

Summarised inspection findings

Kilgraston School

Independent

5 February 2019

Key contextual information

Kilgraston School is located in Bridge of Earn, Perth and Kinross. It is a non-selective, independent boarding and day school for girls aged 5 to 18. Kilgraston offers accommodation to girls who wish to be full, weekly or flexible boarders. Some young people attend the school for a short period of time, specifically to be immersed in the English language. At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 262 with 53 at the junior stages, 209 at the senior stages, and 81 boarders. Kilgraston School is a member of the Sacred Heart Network, and part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dunkeld. The environment for learning includes extensive outdoor grounds, a swimming pool and, uniquely for schools in Scotland, an equestrian centre.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

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

- Kilgraston School is a welcoming, caring and inclusive school. The life and work of Kilgraston is underpinned by core values, which are based on an ethos of faith. These values of trust, respect, integrity and responsibility are explored and reinforced in a variety of relevant and motivating ways. This includes in lessons and classes; in the extensive out-of-class opportunities; at assemblies; and in boarding houses. As a result, girls of all ages benefit from very positive relationships and the supportive, encouraging ethos. They demonstrate the school values in their daily interactions with each other. Adults also model and reinforce the values as they fulfil their roles and responsibilities, often with clear passion and dedication. School leaders and staff strive to offer a high quality, individualised educational experience for all, and to foster the skills, talents and interests of each girl. They are successful in doing so, and children and young people, and adults alike are rightly very proud of their school.
- The headmistress has been in post for three years. During her time in post, she has very successfully led a process of change and improvement, to build further on the long-established strengths of the school. She has a clear focus on striving for high standards in all aspects of school provision, in order to secure the best possible outcomes for all learners. To achieve this, she has communicated clearly to the school community the importance of self-evaluation. She has established a positive culture of self-reflection and review, encouraging staff, learners, parents, governors and trustees to participate and contribute meaningfully to the improvement agenda. The headmistress is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, the head of pastoral care and boarding, the head of junior school, the bursar and the director of communications and sport. As a very experienced team, with differing and complementary skills, they provide highly effective leadership and direction across the school and boarding houses. Together, they have an accurate view of the key strengths of the school and have identified areas for further development. Inspectors were able to validate all aspects of the school's own self-evaluation.

- Arrangements for governance and accountability are clearly defined and highly effective. The Board of Trustees provide very well considered financial stewardship and a sense of stability for the school community. They strive to ensure that girls benefit from a high quality, well-maintained learning environment. The Board of Governors provide strategic leadership and guidance to the school leadership team, including elements of scrutiny, challenge and support whenever necessary. Recent changes to the duties and responsibilities of governors are innovative and very effective. Each governor is assigned an area of special interest within the life of the school. This includes over-arching policy areas such as child protection, medical provision and health and safety. Commendably, governors' areas of special interest also focus on learning and teaching. Senior school subject departments, the junior school and boarding houses each have a link governor. Throughout the year, governors carry out visits within their areas of special interest. They engage in dialogue with staff and learners. As a result, governors have a well-informed view of the day-to-day life of the school and boarding houses, including strengths and any challenges. Governors are very accessible to the school community, which helps to create a climate of openness, transparency and trust.
- Senior leaders in the junior and senior schools evaluate the quality of provision in a variety of ways. This includes a programme of observations of classroom practice, regularly seeking the views of stakeholders via questionnaires; and on-going professional dialogue in relation to meeting the needs of all learners. In the junior school, class teachers each maintain records of children's progress across their learning. School leaders should continue with their plans to develop assessment and tracking systems further. A next step is to develop a strategic overview of the attainment and progress of children as they move through the junior school. This will allow promoted staff to pinpoint more easily where children may require any additional support or challenge. In the senior school, promoted staff, including heads of departments, analyse assessment and examination data to identify what is working well and areas to improve or refine. Overall, middle leaders demonstrate strong capacity to now help to achieve consistently high quality learning and teaching across subject departments. This includes monitoring measurable improvement in attainment over time. Girls would benefit from their subject teachers reinforcing and making the most of the helpful, focussed, personal targets that are set for them. This will help to maximise success for all learners, including for those participating in SQA examinations.
- All staff, teaching and non-teaching, benefit from the school's positive and proactive approach to promoting career-long professional learning (CLPL). Staff make the most of, and value, opportunities to share practice with colleagues in other schools. The headmistress encourages teachers to take on additional leadership responsibilities and to extend their professional skills and knowledge, for example as SQA markers. Staff participate willingly in a range of local networks, which include independent and local authority schools. Professional learning time is set aside to ensure that all staff have up-to-date skills to meet the needs of all learners. Girls' experiences are enhanced as a result of this outward-looking approach to school improvement,
- A wide range of well-planned opportunities is provided for girls to develop and apply leadership skills. Girls in Upper 6th act as Big Friendly Girls (BFG) to younger ones. In this buddying role, which they take very seriously, they provide help and support, and offer kindness and friendship to their peers. This is much appreciated by younger girls and their parents, and contributes significantly to the warm and nurturing ethos around the school and boarding houses. There are many opportunities for girls to demonstrate leadership through sport. This results in a strong ethos of collaboration and teamwork, as well as individual and team

