

COMMITTEE:	Education & Children's Services Committee
MEETING DATE:	9 June 2026
BY:	Depute Chief Executive Children and Communities
REPORT TITLE:	HMIE Inspection of Ross High School
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to Committee on the outcomes of the March 2026 HMIE inspection of Ross High School.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the content of the HMIE letter (Appendix 1) published on the HMIE website notifying parents and carers of the outcomes of inspection for the school.
- 2.2 Note the key strengths of the school identified by the Inspection Team.
- 2.3 Note the Summary of Inspection Findings (Appendix 2) detailing strengths and recommended future developments for the school.
- 2.4 Note that because of the inspection findings, HMIE will not make a follow-up visit in connection with this inspection.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Inspection Model

The inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS4?) quality indicators for primary inspections to evaluate the quality of provision at Ross High School.

- 3.2 Evaluative judgements were recorded against a six-point scale (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Weak, Unsatisfactory) using [How good is our school \(4th edition\) Appendix 3: The six-point scale](#).

The evaluations for Ross High School are:

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
2.1 Safeguarding and child protection	Not evaluated – reported directly to Headteacher and Local Authority
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Satisfactory

Further details regarding the evaluation of each quality indicator can be found in the Summary of Inspection Findings (Appendix 2).

3.3 NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

As part of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, the reporting procedures for the National Improvement Framework (NIF) have been placed on a statutory footing. The evaluations from inspection feed directly into the evidence base for the NIF to demonstrate progress with the NIF priorities and drivers for improvement. This progress is reported annually by the Scottish Government.

3.4 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

- Ross High School is a comprehensive secondary school serving the town of Tranent and the surrounding area. As of March 2026, the school roll stood at 1,202 young people. Just over 20% (one in five) of young people leave school at the end of S4.
- The headteacher has been in post for 13 years and is supported by four depute headteachers and a school business manager. The school community has recently experienced the development of a significant extension to the school building alongside the refurbishment of other school areas.
- Socio-economic indicators contextually relevant to the inspection include:
 - Free School Meals: In September 2024, 15.3% of young people were registered for free school meals.

- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD): In September 2024, 10% of young people lived in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.
- Additional Support Needs: In September 2024, the school reported that 52% of young people had an additional support need.
- Specialist Provision: The school hosts a specialist local authority provision ("Ross ASN") for young people with complex additional support needs, which currently serves 32 young people.
- Attendance: Improving attendance is an identified school priority, which has improved since 2022/23 and is now in line with the national average. Exclusions are also generally in line with the national average.

3.5 INSPECTION FINDINGS

3.5.1 The HMIE letter to parents, published on 2 June 2026 (Appendix 1) provides a summary of recognised strengths of the primary school and recommended focuses for continued improvement.

3.5.2 The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- i. **Compassionate Leadership:** The headteacher provides compassionate leadership to improve learners' experiences across the school community.
- ii. **Positive Climate for Learning:** Senior leaders and staff create a calm, purposeful, and inclusive learning environment for young people. This climate is underpinned by positive relationships between young people and staff.
- iii. **Effective Use of Learner Information:** Staff use information about young people and how to support them well, which helps ensure more young people are confident and successful in their learning.
- iv. **Partnership and Post-School Destinations:** Staff work effectively with partners to improve young people's engagement and post-school destinations, providing a range of effective supports to improve outcomes.
- v. **Exemplary ASN Provision:** The specialist 'Ross ASN' provision supports young people very effectively to learn, achieve, and participate well in the broader life of the school.
- vi. **Physical Education Entitlement:** Young people receive their entitlement to high-quality physical education.

3.6 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and representatives from East Lothian Council:

- i. Assessment Frameworks (S1–S3): Staff should use a wider range of approaches to assessment to make more reliable judgements about young people’s progress across S1 to S3 and use this data to inform their planning of learning, teaching, and assessment.
 - ii. Differentiated Pace and Challenge: Staff need to raise expectations of what young people can achieve, across all curricular areas. They should particularly focus on providing appropriate levels of challenge in learning for young people through S1 to S3.
 - iii. Nutritional Regulations compliance: Nutritional standards must be reviewed to ensure alignment with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties under The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. Several areas for improvement have been agreed with the school meals provider to enhance whole-school approaches to health and wellbeing through food.
- 3.7 HMIE are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Not applicable

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Finance: None
- 5.2 Human Resources: None
- 5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None
- 5.4 Risk: None

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 ***Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an ‘X’ in the relevant box.***

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council’s role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.



