East Lothian Council

REPORT TO: Council Committee for Education

MEETING DATE: 18 March 2025

BY: Executive Director - Education and Children's Services

SUBJECT: Education Scotland Inspection of Preston Lodge High School

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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Preston Lodge High School

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

    (i)   Note the content of the Education Scotland letter (Appendix 1).

    (ii)   Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the School (SIF) (Appendix 2).

    (iii)   Note that as a result of the inspection findings, Education Scotland will make a follow-up visit in connection with this inspection within 12 months of publication of the inspection report to allow more time for the school to make necessary improvements.

    (iv)   Note the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team and progress made since the inspection

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 **Inspection model**

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

3.2 Inspectors use the following selected quality indicators (QIs) to report on the outcomes of their five-day full inspection model using a six-point scale ranging from excellent to unsatisfactory:

HGIOS?4:

1.3 Leadership of change

2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

3.3 At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes are published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement. This letter provides a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work. This is published along with the summary of inspection findings (SIF). The SIF is a professional report and summarises the findings from all the evidence gathered during the inspection. This document is intended to be used by staff in progressing school improvement.

3.4 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 of QIs 2.3 and 3.2 feed directly into the evidence base for the NIF in order to demonstrate progress with the NIF priorities and drivers for improvement. This progress is reported annually by the Scottish Government.

3.5 **Inspection Findings**

Preston Lodge High School was inspected during October 2024. A letter to parents and carers summarising the key findings was published on 21st January 2025. It should be noted that the local authority's rigorous quality improvement processes had already identified the same issues as identified by the inspection team and were working with the school.

The quality indicators were evaluated as follows:

Preston Lodge High School	
Quality Indicator	**HGIOS?4**
1.3 Leadership of change	**Weak**
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	**Satisfactory**
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	**Satisfactory**
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	**Weak**

3.6 **Key Strengths**

- Strong relationships between staff and young people create a calm learning culture where young people are proud of their school. Individual staff support young people well to achieve in many aspects of school life.

  o Inspectors noted that the headteacher has established a strong and positive culture across the school. As a result, most young people and staff are happy, proud of their school and feel valued.

  o Young people feel a real sense of belonging in school. Staff understand well the local community and the context in which young people live. The school's values of achievement, happiness and respect are used well to promote the importance of good relationships across the school. Staff know young people and their families well. As a result, relationships across the school are respectful and positive.

  o Individuals and groups of staff lead on areas such as sustainability, school musicals and the school rugby club. Staff work well to provide positive experiences and skills for young people through these clubs.

  o Staff work well with a range of partners to support young peoples' achievements. Organisations such as the Pennypitt Trust and the Bridges Project help a few young people to gain valuable life skills. Whilst contributing to their local community, young people exercise responsibility thorough volunteering and helping others. Local community and development youth work staff provide a helpful bridge between school and community. They work closely with guidance teachers, supporting young people less engaged with school. A few young people gain Saltire, Youth Achievement and Dynamic Youth awards.

- Partners, together with pupil support staff work well to provide individualised provision for young people who require targeted support. This helps young people to improve their wellbeing and to feel included and engaged in school.

  o Staff have well established processes to plan to meet the needs of young people requiring targeted support through child's planning meetings. Staff work together, supported well by partners, to address barriers to learning resulting from the learning environment, family circumstances, health needs and social and emotional factors.

  o Senior leaders recently reviewed the physical environments for young people who are supported beyond the classroom environment. The nurture and inclusion spaces support a minority of young people to feel included, engaged and involved. As a result, a few young people attending these spaces feel more

confident to attend school. Young people who attend the inclusion space are positive about planning for their reintegration to mainstream classes.

- o In the Enhanced Learning Provision, young people enjoy mutually respectful relationships with all staff and each other. Young people are treated with dignity and know they are valued members of the school community. As a result, young people feel safe. They are confident to speak out and express their opinions. This supports young people well to develop their social skills with adults and other young people throughout the school. Young people are supported effectively to be active participants in decisions which affect them.

- Staff work well together to support almost all young people into positive destinations beyond school.

  - o Almost all young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 attained significantly lower or much lower than national figures, however moved onto a positive destination. The majority of young people leave school to go on to higher or further education. Less than half go to employment and a few to training opportunities.

3.7 **Areas for Improvement**

- The headteacher should lead and develop a clear overview of all areas of the school. He needs to put in place effective methods for gathering evidence to identify the school's own strengths and areas for improvement. This should lead to clear priorities for improving the school and these should be agreed with staff, parents and young people.

  - o The headteacher and senior leaders have developed a revised School Improvement Plan in response to the findings of the school inspection. The revised School Improvement Plan has a focus on key priorities with timed, measurable outcomes.

  - o The remits of the senior leadership team have been refreshed with clear roles and responsibilities for improvement aligned to the school priorities. The Quality Improvement Service is working alongside members of the senior leadership team in a support and challenge role to secure improvement.

  - o The headteacher is working with senior leaders and the school's Quality Improvement Officer to improve approaches to self-evaluation and quality assurance clearly focused on impact on learners. This includes professional learning for staff and developing more collaborative approaches to self-evaluation involving all stakeholders.

- Senior leaders should ensure a whole school focus on providing tasks and activities which are set at the right level of difficulty for all young people. This should help ensure all young people's learning needs are met more effectively. All staff should work together to raise attainment for

all young people from S1 to S6.