successes in national and county sports and pursuits. Pupil voice is improving. The food committee and eco committee have helped to influence improvements in learning about sustainability and healthy lifestyles. The junior school and senior school councils have recently been revamped to become more pupil-led. Girls of all ages are ready and able to now take on even more leadership responsibility, particularly in shaping the direction of learning and teaching.

- The senior leader with responsibility for boarding leads and manages her remit very effectively. Her clear direction ensures that systems are understood, implemented and informed by staff. She is held in the highest regard by staff who value her support and leadership style. Staff place a high priority on the academic and pastoral needs of the young people in the boarding houses. Young people are valued and central to their work. Of note is the strong sense of teamwork and the communication processes between boarding, pastoral and academic staff. The head of boarding monitors closely the work of staff in the houses. She is highly visible and undertakes focused observations within the boarding houses to improve practice.
- Boarding house staff readily take on wide ranging duties and leadership roles that take account of their own strengths and the interests of young people. These include additional qualifications at degree level and training in relevant subjects, such as mental health and first aid. Staff use their strengths very well to support each young person's emotional wellbeing and academic needs.
- Boarding house staff contribute very well to the school improvement planning process. Boarding house improvement plans link to the whole school improvement agenda. These plans are informed by the views of boarders and staff and set a clear agenda for change. Moving forward, staff should continue, as planned, to strengthen the range of evidence they gather to help inform improvement plans.
- Across the school and boarding houses, senior leaders and staff actively promote positive partnerships with parents and carers. Open days, family days and curriculum events are well attended. Almost all parents appreciate the ways that governors and school leaders communicate with them, and feel that they have good information about their child's progress. Kilgraston Parents' Association plays an important role in school life, for example in supporting open days and in fundraising. They support the school's drive for sustainability and equity very well by running the popular second-hand uniform shop. There are plans in place to establish a parent forum, in order to provide a consultative mechanism to support and inform improvement and change.
- Led by the headmistress, school leaders have a clear focus on striving for equity and inclusion for all. Steps are taken to ensure that no girl misses out, and can benefit from the extensive range of enriching and motivating experiences on offer. Kilgraston School staff appreciate the partnerships they have grown over many years, within the educational and wider community in Perth and Kinross and beyond. In return, they willingly share their specialist teaching expertise through an outreach approach, for example in expressive arts, for local primary schools. Younger girls look forward to visiting a neighbouring care home for senior citizens, for example, to share their Hallowe'en stories. Of particular note is the partnership that staff in Kilgraston School's equestrian centre have developed with the local Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) group. Together, staff and RDA volunteers welcome children and adults with disabilities from across Perthshire each week. Kilgraston learners often volunteer to support these sessions. Staff from visiting schools commented to inspectors how warmly they are welcomed at Kilgraston, and that their children relish their riding experiences with Kilgraston's skilled

instructor each week. Such community-minded approaches demonstrate in action the school's Christian spirit and ethos of kindness