or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix 1 - The HMIE letter to parents of the school, published on 2 June 2026.
- 7.2 Appendix 2 - The HMIE Summary of Inspection Findings for the school, published on 2 June 2026.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Report Author(s)

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Date	25.05.2026

Head of Service Approval

Name	Nicola McDowell
Designation	Head of Education
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	26/5/2026

2 June 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2026, a team of HM Inspectors of Education visited Ross High School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher provides compassionate leadership to improve learners' experiences across the school community. Senior leaders and staff create a calm, purposeful and inclusive learning environment for young people. This climate for learning is underpinned by positive relationships between young people and staff.
- Staff use information about young people and how to support them well. This is helping to ensure that more young people are confident and successful in their learning.
- Staff work effectively with partners to improve young people's engagement and post-school destinations. Together they provide a range of effective supports to improve outcomes for young people.
- The 'Ross ASN' provision supports very effectively young people to learn, achieve and participate well in the life of the school.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from East Lothian Council.

- Staff should use a wider range of approaches to assessment to make more reliable judgements about young people's progress in S1 to S3. They should use this information to inform their planning of learning, teaching and assessment.
- Staff need to raise the attainment of young people at each stage. They should particularly focus on providing appropriate levels of challenge in learning for young people through S1 to S3.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are HMIE's evaluations for Ross High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale.	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the HMIE website at: [Ross High School | Inspection Report | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland](#)

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. East Lothian Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Andrew Dingwall
HM Inspector

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland



HMIE

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland
Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh airson Foghlam ann an Alba

Summarised inspection findings

Ross High School

East Lothian Council

2 June 2026

Key contextual information

School Name: Ross High School
Council: East Lothian Council
SEED number: 8223831
Roll (March 2026): 1202

Ross High School is a comprehensive secondary school serving the town of Tranent and the surrounding area.

The headteacher has been in post for 13 years. He is supported by four depute headteachers and a school business manager. The school community has recently experienced the development of significant extension to the school building. This included the refurbishment of some other areas of the school. Just over one in five young people leave school at the end of S4.

The school hosts a specialist local authority provision for young people with complex additional support needs. Currently, thirty-two young people attend this provision.

Improving attendance is an identified school priority. Attendance has improved since 2022/23 and is now in line with the national average. Exclusions are generally in line with the national average.

In September 2024, 15.3% of young people were registered for free school meals.

In September 2024, 10% of young people live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2024, the school reported that 52% of young people had additional support needs.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Relationships between young people and staff are very positive in almost all lessons and around the school. In almost all classes, most young people reflect well the school values of positivity, respect, integrity and perseverance through their behaviours, engagement in learning and interactions. Almost all teachers promote consistently agreed basic expectations for all young people to be ready to learn through the school's 'expected standards – excellence for everyone' charter. This pledge, agreed by young people and teachers, contributes to creating a calm, purposeful and successful learning environment for all. Most staff respond sensitively and successfully when any young people become disengaged.
- In the majority of classes, teachers plan well to ensure young people have varied opportunities to work individually, in groups and in pairs. Most young people respond positively when learning approaches are varied and when planned learning provides opportunities to work with others. In a minority of subject areas, teachers create purposeful opportunities for young people to lead aspects of their learning. Across the broad general education (BGE), young people would benefit from more regular, planned opportunities to work with their peers. Staff should consider how to vary further approaches to learning and increase challenge appropriately. Overall, a significant minority of lessons are overly teacher-led. This leads to a few young people becoming disengaged in their learning. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to capitalise on examples of highly effective practice within and beyond the school. They should consider how to provide more consistently engaging and challenging learning experiences for all young people.
- Almost all teachers know young people's learning needs well. Across subject departments, teachers access up-to-date information on young people's needs and learning targets. This includes sharing strategies to support identified young people access their learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers skilfully implement these agreed strategies to ensure they meet well the needs of all young people. A significant minority of teachers plan learning that provides sufficient challenge and supports young people to achieve their best. All teachers should now provide rigorous challenge appropriate to young people's needs and abilities, especially in the BGE. Teachers, supported by senior and middle leaders, need to ensure the BGE provides consistent rigour and motivational learning experiences.
- In most lessons, teachers provide clear instructions and guidance for young people to complete tasks. A majority of teachers use skilled questioning to check for understanding and to promote higher-order thinking amongst learners. This helps to generate deep and meaningful

discussion and debate in lessons. This supports young people in these classes to become more confident in asking questions and encourages them to be more curious as learners. Senior and middle leaders should build on the well received programme of professional learning provided by staff within the school. They should capitalise on areas of highly effective practice to help all teachers gain a clearer understanding of how this can help to deepen learning.