- o The DHT and the school's Learning and Teaching group are leading the development of the Preston Lodge Learning Promise to establish shared expectations for high quality learning and teaching in every lesson.

- o Work is underway to establish a greater understanding of the barriers to meeting learners needs in lessons to inform professional learning.

- o A review of school datasets has taken place with support from the Management Information System officers to improve tracking and monitoring across Broad General Education and Senior Phase.

- o A whole school policy to standardise and improve approaches to interventions is being developed to improve attainment and further involve parents and carers in supporting their young people.

- o An audit of assessment and moderation practice has started to develop a new Preston Lodge Assessment and Moderation strategy and to support staff professional learning.

- Senior leaders should review the programmes of learning from S1 to S3 to ensure that young people access their full entitlements.

- o A refresh of course choice principles and processes has taken place to provide personalisation that ensures all students receive their full BGE entitlement. A very clear expectation has been set that all Senior Phase students should be fully coursed.

- o The DHT is leading a curriculum review to create positive pathways for more learners. There is an expectation that this will be in consultation with stakeholders.

- Senior leaders need to develop a clearer overview of the purposes and effectiveness of existing support provisions. This includes improving attendance at school for identified young people.

- o Revised systems and processes for monitoring and improving attendance have been established and implemented in line with the East Lothian Attendance policy. A school attendance team has been set up with clear roles and responsibilities for monitoring attendance ensuring appropriate interventions and follow-up.

- o The clarification of the purpose and effectiveness of inclusion spaces is taking place with a clearer focus on learning targets within high quality learning plans.

3.8 The school's Quality Improvement Officer, Mrs Karen Haspolat continues to work closely with the Head Teacher, leadership team and staff to provide professional advice, guidance, professional learning, support, and challenge in the areas for improvement outlined in Section 3.7. It is acknowledged that it can take longer than a year to demonstrate improvements in attainment, particularly in the senior phase. However, the school Senior Leadership

Team and the Quality Improvement Team will work to evidence progress across all areas for improvement identified in the inspection in readiness for the follow-up visit by Education Scotland.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Education Scotland inspection report on Preston Lodge High School (Appendix 1) and Summary of Inspection Findings (Appendix 2).

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DATE	17 February 2025

21 January 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Preston Lodge 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.

- Strong relationships between staff and young people create a calm learning culture where young people are proud of their school. Individual staff support young people well to achieve in many aspects of school life.

- Partners, together with pupil support staff work well to provide individualised provision for young people who require targeted support. This helps young people to improve their wellbeing and to feel included and engaged in school.

- Staff work well together to support almost all young people into positive destinations beyond school.

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

- The headteacher should lead and develop a clear overview of all areas of the school. He needs to put in place effective methods for gathering evidence to identify the school's own strengths and areas for improvement. This should lead to clear priorities for improving the school and these should be agreed with staff, parents and young people.

- Senior leaders should ensure a whole school focus on providing tasks and activities which are set at the right level of difficulty for all young people. This should help ensure all young people's learning needs are met more effectively. All staff should work together to raise attainment for all young people from S1 to S6.

- Senior leaders should review the programmes of learning from S1 to S3 to ensure that young people access their full entitlements.

- Senior leaders need to develop a clearer overview of the purposes and effectiveness of existing support provisions. This includes improving attendance at school for identified young people.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four 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 Education Scotland's evaluations for Preston Lodge High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	**weak**
Learning, teaching and assessment	**satisfactory**
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	**satisfactory**
Raising attainment and achievement	**weak**
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 Education Scotland website at:
[Preston Lodge High School | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)

What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. We will liaise with East Lothian Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with East Lothian Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

Frances E. Graham
HM Inspector

Summarised inspection findings

Preston Lodge High School

East Lothian Council

21 January 2025

Key contextual information

School Name: Preston Lodge High School
Council: East Lothian
SEED number: 5556139
Roll in Sep 2022: 1086

Preston Lodge High School is a six-year non-denominational school, serving the communities of Cockenzie, Port Seton, Prestonpans, Longniddry, Blindwells and the surrounding areas. Preston Lodge High School is part of the Preston Seton and Gosford associated schools group (ASG), along with Preston Tower (Formerly Prestonpans), St Gabriel's RC, Longniddry, and Cockenzie Primary Schools. The Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP) supports 14 young people from S2 to S5. All young people supported in the ELP also access learning in mainstream areas of the school at some point during the school week.

Preston Lodge High School underwent a period of significant disruption between December 2022 and February 2024 due to issues with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete in part of the building.

The headteacher has been in post for 15 years. He is supported by three Depute Headteachers (DHT).

Attendance is generally below with the national average.
The exclusion rate is generally below the national average.
In September 2023 12.3% of pupils were registered for free school meals and 8.9% of pupils live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.
In September 2023 the school reported that 56.6% of pupils had additional support needs (ASN).

1.3 Leadership of change	weak

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

■ developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
■ strategic planning for continuous improvement
■ implementing improvement and change

■ The headteacher has established a strong and positive culture across the school. As a result, most young people and staff are happy, proud of their school and feel valued.