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

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

Overall

- Across all stages of the school, the ethos for learning is very positive. Learners at Kilgraston feel nurtured and are highly motivated in their learning. This creates a safe and dynamic learning environment for all. Relationships between the girls and staff are very positive across the Kilgraston community. This is a notable strength of the school.
- The Kilgraston School ethos is underpinned by its pledge to develop the whole person, through the five Sacred Heart goals: a living faith, personal growth, intellectual values, building community, and active social awareness. The day-to-day actions of learners and staff reflect the tradition of the school's commitment to Catholic values. These values help to create the unique ethos and environment at Kilgraston, where staff and learners show mutual respect and commitment to high standards at all times. Girls across the stages are well mannered, courteous and very articulate, both in classes and around the school.

Junior school

- Staff know each learner's individual strengths and development needs very well. Almost all learners are very attentive and engaged in lessons. Learners have very positive and nurturing relationships with their teachers and with each other. Very positive interactions across the junior years are evident.
- Children are keen to discuss their learning and respond very positively to all adults who work with them. Teachers, classroom assistants and other adult helpers create a very caring environment. Learners are confident, articulate and they feel listened to by staff and other learners. Across the junior years, children are happy and enjoy being at school. They are supportive of each other in class and more widely across the school community. They are keen to recognise and celebrate each other's successes. In most classes, children are encouraged to self-assess their work and have regular opportunities to peer assess with other members of the class. Most staff make effective use of strategies to promote active learning opportunities. As a result, children are very eager and confident to talk about their successes and areas for improvement in their learning.
- At the outset of planning topics and themes, the majority of teachers involve children by asking them what they already know, and what they would like to learn. Further development of this approach across all junior classes will help to create increased opportunities for all children to lead aspects of their learning in class.
- From our observations of lessons, there is clear evidence of children's ability to apply concepts from prior learning to new topics. Children readily make links in their learning across different curricular areas. Learners are eager to talk about how aspects of their learning help to develop

new concepts. Overall, the language of learning used amongst learners, without prompt by staff, is a strong feature across the junior years.

- Overall, the quality of teaching in the junior years is very good. Most lessons are high quality and delivered with energy and enthusiasm. Learning aims are shared and discussed with the learners in order to frame clearly contexts for learning. Plenary sessions are used to celebrate and consolidate learning in the most effective lessons. There is scope to share this practice and roll this out across all stages of the junior years. Most teachers demonstrate effective questioning techniques to encourage higher order thinking. Most teachers are highly skilled at helping learners to develop their responses to deepen learning and offer challenge.
- Digital technology is used well to enhance learning across most stages. For example, digital devices are used outdoors in numeracy lessons to photograph and compare a variety of angles in real-life contexts. Almost all staff across the junior years, capitalise on Kilgraston's abundant outdoor spaces. They routinely use the outdoors to develop concepts in learning. Children clearly enjoy this aspect of their learning.
- Teachers use a range of effective assessment approaches to determine children's progress in learning and their development needs. Staff are equipped to build in effective interventions to support and challenge children in their learning, through the monitoring of outcomes from standardised testing, internal assessments and teacher professional judgements. The head of junior years has correctly identified the need to increase the interrogation of this data in order to provide a more detailed overview of learners' progress. There is scope for staff to engage further with national guidance for assessment, in order to provide clear standards of attainment linked to national expectations. We discussed with staff the benefits of engaging in moderation activities, to share standards in the planning of learning and teaching, and for assessment. A key feature of moderation activity should include collaborating with colleagues from other schools. This will provide teachers with a clearer understanding of expectations of attainment and achievement aligned to national standards. A more collegiate approach to forward planning for contexts of learning will provide a clearer overview of learning across the junior years. Importantly, this will also provide a clearer picture of strengths and areas for improvement in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