- In a few classes, teachers use creative approaches to deliver learning using digital technologies. In a majority of subject areas, young people also benefit from regular, helpful feedback from teachers via online platforms. Teachers should continue to plan to maximise the use of digital technologies to deepen and vary learning experiences for young people.
- Teachers routinely create opportunities for young people to share their views and suggestions to improve their learning experiences. A few teachers have successfully adapted courses and topic areas of focus in response to pupil feedback. Young people have influenced the school's approach to improving learners' experiences in a few subject areas. In these subjects, learner voice has resulted in teachers designing courses and contexts that are clearly aligned to young people's interests and personal choices of what and how they prefer to learn. A next step is for all staff to share clearly with young people the impact of their voice in shaping learning experiences.
- All teachers make frequent use of summative assessment to measure young people's progress. In the majority of lessons, teachers employ formative assessment approaches and check for understanding through learning conversations. Teachers should continue to build a greater range and balance of effective summative and formative assessment approaches to monitor young people's progress. They should continue to develop approaches to using this information to inform future planning of learning, teaching and assessment.
- Teachers across all departments engage in a range of moderation activities within the school and with colleagues across the local authority. This is helping to develop further a detailed understanding of assessment standards. Senior and middle leaders should continue to support all teachers to moderate the planning of learning, teaching and assessment more consistently in the BGE. This should support teachers in making robust, holistic judgements and inform more effective planning for progression in learning.
- Teachers are increasingly confident in making judgements about the attainment of young people in the senior phase. A minority of teachers undertake additional responsibilities with Qualifications Scotland (QS). These teachers work across most subject areas to support understanding of national standards.
- Almost all teachers provide verbal feedback, and the majority also share comments in a written format to support young people to understand their progress. Staff are developing their use of personal learning plans (PLPs) as a format for sharing feedback and encouraging learners to reflect on their progress and next steps. This is supporting most young people to reflect on their performance in assessments. Young people would benefit from more consistent use of PLPs across their subject learning. The majority of young people in the BGE cannot yet articulate clearly how well they are progressing in learning or what they need to do to improve. Staff support most young people in the senior phase well through formal learning

conversations. They provide written feedback that helps young people understand how to improve in their learning.

- Teachers plan learning through the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and assessment Benchmarks. Senior leaders have created a relevant policy on learning, teaching and assessment to support staff in understanding priorities in this area. Teachers' approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment are not yet of a consistently high quality. As a next step, senior and middle leaders should support teachers in reviewing planning in the BGE, with a particular focus on ensuring appropriate challenge for progression.
- Almost all teachers are tracking the progress of young people in the BGE using progression pathways. Strengthened approaches to holistic judgements of achievement would help make this data more reliable. This would support senior leaders and teachers to monitor, and plan more accurately for, the progress of learners.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

BGE

- Staff responsible for literacy and numeracy have recently developed more robust approaches to tracking progress. This is supporting the identification of young people for targeted intervention to support more learners to achieve expected levels of attainment.
- Between 2021/22 and 2024/25, almost all young people achieved CfE third level in literacy by the end of S3. The majority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in literacy by the end of S3 between 2022/23 and 2024/25. This improved from a minority in 2021/22. Performance in literacy is generally above local measures and in line with national averages. All learners in S1 and S2 benefit from dedicated time to participate in the Reading Schools initiative, which is supporting improvements in literacy attainment.
- Between 2021/22 and 2024/25, most young people achieved CfE third level in numeracy by the end of S3. This has been consistently in line with local and national averages. The percentage of young people achieving CfE fourth level increased from just under half of the S3 cohort in 2023/24 to the majority in 2024/25. In 2024/25, performance at this level increased to the highest level in five years. Staff are currently reviewing and adapting the curriculum within mathematics and numeracy with an aim of developing more effective progression to further improve outcomes through the BGE and beyond.

Senior Phase

Leavers

- Between 2021/22 and 2024/25, most young people who left school achieved Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 or better in literacy. This has been in line with the virtual comparator (VC) from 2020/21 to 2024/25. Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, the percentage of young people leaving school, having achieved SCQF level 6 or better in literacy, remained in line with the VC. This steadily increased following a dip in 2021/22, with the majority of young people achieving this level in 2024/25.
- Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, the majority of young people left school with SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This is significantly lower than the VC over this period. Senior leaders and staff have developed approaches to ensure improvements in attainment for specific groups of young people in numeracy. Performance has steadily increased following a dip in 2021/22. Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, a minority of young people left school having achieved SCQF level 6 or better. Performance at this level decreased between 2020/21 and 2022/23 and was

significantly lower than the VC for two of those three years. Performance has improved between 2022/23 and 2024/25 and is in line with the VC in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

- Young people who require additional support attain similar levels of SCQF qualifications in literacy when compared to their peers nationally. Performance at SCQF level 5 in literacy has improved each year between 2020/21 and 2024/25. Young people who require additional support generally leave school with lower levels of SCQF qualifications in numeracy when compared to their peers across the country.