■ The headteacher led the school sensitively during recent challenges relating to the school building. Staff and young people worked well together taking a solution focused approach to the issues they faced. Staff then built on this experience to develop a project based approach to teaching and learning for young people currently in S1. Staff now need to put in place rigorous self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures to ensure clear, measurable outcomes for young people. As yet, there is no clear evidence of the impact of this approach on learning and attainment.

■ Staff, along with the school community established the current school vision and aims many years ago. These are well known across the school and are displayed widely. The values of respect and being happy are evident in most behaviours and relationships. The headteacher plans to review the vision and aims to better reflect the current school context. Staff should ensure the views of parents and young people are integral to the planned review.

■ Staff are working towards many different priorities across the school. The large number of priorities in the school improvement plan (SIP) is leading to a lack of clarity amongst staff. There is not yet a clear strategic overview of the work of all staff, for example in the changes to the curriculum. The headteacher needs to work with staff, parents and young people to ensure they are involved in developing a more realistic and time planned set of improvement priorities. These need to be streamlined, achievable and trackable. School priorities need to reflect the current context of the school and raising attainment should be a central focus of school improvement.

■ Many key areas of improvement for the school remain at an early stage of development. As a result, there is inconsistent practice across the school.The headteacher and senior leaders need to review their roles and responsibilities and apply a robust and coordinated approach to strategic leadership across all areas of the school.

■ Most middle leaders work well together. They exemplify aspects of positive leadership and work well to lead and support staff in faculties. Middle leaders are empowered to lead the three long-established whole-school working groups; health and wellbeing, strategic learning and teaching, and raising attainment. Almost half of teachers are involved in one of these groups. These groups work well individually and support teachers in their daily practice. However, the work of the groups is not yet clearly linked to outcomes for young people or to current whole-school priorities for improvement. Senior leaders now need to ensure these groups work better together to ensure greater consistency across the school.

- Individuals and groups of staff lead on areas such as sustainability, school musicals and the school rugby club. Staff work well to provide positive experiences and skills for young people through these clubs.

- Senior leaders have established a culture of teacher enquiry across the school. Individual staff are encouraged to take responsibility for improving aspects of their practice. Most teachers are involved in relevant professional learning activities and are empowered to develop their classroom practice. Teachers have developed helpful enquiries based on their class needs. A few of these are being developed more fully across faculties. Senior leaders now need to support a more strategic whole-school approach to this professional development. This should enable the outcome of teacher enquiries to link to school priorities, staff development and ultimately to increase attainment for all young people.

- Staff gather evidence either individually or in departments to identify areas of their work that require improvements. In a few departments, middle leaders seek pupil views on the learning experience and use the evidence to shape curriculum planning. The range of data used to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning needs to be broader. Senior leaders need to ensure thorough self-evaluation sits alongside planning for school improvement. Self-evaluation activities should involve all young people, staff and parents. This should then lead to priorities that reflect the school context better. The current review of the curriculum for example, could take more account of the views of young people.The headteacher and senior leaders need to ensure processes for quality assurance are used to refine and improve all improvement areas across the school. This will help to streamline the work of staff and ensure a clear focus on improving outcomes for young people.

- A few young people contribute to the life of the school through various leadership roles. such as pupil council, library leaders, 'Rights Respecting' team and S6 committees. Young people, through the pupil council, are beginning to use 'How Good is OUR school?' to reflect on approaches to learning and teaching. Young people value the opportunities to be mental health ambassadors and sports ambassadors. As a result, a few young people feel empowered to make a difference and affect change in their school community. Leadership for young people now needs to be developed across all year groups in order to improve young people's role in moving the school forward.

- The Parent Council are consulted on the SIP. The role of the Parent Council should be developed more fully. Parents should be supported to play a more active role in deciding what the school needs to do to improve. Moving forward, it is important to involve parents in reviews of activities which are in development, for example, the current approach to teaching and learning in S1, and the 'Home Room'.

- Senior leaders understand how the priorities for Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) prepare young people for skills for learning, life and transition into the world of work. However, there is no clear vision within the SIP to incorporate these priorities into learning and teaching. There is no overall strategy or skills framework for DYW to help communicate these priorities to staff, young people and partners. Without a clear strategy for DYW, senior leaders are unable to reflect on or measure the progress made with implementing these priorities.

In the ELP:
- Senior leaders have a shared understanding of how they would like to improve the ELP. In recent years they have moved the ELP to a different classroom within the school. The new, larger classroom, which is near to an outside space, provides opportunities for young people to learn in different areas within the room. In recent years, senior leaders have taken an important

step in helping young people in the senior phase attain National Qualifications (NQs).

- Senior leaders have developed a distinct vision for all support for learning across the school. The vision for support for learning does not yet make clear the role of staff in the ELP in contributing to school improvement. Senior leaders develop an annual curricular area improvement plan (CAIP). The CAIP references improvement priorities within the ELP. The CAIP does not yet place sufficient importance on the development of the unique context of the ELP. Senior leaders need to prioritise the development of a curriculum, which meets all young people's needs more effectively and takes greater account of national expectations. They need to review the school's vision for the ELP to ensure improvement priorities reflect more accurately important developments, which require attention. Senior leaders should work closely with the local authority to ensure the ELP focusses more effectively on supporting young people to make improved progress in their learning.