Senior school

- There is a very positive culture for learning across the senior school. Relationships between staff and pupils are relaxed, and mutually respectful. Almost all young people are motivated and engaged in their learning. Most young people are keen to participate actively during class activities. In a few lessons we observed, learners were more compliant and passive. There is scope for planned opportunities to share the aspects highly effective learning and teaching that exist within different curricular areas, amongst staff more widely across the senior school.
- Staff are very aware of the needs of all learners. Almost all young people and staff demonstrate courtesy and mutual respect, which creates a nurturing ethos, where learners are confident to learn by taking risks in their learning and participate more fully. Young people see their teachers as approachable and helpful.
- In most lessons, learning is appropriately challenging. Most staff plan a variety of varied learning approaches and there are some highly effective examples of young people having opportunities to lead learning. In most lessons, learners' individual needs are met skilfully and discretely, often with effective differentiation planned through the tasks and activities.

- Overall, the quality of teaching across the senior school is very good. Most lessons are of high quality and increasingly, learners are involved in defining aspects of learning that they are eager to explore. Most staff are very responsive to the needs and interests of the girls in their learning. In most lessons, learning aims are shared and discussed with the learners. This helps learners to evaluate their success at different stages of learning. In the most effective lessons, plenary sessions are used to celebrate and consolidate learning. Staff should continue with plans to share this practice consistently across all stages of the senior school.
- In most lessons young people have the opportunity to discuss their learning and are able to feed back their views and findings to their peers. Most young people have opportunities to be involved in self-evaluation and peer assessment to benchmark their progress in their learning. Personalisation and choice is an effective feature in most subject areas. For example, in religious studies, learners define the contexts for learning that they are keen to explore for the academic session.
- At Kilgraston School, learners are expected to bring digital electronic devices to a number of subject areas. In the most effective examples, teachers capitalise on the benefits of digital technology to deepen learning and provide research opportunities for learners, as well as to provide whole class and individual feedback for both class work and homework. There is headroom to share this effective practice more widely across the school in order to provide more consistency across subject areas. Senior leaders have correctly identified staff professional learning in the effective use of technology and digital devices, as a whole-school improvement priority for this session.
- Most lessons are well structured and offer appropriate challenge to young people. We discussed with senior leaders areas where challenge should be increased as appropriate to the level and stage. This in turn will help to improve overall motivation for learning in certain subject areas. The majority of teachers make full use of discussion in learning to facilitate high-order questioning. This allows learners to build their confidence and challenge concepts with staff and their peers in a respectful and articulate manner. In most lessons, teachers make connections to real-life contexts. This helps to demonstrate the relevance of planned contexts for learning and make meaningful connection to skills development for areas of the world of work.
- Study areas provide a well-used space for day pupils and boarders to learn together, out with timetabled lessons during the school day. Young people make decisions where to study and complete their prep. Staff make regular checks on the young people and offer advice or support if required. In addition, young people across the boarding houses support each other very well in their learning. Where necessary, staff in boarding houses work with alongside young people and their parents to identify suitable additional support, such as supervised study sessions or 'surgeries'. These sessions provide very effective targeted support for individuals, to address specific gaps in their learning or to improve motivation.
- Subject departments have up-to-date verification arrangements in place, in line with national expectations for National Qualifications. Across the senior school, there are a number of staff involved in the administration and quality assurance procedures for SQA courses. As a result, almost all staff are clear about their roles in implementing the key requirements for National Qualifications courses offered across departments. As a next step, staff should develop approaches to moderation activity across the stages prior to National Qualifications. This will help to ensure their judgement of levels of achievement and attainment is consistently robust. Staff would benefit from opportunities for moderation more widely with colleagues beyond their own setting. This will allow teachers across all departments to develop a wider national picture

of standards and expectations around assessment and achievement at the earlier stages of the senior school. A few departments have recently revised senior school courses at the earlier stages, so that planned learning and associated assessment aligns more naturally to the national benchmarks for assessment. A consistent whole school approach to standards across the earlier stages of the senior school will provide more consistency around standards for assessment and expectations in all subject areas.