Cohorts

Literacy

- At S4, most young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy in between 2023/24 and 2024/25. This increased from the majority achieving this level between 2020/21 and 2022/23. Performance at this level has improved steadily and is in line with VC between 2021/22 and 2024/25.
- By S5, based on the S5 roll, the majority of young people achieved SCQF level 6 in literacy between 2020/21 and 2024/25. Performance decreased between 2020/21 and 2023/24 and was in line with the VC. Performance increased in 2024/25 and is now significantly higher than the VC.
- By S6, based on the S6 roll, most young people achieved SCQF level 6 between 2020/21 and 2024/25. This is in line with the VC except for 2020/21 and 2022/23 when it was significantly higher.

Numeracy

- At S4, between 2021/22 and 2023/24, a minority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy. This was significantly lower than the VC in three out of four years. The percentage of learners achieving SCQF level 5 or better in numeracy increased between 2022/23 and 2024/25. In 2024/25, the majority of young people achieved this level, in line with the VC. Staff with responsibility for numeracy have recently implemented a plan for increasing further attainment at SCQF level 5. They should continue to evaluate carefully the impact of planned approaches on learner attainment.
- By S5, based on the S5 roll, and S6, based on the S6 roll, a minority of young people achieve SCQF level 6 in numeracy. There is no consistent pattern of attainment at this level. By S5, attainment was in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2024/25 except for 2020/21 and 2023/24 when it was significantly lower.

National Qualifications

- The percentage of young people presented at National 5 (N5) English is below national levels. Most young people attain a pass, above national levels. As planned, staff should increase the percentage of young people presented at N5 English in S4. The percentage of young people presented at Higher in English has increased and is in line with national levels. Pass rates are consistently above national levels between 2022/23 and 2024/25.
- Young people's presentation rates for N5 Mathematics and N5 Applications of Mathematics are below national levels. Pass rates are in line with national levels for applications of

mathematics but below for mathematics. Young people's presentation levels are in line with national levels at Higher for mathematics and applications of mathematics. Pass rates are in line with national levels for Higher Mathematics and above national levels for Higher Applications of Mathematics.

Attendance

- Senior leaders and staff have had a focus on improving attendance at school. Attendance is improving and is now in line with the national average. Senior leaders recognise that absence is impacting on outcomes for young people. They identified that continuing to improve attendance, particularly for those young people with persistent absence, should remain a school priority. Around 40% of young people experience persistent absence with attendance below 90%. Staff monitor young people's attendance systematically and work well with parents to address barriers to regular attendance. Staff support well a few young people and families who experience challenges with attendance at school. This includes targeted work to develop young people's emotional resilience. This is leading to improvements in attendance for the majority of identified young people.
- Currently, too many young people attend school on agreed part-time arrangements. Staff should continue to work with young people and their families with a focus on supporting young people back into full-time learning as soon as possible. Staff should continue to ensure that arrangements for part-time learning are reviewed regularly, with outcomes and decisions recorded, to demonstrate progress being made over time.

Attainment over time

BGE

- Senior leaders have identified the need to increase appropriate levels of challenge within the BGE to maximise attainment and achievement for all young people. Most young people achieve CfE third level across their curriculum learning beyond literacy and numeracy by the end of S3. A majority achieve CfE fourth level. Senior leaders are aware of the need to support further teacher confidence in making judgements about young people's progress through CfE levels, particularly at CfE fourth level. Senior and middle leaders should now work with staff to review curriculum planning in the BGE. They should develop further the correlation between planning, challenge and appropriate progression to help improve attainment outcomes.

Senior Phase

Improving attainment for all

- Senior leaders are aware that in a minority of subjects, too few young people are being presented for National 5 qualifications in S4. They are taking steps to address this through earlier identification of individual young people who could attain at this level and supporting them to make appropriate course choices. It is too early to measure the impact of this approach. Senior leaders, with staff, have undertaken developments that are helping to ensure young people leaving school at the end of S4 are supported to attain a minimum suite of qualifications. As planned, they should now seek to maximise attainment for individual young people by securing qualifications at the highest level possible.