- Senior leaders are creating a culture of continuous improvement within the ELP. All staff are highly ambitious for young people. As a result, they seek out opportunities for young people to improve their learning across the school and within the wider community. Senior leaders have introduced a tracking and monitoring tool to measure young people's progress. Senior leaders now need to develop this approach further to help them evaluate how effectively young people attain as they move through the school. Senior leaders need to increase the pace of change to ensure improvement priorities are identified and acted upon with greater expediency. Overall, senior leaders need to develop a more strategic approach to self-evaluation and improvement within the ELP.

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

■ Strong relationships between most staff and young people support a nurturing environment across the school. Young people value the positive relationship they have with staff. They are respectful of their teachers. Staff's focus on engagement and motivation of young people, together with the efforts to create a nurturing and inclusive environment, are leading to improvements in the behaviour of most young people.

■ Almost all teachers use the 'Preston Lodge Learning Cycle' with the aim of improving consistency in classroom practice and in experiences for young people. This includes sharing and reviewing the purpose of learning. The 'Preston Lodge Learning Cycle' is currently being reviewed. Senior and middle leaders now need to ensure that this review results in improved consistency by teachers in planning lessons as well as in developing high quality learning and teaching. This should lead to environments for learning where all young people are enthused, motivated and leading their own learning.

■ In a few subject areas teachers demonstrate strong practice in learning and teaching. Where this is most effective, young people engage in learning that is well-paced, active and challenging. In these subject areas, teachers provide regular feedback that enables young people to understand their next steps in learning and to make good progress. Senior leaders should create opportunities for this practice to be spread more widely across the school.

■ The majority of young people participate well in their lessons and contribute positively in class. In most lessons teachers share the purpose of the lesson with pupils and revisit this at the end of the lesson. A minority of lessons are too teacher-led and the pace of learning is too slow. Teachers should develop further opportunities for young people to be sufficiently challenged and to take responsibility for their own learning.

■ The majority of teachers plan lessons well and use tasks and resources appropriately to engage and motivate young people. In a majority of lessons, however, teachers do not take enough account of young peoples' needs and prior experiences. As a result, planned learning activities, teaching styles and resources are not differentiated to meet the needs of all young people. Senior leaders should ensure that current plans for a whole-school focus on improving differentiation are taken forward timeously in order to meet the needs of all young people.

■ Within the S1 'Home rooms' teachers are developing their practice of project-based learning. This does not yet include opportunities for young people to learn effectively across all curriculum areas. Senior leaders have identified the need for close collaboration across curriculum areas to ensure the appropriate planning, assessment and reporting of young people's learning experience.

- In a few lessons, teachers use questioning well to check for understanding. This helps young people have a clearer understanding of what they are learning. However, this practice is inconsistent. Teachers should improve questioning techniques with a focus on higher-order thinking skills to promote deeper thinking.

- A few teachers use digital technology effectively to enhance the learning experience of young people. All teachers should develop opportunities for young people to benefit from this practice.

- A minority of teachers are skilled in the use of formative assessment strategies to check for young people's understanding. A few teachers, for example, systematically use 'show-me' boards and targeted open-ended questioning. Senior leaders and teachers are well-placed to share these approaches through professional learning with all staff. This should support further progress and understanding of how these strategies positively impact young people.

- Teachers access a range of information systems which provide detail of young peoples' backgrounds and needs for example. The 'Attainment Hub' provides data linked to levels of achievement and attainment. A minority of departments used these systems, primarily in the senior phase, to develop their own approaches to tracking and monitoring. All teachers should now use whole school information more consistently to inform planning of learning, teaching, and assessment to better meet the needs of all young people. Senior leaders are planning to support teachers by raising awareness of the current 'Planning for Purpose' documentation.

- Teachers in a few departments use a range of data well to make their professional judgements of achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level. Too many teachers are not yet fully confident in making assessment judgements in the broad general education (BGE). Teachers across the school recognise that their understanding and use of moderation activities to support improved, robust and reliable assessment judgements is an improvement priority. Senior leaders need to ensure teachers benefit from activities within, across and beyond the school to improve the reliability of teachers' professional judgements of achievement of a CfE.

In the ELP:
- All staff develop and maintain positive relationships with young people. Young people enjoy their lessons and almost all engage well with their learning. Young people come to school each day motivated and eager to learn. They enjoy learning most when lessons provide them with appropriate levels of challenge.

- All young people enjoy learning in mainstream classrooms. Young people particularly enjoy lessons in music, craft and design and home economics. All teachers who work with young people from the ELP are considerate and kind when speaking to each young person. Most teachers' explanations of young people's learning are clear. This helps young people know what they are learning.

- Young people's learning experiences are enriched by a range of activities in the local community. These include visits to care homes, local shops and outdoor learning centres. Teachers should continue to explore how they use the school campus to provide interesting real-life contexts for learning. This includes developing further how they use digital technologies to support young people's engagement.

- Teachers plan lessons, which almost all young people find interesting. However, in too many lessons all young people from S2 to S5 undertake the same task. Planned learning does not yet take sufficient account of each young person's individual skills, abilities, interests or needs. Lessons need to build progressively on young people's prior learning. Young people should be afforded the opportunity to study within a well-planned BGE prior to moving onto the senior

phase. This should include teachers being supported to differentiate lessons more fully to take greater account of each young person's skills and abilities.