- The majority of subject areas involve young people in discussing, recording and revisiting targets and interventions regularly. Where this takes place, it provides improved support for learners, leading to improved outcomes for attainment and achievement. Staff should review this process, so that learners experience consistent opportunities to discuss and revisit targets and interventions which will help them to focus on the detail of how to be successful across all curricular areas.
- Almost all subject departments across the senior school have developed useful approaches to track and monitor learner's progress, attainment and achievement. This is developing well. We have discussed with staff the benefits of developing a whole-school overview of learners' progress. When fully developed, this will include the facility to show the progress of learners with protected characteristics, and other key information about learners who require additional support and who may face barriers in accessing their learning. Overall, a more robust approach to tracking and monitoring across the earlier stages of the senior school will ensure stronger evidence-based presentation decisions for young people's learning pathways into and through the senior school.

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, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their 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 each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Overall, across the junior and senior schools and boarding houses, children and young people benefit from strong positive relationships with staff and with each other. The promotion of wellbeing is an underpinning feature of the whole school. This helps children and young people to develop confidence, resilience and helps them feel safe and included. Across the school, children and young people are well behaved and are caring and respectful to each other. Staff know children and young people very well and are very effective in supporting them in dealing with family issues, such as bereavement and divorce. Children and young people who have moved here from other schools say that it has been an extremely positive experience, allowing them to feel more nurtured and to achieve more. The importance of wellbeing and positive relationships is further strengthened by the BFG scheme, where senior girls enthusiastically mentor and nurture younger ones. Staff involve the children and young people in discussions and decisions regarding the life of the school such as attendance at pupil council, food committee and boarding committees. They should continue to build on this.
- A yearly survey using a rating scale across the wellbeing indicators is used very effectively to assess learners' attitudes to their own wellbeing. This approach both familiarises children and young people with the wellbeing indicators, and gives the school a baseline to gauge wellbeing progress in the school. The wellbeing indicators have been described within a 'Kilgraston wheel', illustrating how children and young people should respect and interact with each other to reflect the indicators. A next step for the school is to work with children and young people to help them understand the wellbeing indicators in relation to articles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The highly effective pastoral support provided in the school is further enhanced by input from a wide range of outside agencies such as child and adolescent mental health, Shelter and external counselling services. Staff commendably encourage young people to work in a leadership role with such outside agencies, therefore building capacity within the school. Senior girls are trained in child protection and contribute very well to school policies, such as anti-bullying.
- Overall, across the junior and senior schools, children and young people benefit from a range of opportunities to help them develop an awareness of their own health and wellbeing. This includes yoga and mindfulness sessions. At all stages, learners are aware of the importance of healthy food choices and are provided with the opportunity to make these choices by the range of high quality food on offer. Children and young people can participate in an extensive range of sports and games, including horse riding which encourages them to both develop and enjoy physical activity. The older children apply their leadership skills as sports leaders.
- Across the junior and senior schools, children and young people with additional support needs are very well supported, using a staged intervention support model. Staff are extremely skilled in supporting children and young people sensitively. This includes within the learning support

base, in classes and on outside activities, such as competing in national sports competitions. For children and young people who require additional assistance, there are robust support plans in place with relevant targets. Plans are constantly assessed and changed when appropriate. The school has recently been re-accredited by the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils on account of the very good support offered to children and young people with dyslexia. The school should continue with plans to provide regular and appropriate CLPL opportunities to continue to build capacity in class teachers to support children and young people with a range of additional support needs.