Leavers

- The attainment of young people leaving school, using average complementary tariff points, is generally in line with the VC for the lowest attaining 20%, the middle 60% and the highest attaining 20% of young people. For the middle 60% and highest 20% of young people, performance fluctuates with no clear pattern of improvement.

Cohorts

- At S4, using average complimentary tariff points, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people was in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2022/23. In 2023/24 and 2024/25 this fell to being significantly lower than the VC. The attainment of the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people was in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2023/24. This decreased to being significantly lower than the VC in 2024/25.
- By S5, based on the S5 roll and S6, based on S6 roll, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people is in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2024/25. The attainment of the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people is generally in line with the VC between 2020/21 and 2024/25. In 2024/25, the performance of the middle attaining 60% of young people in S5 increased to the highest level since 2021/22. There is no consistent pattern of improvement for these cohorts.

Breadth and Depth

- At S4, the majority of young people generally achieve one or more to three or more awards at SCQF level 5C. A minority achieve four or more to six or more awards. Between 2020/21 and 2023/24, this is in line with the VC. Performance at SCQF level 5A is inconsistent and has decreased from 2020/21 to 2024/25. Performance at this level and SCQF level C or better has fallen to being generally significantly lower than the VC in 2024/25.
- By S5, based on the S5 roll, between 2021/22 and 2024/25, for one or more to five or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better or 6A or better, performance is in line with the VC. The majority of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 6C. A minority of young people achieve three or more to five or more awards at SCQF level C, except in 2023-24 when a few young people achieved five or more awards. Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, a minority of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better. During the same period, the proportion of young people achieving three or more awards at this level decreased from a minority to a few. Between 2020/21 and 2024/25, a few young people achieve five or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better.
- By S6, based on the S6 roll, between 2020/21 and 2024/25, generally, most young people achieve one or more to two or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better. The majority of young people achieve three or more to four or more awards at this level. The majority of young people achieve one or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better. Between 2021/22 and 2024/25, a minority achieve two or more to three or more awards. This is in line with the VC.
- Senior leaders have identified a priority to improve the quality of passes achieved by more learners in national qualifications. They are working with middle leaders to identify more young people who may be supported to attain passes at SCQF level 5A and level 6A. Senior leaders should, as planned, continue to review the curriculum offer to ensure young people can maximise their attainment.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people build skills and confidence through participation in a wide range of clubs and activities in school and their local communities. These include sports activities and opportunities within the creative arts. Most young people recognise and value the opportunities available for them. This is supporting a sense of community. Staff are ensuring young people receive accreditation, including Saltire Awards, to recognise and celebrate a wider range of achievements.
- Working with partners, a few senior students contribute positively to school life through a range of leadership roles, including, Young Ambassadors and Sports Captains. These young leaders are supporting a few young people in the BGE to develop their coaching and leadership skills as part of the school's Future Leaders programme. As a result of this positive work, the school has recently been awarded the Gold Sport Award by Sport Scotland.
- A few young people in S1-3 develop leadership skills and their confidence through their roles including pupil council and the Equality group. Young people in S6 contribute positively to school life through a range of leadership and volunteering roles. A few complete the Mentors in Violence Prevention training and deliver valuable learning to S2 pupils. A few young people achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. As a result, young people further develop skills in communication, teamwork and organisation skills.
- Staff work effectively with a range of partners to provide targeted support for a few young people. This is enabling young people to build confidence and develop positive pathways, leading to a few young people re-engaging with learning.
- Staff celebrate young people's achievements well through newsletters, daily communications and pupil of the month displays. Senior leaders and staff deliver showcase and celebration events that are well received by young people and their families. These include community concerts, art exhibitions, celebration of success evenings and annual sports awards.
- Senior leaders have very recently begun to track skills and pupil achievements for all young people within and beyond school using the online profile through My World of Work. They are building on previous approaches that supported young people in S1 and S2 to record their participation in activities. Staff use this information to identify young people who do not take part in activities and support them to find opportunities to engage in experiences most relevant to them. This is leading to the majority of young people targeted for support now taking part in clubs. Senior leaders and staff should, as planned, support young people to continue to build their capabilities for future learning, work and life by linking participation with skill development.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff use effectively the data they gather to monitor carefully the attainment of young people who face barriers to success. This includes young people who benefit from additional support with learning, are in receipt of school meals or are care experienced. Senior and middle leaders use data very well to plan strategically their use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This supports effectively improved attendance, wellbeing and engagement of identified groups of young people. Staff use this fund successfully to support individuals and specific groups, across the school, who require additional support to develop

appropriate literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, young people who are supported through these interventions demonstrate accelerated progress in these areas.