■ Senior leaders work closely with colleagues in the ASG to support their understanding of each young person's skills and abilities prior to them attending the ELP. This helps teachers plan effective transition processes. As a result, young people settle well into the ELP. Teachers assess young people's progress at key points throughout the school year. For example, they use spelling and reading assessments to evaluate young people's progress in literacy. Teachers comment on how well young people complete tasks using the terms developing, consolidating and secure. However, assessment does not yet inform planned learning effectively. Teachers need to be supported to develop further their approaches to assessment and moderation. This should help improve their understanding of national standards.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ Staff liaise effectively with colleagues in the ASG to support the pastoral transition of young people to secondary school. Senior leaders and teachers should explore closer collaboration to ensure more effective continuity and progression in learning.

■ Senior leaders should address factors limiting young people's access to their full entitlement to the BGE. Learning in the BGE is planned primarily around third and fourth level experiences and outcomes. Young people in S1 spend approximately a third of their school week in a 'Home Room' with learning focussed on literacy, numeracy and project-based learning. In its current format, the S1 'Home Room' initiative is at an early stage of development. Senior leaders should keep under review the balance of learning in the course of each day to ensure young people experience their entitlement to a full BGE. Staff should now look to gather systematically robust evidence on the quality and consistency of the learning experience. Senior leaders should also monitor the impact of the reduction of teaching time across all curriculum areas as a result of the time allocated to the Home Room.

■ The 'Learning skills' programme is currently delivered within S1 social subjects and within the S2 "School's of…" programme. Chess, supported by the Preston Lodge learning Foundation, has been introduced as an additional subject as part of developing thinking skills in S1 and S2. Young people experience learning across eight curricular areas in S2. In S2 and in S3, young people add to their experiences though the "Schools of…" programme. Senior leaders should now evaluate the impact of all initiatives on young people's interest levels as well as attainment outcomes.

■ In S3, young people follow a core curriculum with an additional element of specialisation. Staff should continue to monitor young peoples' chosen curriculum to ensure that it retains breadth. Young people can modify their learning pathway as they enter the senior phase. Senior leaders should explore further how gaps in prior learning due to choices made in S3 are addressed.

■ In the senior phase, young people build on prior learning and interests through a range of planned learning pathways. At S4, the majoity of young people elect to follow seven courses, reducing to five programmes of study in S5. Young people are encouraged to access wider achievement opportunities within the school and beyond. A broad-based curriculum in the senior phase provides accredited courses of study to reflect young peoples' needs, interests and career aspirations. Young people benefit from clear planned progression pathways including a number of skills for work related opportunities, such as Foundation Apprenticeships and National Progression Awards. Young people access the Young Applicants in School's Scheme to widen their study options. These are delivered effectively in school and in partnership with a range of providers including East Lothian Works, college and other partners including the Open University. In almost all subject areas, young people have the opportunity to build on their learning with more advanced programmes of study.

■ Senior leaders should reflect on the delivery of religious and moral education to ensure compliance with the statutory requirement of a coherent programme from S1 to S6. Similarly senior leaders should ensure young people in the BGE access their full entitlement to study modern languages in line with the Scottish Government's 1+2 languages policy.

■ The school library serves as a central multi-purpose resource. It provides young people with a welcoming educational and social setting. The library provides young people with easy access to resources including a range of media and genre that support personal research and

independent study. A few pupil librarians led a review of library stock to ensure that reading materials are appropriately diverse and meet the needs of all young people. A range of activities including clubs and themed events cater well for young people's interests.

■ Teachers have not yet embedded DYW priorities into the BGE or senior phase curriculum. Teachers have limited awareness of support materials for DYW and do not routinely link classroom activities with skills for learning, life and work. Teachers should ensure that as they continue to develop the learning experiences for young people across the school, they take cognisance of the DYW priorities and of Career Education Standards to enhance the curriculum.

■ Strong community links and partnership with a range of educational providers support the development of young people and supports them in their transition beyond school. Out of class activities including DYW related visits, accredited Duke of Edinburgh's and Dynamic Youth awards, as well as in-school volunteering widen the educational experiences of learners. Young people develop an awareness of the needs of others, their local community and beyond through projects and charity related activities.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ Senior leaders and the Parent Council work together closely to improve outcomes for young people across the school. The Parent Council and the wider parent forum identify strongly with Preston Lodge Learning Foundation and is an important and valued school resource.

■ Increasing parental engagement already features within the current school improvement plan. Staff recognise the importance and advantages of regular ongoing communication with parents and carers. They acknowledge that this is an area to improve. Information on the different aspects of school life are shared through, for example, weekly updates, the school website, young peoples' progress reports. Parents appreciate the weekly newsletter on the life of the school. Senior leaders recognise the need to develop further channels of communication to ensure all parents are consulted on issues and developments. Senior leaders should engage the wider body of parents more in the strategic decision-making processes.

■ The majority of parents would like more detailed information on the nature of learning and advice given to their child on for example course choices. This will help parents know better how to support their child's learning. Most parents are comfortable in raising an issue or a question with staff. Senior leaders should ensure that concerns raised are explored fully and work with parents to address the needs of young people facing challenges to their wellbeing and development.