- Children and young people with English as an additional language are very well supported by the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) department. Staff successfully facilitate the development of the English language in reading, writing, listening and speaking for these young people. They are supported within the department, in mainstream English classes and in other mainstream subjects. Almost all children and young people within the department will sit ESOL exams. As planned, in order to build on the very good support that children and young people receive, ESOL staff should create individual integrated plans which describe the strengths and needs of the child; the impact of steps that have been taken for support; and future steps. These plans should be composed in consultation with children and young people, and parents as practically as is possible, and should focus on the national wellbeing indicators.
- Inclusion and equality is embedded within the school. This is helping to ensure all children and young people can make the progress that they are capable of. Overall, across the junior and senior schools, staff use the multi-national nature of the school community well to develop the children and young peoples' awareness of diversity and cultural differences. A United Nations convention day allows the children and young people to enthusiastically debate a range of relevant topics. International evenings allow girls to share and celebrate their different customs and traditions. Staff, in line with the school values, strive to ensure that children and young people value and celebrate diversity and challenge discrimination of any kind. The personal, social and health education programme across the school allows children and young people to explore further diversity and equality.
- Boarding staff effectively prioritise the wellbeing of young people. They use the support structures in place very well to ensure each young person's pastoral and academic needs are addressed. Staff undertake regular, rigorous discussions about each young person and their wellbeing. Tutors lead pupil group discussions, based on the principles of GIRFEC, which link well to the approach undertaken in the boarding houses. Routinely staff direct the young people to the language of the health and wellbeing indicators. This is evident in the plans and used for discussions. This session, boarding staff have had focused discussions with all senior girls, including for some, one-to-one discussions relating to wellbeing. As a result staff and these learners have a deeper understanding of health and wellbeing and how this relates to each individual directly. Boarding staff should continue, as planned, to evaluate this approach. They should continue to extend this practice, to ensure all young people have regular and planned opportunities for one-to-one discussions about their wellbeing.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

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

- Overall this quality indicator is evaluated as very good. By the time young people leave the school, there are major strengths in their attainment and achievement. Over time in the senior school, the Depute Head has very effectively led with staff a thorough interrogation and analysis of data to realise improvements in attainment. From this, adjustments have been made to the curriculum, and to learning and teaching to raise further attainment. HM Inspectors are confident in senior leaders' use of data to drive improvements. It would now be appropriate to continue to make more use of the self-evaluation framework, *How good is our school?* (4th edition) in analysing data. We have asked senior leaders to continue to share more of the approaches they use in monitoring and tracking the attainment of the senior girls, as appropriate to age and stage, across the school. Across the school, it would be useful to continue building a concise, one-stop summary of key information on progress and attainment. This should give an overview of how groups and individuals are performing across the totality of learning in their 5-18 experience. As identified by the school, there is headroom for young people to be more conversant in knowing how they improve their attainment through being set meaningful targets, and receiving better subject-specific feedback from formative and periodic assessment.
- In analysing the school's data, account has been taken of the relatively small school roll. We have also considered that the school follows aspects of Curriculum for Excellence in the broad general education (BGE), while developing a curriculum which is tailored to Kilgraston School.

Junior school:

- Across the curriculum, senior leaders report that most children's attainment is good, with a significant minority's attainment being very good. From working with groups of children, we found that children are making very good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Progress in literacy at the junior school

- Across the junior years, most children achieve high standards of attainment and acquire important skills for learning. Standardised assessment show that children are working at national average level or beyond. The school has identified the need to focus on improving children's spelling across the junior years.

Listening and talking

- Across the junior years, almost all the children we observed displayed excellent listening and talking skills. They listen attentively in both class and small group situations. They take turns to talk. They are open and respectful of others' ideas and opinions. They can express themselves articulately in a range of situations.

Reading

- In the early years, almost all children are making very good progress with using phonics and their application in texts. They use texts of increasing complexity and benefit from extended reading groups to enrich their experiences. Older children use a variety of texts, fiction and non-fiction, to extract information and they can confidently discuss complex ideas, structures and specialist vocabulary.