- All staff have a very strong awareness of the socio-economic context of all young people. They work very effectively with the local community to support sensitively young people and families. For example, staff discretely support young people to ensure they can attend educational excursions and provide vouchers to families for local community support organisations who provide uniform and outdoor clothing. Staff and young people provide a well attended and well received breakfast club, open to all. This is helping young people be ready to learn, reducing late coming and improving attendance.
- Young people are supported effectively through a range of approaches, including the Creative Learning Space (CLS). The CLS provides safe spaces for young people who find the mainstream school environment challenging. Staff provide a range of activities to support emotional regulation, the development of social skills and help to build positive relationships with others. This support, together with the Equity Interventions programme, is helping the majority of identified young people to reengage with learning. The majority of these young people in the senior phase attain appropriate National Qualifications as a result of this additional support.
- When compared using average complementary tariff scores, the attainment of young people who left school, and reside in SIMD deciles two, six and nine, is generally significantly lower or much lower than the national average between 2022/23 and 2024/25. Senior leaders identify that the attainment of a few young people who may experience socio-economic disadvantage requires further improvement. They should continue to develop and monitor the support available for this group to reduce all poverty-related attainment gaps in line with national expectations.
- Senior leaders and staff effectively use their extensive knowledge of the local context to prepare young people to transition successfully from school. Members of the school led 16+ Hub collaborate very effectively to ensure almost all young people are supported into positive destinations. A majority of young people progress successfully to higher education or further education on leaving school. Staff and partners support effectively any young people identified as being at risk of not progressing to a positive destination when leaving school. These highly impactful approaches result in almost all young people between 2020/21 and 2024/25 progressing to a positive destination on leaving school. This was significantly higher than the VC in 2024/25.

Context

The Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision in Ross High School is a specialist local authority provision for young people with complex additional support needs. There are currently thirty-two young people attending the provision from S1-S6. The provision has five classrooms, a soft playroom, a sensory room, a life skills room, two nurture spaces and two music rooms. The facility is led by a depute headteacher, a 0.7 full time equivalent (FTE) principal teacher and a 0.3 FTE acting principal teacher. Over and above this, there are teachers and ASN auxiliary staff.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Aply led by the depute headteacher, all staff within the specialist ASN provision have created a respectful, warm and welcoming culture grounded in the school's values and children's rights. Staff support young people to build positive relationships and friendships across all classes. All staff demonstrate a solid understanding of young people's individual needs and consistently provide effective support, for example through a movement break or sensory experience. As a result of immediate needs being met well, most young people return to tasks quickly and reengage with their learning.
- In most lessons, young people are appropriately challenged, and as a result, they enjoy learning that is matched to their needs. Staff should continue to build on current practice to ensure consistent approaches to differentiation. They should continue to ensure all young people are fully supported and extended in their learning.
- Staff structure lessons effectively to ensure routines and consistency across practice, for example by using the same symbol-supported communication tool. In most lessons, teacher's explanations are clear. This supports young people to understand what they are learning and going to be doing. Staff continually revisit and enhance total communication approaches, including the use of sign language, to support learners' understanding and expression. Staff should strengthen their consistency in the use of sign language to ensure all learners experience a coherent approach.
- All staff use digital technologies appropriately to enrich young people's learning. This includes supporting young people to complete end of topic online quizzes or to choose educational games to play.
- Young people access their learning within a wide range of creative spaces, for example a multi-sensory room, which helps them to feel secure and ready to learn. All young people engage in learning outdoors and staff, supported by partners, ensure young people have access to a range of motivating experiences. When preparing for cooking lessons, young people visit local shops to purchase ingredients as part of life skills learning. Staff should continue to build on their use of the school campus and wider community to support young people to learn in real-life contexts.
- Young people attend the provision following a multi-agency assessment process. Prior to attending, effective transition processes ensure young people settle well into the provision. Staff continue to build on young people's levels of social, emotional and academic need. Teachers use a range of assessments on an ongoing basis, including observation, experiential

assessment and learning conversations. As a result, teachers plan appropriate next steps for young people.