2.1 Safeguarding

■ 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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

■ wellbeing
■ fulfilment of statutory duties
■ inclusion and equality

■ Young people feel a real sense of belonging in school. Staff understand well the local community and the context in which young people live. The school's values of achievement, happiness and respect are used well to promote the importance of good relationships across the school. Staff know young people and their families well. As a result, relationships across the school are respectful and positive.

■ All staff have a basic understanding of the principles of 'Getting It Right For Every Child'. Pupil support staff have started to collect wellbeing data for young people. This is helping them identity young people who require support to improve their wellbeing. As a result, most young people know staff care about their wellbeing and their progress.

■ Supported by the Preston Lodge Learning Foundation, the breakfast café ensures that all young people can access a healthy breakfast at the start of the school day. This enables a few young people to benefit from a safe and nurturing start to the school day.

■ Teachers, in consultation with young people, recently reviewed the personal and social education (PSE) curriculum. This now includes a greater focus on relationships, sexual health and parenthood, and mental health. Staff also introduced a Mental Health and Wellbeing award at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 for young people in S5. As a result, young people are gaining a better understanding of healthy coping strategies. Staff should continue to review the PSE curriculum with young people to ensure that it remains relevant to their needs and interests and builds on prior learning.

■ Staff have well established processes to plan to meet the needs of young people requiring targeted support through child's planning meetings. Staff work together, supported well by partners, to address barriers to learning resulting from the learning environment, family circumstances, health needs and social and emotional factors. Young people's learning needs are identified appropriately within their learning plans. Senior leaders should ensure that the learning targets within learning plans are high quality. Targets should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely. This should help staff to measure better young people's progress and support young people's understanding of their own progress.

■ Senior leaders recently reviewed their approaches to recording and monitoring attendance for all young people. For a few young people, effective community partnerships are improving their attendance at school. Too many young people attend school on a part-time basis. Senior leaders should ensure regular and timeous reviews for all young people currently attending school on a part-time basis. More effective planning is required to develop clear targets for young people to support them in their learning. Senior leaders acknowledge that ongoing close

monitoring of attendance data, and subsequent actions, is required in order to reduce the number of daily absences.

■ Support for learning staff deliver professional learning to teachers to develop teachers' understanding of their roles and responsibilities in providing universal support. The impact of this professional learning is not consistent across the school. Support for learning staff provide teachers with information on young people's learning needs and strategies to support their progress in learning. These strategies are not routinely used to plan appropriate learning activities to meet the needs of all young people who require additional support. An important next step for senior leaders is to quality assure these strategies. Senior leaders also need to ensure that these strategies are used effectively by class teachers to plan and deliver appropriate learning activities.

■ All staff have benefited from professional learning in restorative and trauma informed approaches to support better behaviour. This has resulted in most young people behaving well in classes and feeling listened to and respected by staff. Staff and young people use a range of interventions to address incidents of bullying. Recently, a few senior pupils have been trained as 'Mentors in Violence Prevention' to support younger pupils. Staff have improved their approaches to recording incidents of bullying behaviour. As planned, senior leaders should retain an overview bullying incidents to ensure timely actions are taken, recorded and closely monitored.

■ Senior leaders recently reviewed the physical environments for young people who are supported beyond the classroom environment. The nurture and inclusion spaces support a minority of young people to feel included, engaged and involved. As a result, a few young people attending these spaces feel more confident to attend school. Young people who attend the inclusion space are positive about planning for their reintegration to mainstream classes. An important next step is for senior leaders to review the learning experiences within the targeted spaces to support young people more effectively in their learning and attainment.

■ Staff and partners provide effective support to young carers and care-experienced young people. Young carers' entering S1 benefit from workshops within the ASG at the point of transition. As a result, barriers to their progress are being reduced. It is important that teachers continue to track and monitor the progress of young carers and care-experienced young people.

■ 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. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

■ Staff liaise effectively with colleagues across the associated primary schools to support the wellbeing needs of young people as they transfer to secondary school. A personal passport which contains pertinent, individual information, accompanies young people as part of their transition from P7 to S1. S6 buddies support young people well during these times. As a result, young people feel safe and supported during the move from P7 to S1.

■ Young people, as part of the 'Rights Respecting' group, are increasing awareness of children's rights from the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child. Young people are at the early stages of developing a rights charter.

■ Staff encourage young people to value diversity and challenge discrimination. The S6 equalities committee, for example, is leading a range of relevant activities across the school. These include 'Show Racism the Red Card' and 'Anti-bullying week'. A few young people lead assemblies focused on diversity, for example during Black History Month. This helps most young people increase their knowledge and awareness of different cultures and ethnicities. A few teachers are embedding opportunities for young people to explore and discuss issues relating to diversity and discrimination. Staff should continue to plan learning experiences which enable young people to discuss diversity and challenge discrimination.

In the ELP:

■ Young people enjoy mutually respectful relationships with all staff and each other. Young people are treated with dignity and know they are valued members of the school community. As a result, young people feel safe. They are confident to speak out and express their opinions. This supports young people well to develop their social skills with adults and other young people throughout the school. Young people are supported effectively to be active participants in decisions which affect them.

■ Teachers support young people appropriately to develop their understanding of their body and how this changes as they grow. This is developing young people's understanding of their wellbeing. Staff are at the early stages of developing their use of the language of the wellbeing indicators. They should continue to embed this language more fully in their practice. This will help young people have a wider knowledge of their wellbeing and to understand what actions they can take to improve their own wellbeing. Teachers should continue with plans to develop the school's outdoor space to support young people's wellbeing.

