Forces for Children Scotland, the bomb squad and the Army Cadets. Pupils enjoyed the activities and stalls during the day and our Armed Forces Ambassadors highlighted to their peers about the work they are doing within the school. Our Sports Leaders supported the Navy PT Instructors with the physical activities. The Royal Navy Family support workers and the British Legion Royal Navy veterans visited the stalls and answered questions from our N5 and Higher RMPS pupils on their experiences of conflict. Each year group had the opportunity to salute our Armed Forces to show respect and give thanks for the important work they do.

LGBTQ+ Development

The LGBTQ+ Pupil and Staff Working Group was formed in December 2021. They work in consultation with the SAGE (sexuality and Gender Equality) group who provide additional pupil voice to the activities planned by the group. The Working Group's major achievement so far has been the creation and roll out of the LGBTQ+ Inclusion Policy within the school, which have had one-page versions created for both staff and pupils. This project was completed with the consultation of staff, pupils and parents. Training on the policy was delivered to staff in November 2022, and the one-page pupil versions was rolled out to our young people in June 2023. We are now working on our LGBT Youth Scotland charter Award where further training surrounding LGBT Awareness will be completed by staff. Furthermore, LGBTQ+ visibility has been raised within the school through posters raising awareness of LGBT History Month, staff displaying visual indicators in their classrooms, as well as an annual Pride Day Celebration which was started in June 2022. This has become a much loved event in the school calendar for pupils and staff.