- Staff build their capacity well through regular BGE moderation. This includes collaboration with mainstream colleagues and with one another. Teachers value opportunities to work with colleagues from other schools. This supports a shared understanding of standards and expectations at both BGE and senior phase. Teachers should continue to build on this to further improve consistency and confidence in professional judgements.
- Teachers plan appropriately over different timescales. They use the CfE experiences and outcomes well to ensure young people experience learning across literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing. Each young person has a detailed profile plan, with individual targets and strategies of support that best help them succeed. Teachers plan areas of the curriculum within a topic each term. Young people value having choice in selecting the final topic of each academic session. Staff should continue to explore ways to build on pupil voice to further enhance learner engagement and participation.
- Teachers use tracking systems effectively to inform next steps in learning for young people. Staff have recently introduced a structured framework to plan and track progress in communication and emotional regulation. Staff should continue to develop confidence in using this framework to ensure a consistent approach across the setting.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Most young people in the BGE are making good progress in both literacy and numeracy. A few young people are making very good progress.
- Young people working at CfE early level are developing their communication and literacy skills well. A few of these young people use augmentative and alternative communication effectively to communicate their likes and dislikes. A minority of young people, who are working at CfE first level, listen to a short story and respond with relevant comments or questions. A few young people working at CfE second level write clearly and for different purposes, for example within science when writing about a completed experiment. A few young people who are working at CfE third level read and develop their understanding about a range of texts, including comic strips and stories. Teachers should continue to develop young people's communication and literacy skills across all curriculum areas.
- Within numeracy, young people are working at CfE early level to third level. At CfE early level, a few young people solve simple subtraction problems using concrete materials or pictures. A minority of young people, who are working at CfE first level, use Venn diagrams to sort and classify objects according to simple properties linked to topic work. They follow pictorial recipes involving multiple steps, for example when making soup. At CfE second level young people explore, name and discuss two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. At CfE third level, young people apply knowledge of time and measurement to real-life contexts. Teachers should continue to ensure young people experience numeracy in a range of contexts.
- At the senior phase, all young people are currently working towards National 1 or National 2 qualifications for literacy and numeracy. The majority of these young people have achieved awards at either the same level or above these levels within other curricular areas, for

example National 3 Media, National 3 Science in the Environment, SCQF Level 2 Self and Work, SCQF Level 4 Food Hygiene and National 3 Modern Languages. Staff continually explore pathways that support the interests and talents of young people.

- Young people's achievements within and outwith school are helpfully tracked and accredited. Staff work effectively with partners to offer a wide range of experiences for young people where appropriate, including volunteer placements, out of school clubs, college courses and work experience. Recently, staff collaborated with local partner organisations to support young people within the senior phase to develop hospitality and employability skills. As a result, young people have held successful café events for families and the local community and gained accreditation within hospitality. Last session, a class group were awarded the Young Scot 2025 Equality and Diversity Award. This award recognised their creation of an impactful film highlighting accessibility and inclusion. Senior leaders and staff should continue to work with partners to further develop wider achievement for all young people.
- Staff offer a range of inclusive outdoor learning activities, working alongside partner agencies. Young people have achieved a range of certificates for challenging activities such as orienteering, hill walking, paddle boarding and canoeing. These experiences are celebrated and recognised through accreditation, for example the Duke of Edinburgh award. All young people within the provision are supported well to access the range of outdoor activities that lead to their Duke of Edinburgh's Award accreditation.
- All staff have a strong understanding of the additional support needs and the socio-economic context of all of the young people. They work diligently to remove any barriers to young people's participation in the life of the school.
- Staff work effectively with mainstream staff to ensure that learning takes place in mainstream classes for most young people, where this is appropriate to their level and needs. Staff, young people and families value how they are fully included within the life and community of the whole school. Over the last five years, all young people have moved on to positive destinations, including further education and employment.

Other relevant evidence

- Young people receive their entitlement to high quality physical education. Not all young people receive their entitlement to 1+2 modern language learning after S2 or to Religious and Moral Education after S4.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of young people through food in school. Several areas for improvement have been agreed with the school meals provider.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.



HMIE

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland
Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh airson Foghlam ann an Alba

Health and Nutrition Inspector Summary Report

School: Ross High School

Local authority: East Lothian

Date of inspection: 17.03.2026

Managing Inspector: Andrew Dingwall

Summary of findings Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 (the Act):

Key duties

The school is meeting the key duties of the Act to:

- protect the identity of young people entitled to free school meals,
- promote the uptake of school meals, in particular free school meals and,
- provide access to free drinking water throughout the school day.