■ Young people's individual targets are captured in an individualised education programme. These are reviewed regularly. Parents and, where appropriate, young people are involved in creating and agreeing targets. Young people's individual targets focus mostly on progress in curricular areas. Teachers should consider how young people's targets could be more individualised. This could support teachers to evaluate young people's progress against individualised targets relevant to each young person and their family. Where appropriate, young people are considered for a co-ordinated support plan.

■ All young people access lessons in mainstream classrooms at some point throughout the school week. A few young people enjoy learning in mainstream classes alongside their peers. Young people in the ELP attend school assemblies and take part in school shows. This helps them feel included in the wider life of the school. All young people are members of the 'Rights Respecting' group. This enables them to share their thoughts on how well the school is taking forward actions to uphold their rights. Teachers should build on this work by considering how young people from the ELP are represented on the pupil council.

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3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	weak

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

- Senior leaders are concerned about a significant number of young people for whom absence from school is an issue. Staff recognise the impact this has for these young people and are working closely with young people and their families to address this. Identified staff track and monitor attendance of young people. Specific areas within the school have been developed to encourage young attend school more regularly. This is improving attendance for a few young people. Staff are at the early stages of developing systems and processes to track and monitor effectively those young people who attend school, but do not attend class. Senior leaders need to be more rigorous in tracking and monitoring young people who attend school on a part-time basis.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy
BGE
- Between 2016/17 and 2022/23, most young people achieved third CfE level in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3. At fourth CfE level, less than half young people achieve literacy and numeracy. Young people generally do not make sufficient progress in literacy or numeracy throughout the BGE.

- As a result of ongoing professional learning and collaboration, teachers' professional judgements of achievement of a level are becoming more robust and reliable across all curricular areas. Senior leaders should continue to enable and encourage teachers to work together within and across departments, as well as beyond the school to ensure their professional judgements of achievement of a CfE level are more reliable.

Senior phase
Leavers
Literacy
- Almost all young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 achieved literacy at SCQF level 4 or better. This is significantly much higher than the virtual comparator (VC) from 2019/20 to 2022/23. The majority of young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy, in line with the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. Less than half achieved this at SCQF level 6, in line with the VC.

Numeracy
- Most young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 achieved numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better. This is significantly higher than the VC from 2019/20 to 202/23. The majority of young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 achieved the unit award at SCQF level 5 or better. This is significantly higher than the VC from 2021/22 to 202/23. Attainment at SCQF level 6 is generally significantly lower than the VC.

- In each of the last five years from 2018/19 to 2022/23 very few young people leave school with no literacy or numeracy qualification at SCQF level 3 or better.

ASN
- Almost all young people who require additional support with their learning achieve literacy at SCQF level 4 or better. Most young people who require additional support with their learning achieve numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better.

Cohorts
Literacy
- At S4, by S5 and by S6 there is no consistent improvement at SQCF level 5 or better. In the latest year, 2023/24, performance is significantly higher than the VC. By S6, performance at SCQF level 6 or better shows an improvement over the last three years.

Numeracy
- At S4, the majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better. This is significantly higher than the VC. There is a wide discrepancy between young people achieving success in the course award and unit passes at S4, by S5 and by S6 that needs improved. Attainment in numeracy improved overall at SCQF level 6 by S5 and by S6, to being in line with VC, in 2023/24.

- Staff in the mathematics department should continue to explore the differences between those achieving numeracy through units compared to course awards to ensure all young people are attaining as highly as possible. Teachers have introduced new courses in numeracy in order to improve attainment. Too many young people are currently being presented for both SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 mathematics, and for qualifications in both mathematics and applications of mathematics.

Attainment over time
BGE
- Currently staff in each curriculum area record effort, behaviour and progress in the BGE in different ways. Teachers use a range of identified strategies, interventions and supports to help young people make progress. Teachers are at the early stages of tracking and monitoring progress across all curriculum areas throughout the BGE. As a result, senior leaders are unable to demonstrate improvements in attainment over the BGE.

- All teachers need to understand better and implement literacy and numeracy approaches as a responsibility of all.

Senior phase
Leavers
- Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, when using complementary tariff points, the attainment of young people leaving school has broadly been in line with the VC.

- Attainment improved for the lowest attaining 20% of young people who require additional support from 2019/20-2022/23. The middle attaining 60% of young people who require additional support declined from 2020/21 to 2022/23. For the highest attaining 20% of young people who require additional support attainment improved from 2019/20 to 2021/22 before declining in 2022/23.

Cohorts
- At S4 based on S4, attainment for the lowest attaining 20% of young people improved in 2022/23 and 2023/24 to being significantly higher than the VC. The middle attaining 60% and

highest attaining 20% of young people attained generally in line with the VC, however has declined in recent years.

■ By S5 based on S4, attainment for the lowest attaining 20% of young people is in line with the VC from 2020/21-2023/24. The middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people is often significantly lower than the VC. In 2023/24 attainment was significantly lower than the VC for both groups of young people. Attainment for the lowest 20% and middle 60% shows a decline in recent years, in line with the VC.

■ By S6 based on S4, attainment for all groups is significantly lower than the VC from 2019/20-2021/22. This improved to in line with the VC in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

■ At S4, there are a high number of dual presentations. Almost a third of young people are presented for both National 4 and National 5 qualifications in one subject. A fifth of young people are presented for two qualifications in two subjects. This is above the VC. This is often linked to the number of no awards at National 5.

■ Senior leaders have developed a whole school tracking system which enables them, and teachers, to track and monitor the progress and attainment of individuals, groups and cohorts of young people. Staff should continue to develop this and to improve the use of data to more accurately and reliably inform young people of their working and target grades. This should lead to improved correlation between the expected and actual attainment of young people.

Breadth and depth
■ The percentage of young people attaining 1 or more, to 4 or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better at S4 is in line with the VC from 2021/22 – 2023/24. At SCQF level 5A or better the percentage of young people attaining one or more to five or more qualifications is significantly lower than the VC from 2021/22 to 2023/24.

■ By S5, the percentage of young people attaining 2 or more, to 4 or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better is significantly lower than the VC in 2023/24, having been in line with the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. By S5 the percentage of young people attaining 2 or more, to 5 or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better is in line with the VC in 2023/24, having been below the VC in 2022/23 for two or more, or three or more awards.

■ By S6 the percentage of young people attaining 2 or more to 5 or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better, is below the VC in 2023/24, having been in line 2022/23. By S6 the percentage of young people attaining one or more awards at SCQF level 7A is in line with the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. This declined to being below the VC in 2023/24. By S6 the percentage of young people attaining two or more awards at SCQF level 7A is in line with the VC from 2019/20 to 2023/24.

■ A minority of young people achieved qualifications equivalent to SCQF level 6, such as Social Services: Children and Young People, in 2023/24.

■ Senior leaders should now focus on the quality and quantity of qualifications young people attain, to improve attainment for young people.

Overall quality of learners' achievement
■ Staff work well with a range of partners to support young peoples' achievements. Organisations such as the Pennypitt Trust and the Bridges Project help a few young people to gain valuable life skills. Whilst contributing to their local community, young people exercise responsibility

thorough volunteering and helping others. Local community and development youth work staff provide a helpful bridge between school and community. They work closely with guidance teachers, supporting young people less engaged with school. A few young people gain Saltire, Youth Achievement and Dynamic Youth awards.

■ There is a strong focus on sports, with many young people gaining local recognition in competitions. A few young people complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, mostly at bronze and silver level. This helps them develop resilience and an awareness of themselves when working with others. Young people confidently describe the skills they are learning by being part of the school pipe bands. They are becoming more confident, motivated and recognise their role in a team. Many young people play in the band both locally and nationally.

■ Young peoples' achievements are celebrated regularly through assemblies and the weekly 'PLus' newsletter. This helps build a culture of pride across the school community. As planned, staff should systematically collect and track all young people's participation and achievements. This will enable staff to identify those who may be at risk of missing out from those valuable opportunities.

Equity for all learners

■ Staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school. Staff have a strong commitment to ensuring equity for all young people. This is evident from the focus on supporting the cost of the school day. The Preston Lodge Learning Foundation supports staff and young people well through, for example, funding the pre-loved uniform scheme and supporting access to trips and activities.

■ Staff, across the school, recognise the whole school commitment to raise attainment for young people who reside in areas of greatest disadvantage. From 2018/19 to 2022/23 there has been an inconsistent but negative trend in complementary tariff points for school leavers residing in these areas. Staff have now increased supports for this group of young people. This has led to a few improvements within these cohorts, particularly at S4. Staff should continue to develop and expand the impact of this work.

■ Almost all young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 attained significantly lower or much lower than national figures, however moved onto a positive destination. The majority of young people leave school to go on to higher or further education. Less than half go to employment and a few to training opportunities.

In the ELP:

■ The small number of young people at each phase within the ELP renders comparison of cohorts or groups invalid. The current lack of differentiation between the BGE and senior phase, and the insufficient data on young people's progress contributes further to the difficulty in evaluating young people's progress. From evidence gathered, a minority of young people are making satisfactory progress from prior levels of learning. The majority of young people are not making sufficient progress in their learning. Most young people are capable of achieving more.

■ All young people in S2 and S3 spell and write a range of words appropriate to their age and ability. They develop their ideas to write creative stories and read appropriate texts to gather information. Young people use their questioning skills effectively when interviewing guests into the ELP class. Teachers should continue to support young people to make improvements against all aspects of literacy.

- All young people in S2 and S3 add and subtract single- and two-digit numbers. They identify odd and even numbers to twenty. Young people use their knowledge of money to purchase goods. Teachers should continue to support young people to improve their numeracy skills.

- Teachers do not yet have effective processes in place to evaluate young people's progress over time. Since session 2022/23 all young people in the senior phase attain NQs across a range of curricular areas up to SCQF level 4 or better. The majority of young people are capable of achieving more qualifications at a higher level. Senior leaders need to develop robust processes to assess and evaluate young people's progress across the BGE and senior phase. Teachers need to have a greater focus on raising attainment for young people to ensure they achieve as best they can.

- Young people are developing skills and contributing to their school community through a range of activities in school and with partners. Young people develop confidence in new and unfamiliar settings by taking part in outdoor learning activities such as equine therapy and kayaking. Teachers should explore how young people can be accredited more widely for their achievements.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland 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.