Food and drink standards at lunchtime

The following food and drink standards at lunch time are not being met:

- Drinks – Sugar free soft drinks should contain no more than 0.5g of total sugar per 100ml and no more than 150mg of caffeine per litre
- Pastry – Pastry and pastry products must not be provided more than a total of twice a week across the school day. The frequency of sausage rolls alongside other pastry items must be reviewed.
- Red and red processed meat (RRPM) – No more than a combined total of 230g of red and red processed meat can be provided. The amount of RRPM available across the whole school day must be reviewed.
- Fruit and vegetables – 1 portion of vegetables must be included in the cost of a non analysed school lunch option. The authority must ensure that this option is available at all service areas.

The authority must ensure understanding with the [statutory food and drink standards](#) both during and out with school lunch. The standards cover all food and drink provision across the school day with a number of standards applicable across the whole school week.

The SSAL is currently not being promoted. Promotion of the SSAL must include the following: a minimum of 2 lunch choices which includes at least 2 courses and 2 portions of vegetables and 1 portion of fruit within each lunch choice. The price should also be visible for young people. The school meals provider, working alongside the school, should explore ways to promote this option to young people.

Uptake of fruit and vegetables is low. The school and school meals provider should work collaboratively to find creative ways to increase the uptake of these items as they provide essential nutrients in the body. These options should be available at all serving points, including the smaller S1 dining space.

When reviewing all menus, there are limited minimally processed meals available for both young people who eat meat and those who do not. Wider government policy aims to reduce reliance on processed foods in general in favour of fresh, local, and sustainable menus, as set out, for example, in the principles of the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022. The school meals provider may wish to consider whether changes could be made to future menus. This would better align with the duties of the HPN Act and support habit formation, allowing a young person to choose a minimally processed meal each day if they wish to do so.

Food and drink standards across the school day

Breakfast club provided by the school allows the young people to access a nutritious start to their day at no cost. The school also works in partnership with local charities to donate any surplus food from breakfast club. Almost all of the food and drink standards are being met. However, the food and drink standard for fruit is not being met. Food and drink provision provided on school premises must include the offer of fruit and/or vegetables. Action has been taken by the school already to ensure this option is available.

Food provided at morning break by the school meals provider does not meet the following food and drink standards.

- Drinks – Sugar free soft drinks should contain no more than 0.5g of total sugar per 100ml and no more than 150mg of caffeine per litre
- Sweetened baked goods – should contain no more than 7g of total sugar per portion, no more than 13g of fat per portion and no more than 4g of saturated fat per portion. the authority has made assurances that prepacked sweetened baked goods which do not meet this standard will be removed
- Pastry – Pastry and pastry products must not be provided more than a total of twice a week across the school day. The frequency of croissants alongside other pastry items must be reviewed
- Red and red processed meat (RRPM) – No more than a combined total of 230g of red and red processed meat can be provided. The amount of RRPM available across the whole school day must be reviewed

“Biscuits with the boss” allows young people to have biscuits with the head teacher once per week. Using food as a reward in this way is not consistent with the schools health promotion duties. The school should also ensure that incentives such as these meet all the [statutory food and drink standards](#)

Splitting a young person’s free school meal allowance across both services may prevent young people from meeting their nutritional needs. The school should review this practice to ensure compliance with the statutory duties on free school meal provision set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

The school must ensure that catering staff are fully aware of all children with known allergies in order to safeguard children's health and wellbeing.

Secondary school analysed lunch (SSAL)

A 3-week nutritional analysis was provided. Concerns have been highlighted to the authority due to the nutritional analysis not meeting the requirements of the SSAL which is currently being reviewed.

Lunchtime experience

At Ross High School there are two dining hall spaces. One which is specifically for S1 and another larger dining hall which can be used by all year groups S1-6. Two dining hall spaces offer young people a choice of social spaces to sit with peers while enjoying their lunch. The S1 space is a positive way of promoting the school meals services as it may detract S1 pupils from leaving the school for outside lunch options. It also provides a calm space for young people as they transition from primary to secondary school.

Health promotion in relation to food and nutrition in school

Ross High School is committed to ensuring young people are taught about the importance of a healthy lifestyle through assemblies, PSE and subject specific learning. The school should consider if the current practice of offering young people vouchers for high street outlets is having the intended outcomes. This may be undermining the schools' health promoting efforts and exposing young people to less healthful food choices.

Creating a [school food policy](#) could be a helpful next step for the school to connect current and future work around food and health, including work with partners, as part of a whole-school approach. It could provide a clear structure through which to deliver consistent messaging to young people, parents, partners, and staff.

Email: HNIteamenquiries@educationscotland.gov.scot

Resources: [Food in Schools across Scotland – Education Scotland – a self-evaluation framework](#)