Writing

- Children use a variety of writing for different purposes. They enjoy this curricular area. Younger children can write clear instructions and understand the use of the imperative. Older children incorporate similes and alliteration into their imaginative writing. Almost all children benefit from very good opportunities to apply their writing skills in different contexts and genres.

Progress in numeracy and mathematics in the junior school

- From the data provided by the school and observations in classroom, most children are making very good progress from their previous levels of attainment. Most children are working at an appropriate level of attainment, or achieving beyond the appropriate level. Across the junior years, children participate enthusiastically in active learning activities, such as mathematical games. They particularly enjoy when their learning is taken outdoors. Almost all written work is recorded neatly. Children perform written calculations accurately most of the time.
- In the younger years, girls are establishing their number bonds to 20 using practical materials, which they enjoy manipulating and using to consolidate their understanding. Learners respond well to the use of an interactive 100 number square to explore number and sequences.
- At Upper 2 (U2), girls can demonstrate a confident understanding of the four number operations. They apply a range of strategies to problem solving, using appropriate mathematical vocabulary.
- At Upper 3 (U3), girls can confidently and swiftly recall multiplication facts. They demonstrate their knowledge of simple fractions and decimal fractions. They are using algebraic expressions and equations accurately.
- In shape, position and movement, at Upper (U1) girls can recognise right angles, and apply their knowledge of 2D-shape. At U2, girls confidently find right angles in the classroom and outdoor areas. They can use signs, words and angles associated with direction and turning. At Lower 3 (L3), the girls use mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles including acute, obtuse, straight and reflex. At U3, girls have a good understanding of the terms complementary, supplementary and corresponding angles.
- In their own class records, staff make effective use of assessments to record and track progress. A shared understanding of standards across all staff, within a robust tracking system, would support further professional judgements about how well children are progressing. HM Inspectors discussed with staff how they can further improve monitoring and tracking to help achieve the very best possible outcomes for children.
- Achievements are well documented across junior years. Staff should now discuss ways of tracking the skills gained through the girls' participation in opportunities for achievements.

Attainment in the senior school

- Over the last three years across the Broad General Education (BGE), senior leaders and teachers have been using standardised assessments to monitor young people's progress in

literacy and numeracy. In the latest year, these assessments show that almost all young people perform at the expected level, or higher. In other curricular areas in the BGE, staff are monitoring and tracking progress over time. They are using a range of internally devised summative assessments. The Kilgraston Certificate and Diploma is in its second year of implementation. This is a way of recognising breadth and depth in young people's achievement and attainment. Through time, it would be good to ascertain trends from this in raising attainment and achievement. At the early stages of the junior years, staff are collecting evidence of children's performance as a means of increasing the range of assessments used through which children can demonstrate expected standards. There is some moderation of standards involving senior leaders in L4 and U4. A next step is to have a consistent, progressive approach to moderation across the BGE.

- Across the BGE and at the senior phase, staff could be clearer in their reporting on how well they are raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. This should recognise the responsibility of all teachers in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. In 2018, almost all young people attained English at National 5 or better. Most young people who chose to study Higher English at S5 attain at grade A-C. Staff are due to focus on improving further the quality of young people's passes in Higher English. A few young people sat the Advanced Higher. They were successful in achieving the National Qualification at grade A-C. A few young people for whom English is an additional language do very well and have their successes recognised through a range of accreditation. Some of these young people attend the school for a short period of time, specifically to be immersed in the English language.
- In 2018, most young people attained mathematics at National 5 level or better. There is some capacity for improving the quality of passes in mathematics. Most young people who chose to study Higher mathematics at S5 have attained it at grade A-C. A few young people sat the Advanced Higher. They were successful in achieving the National Qualification at grade A-B.
- In the latest year, across Upper 5 (U5), Lower (L6) and Upper 6 (U6), all young people being presented for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher (AH) performed higher than those undertaking these qualifications across Scotland.
- By the end of U5 and U6, over the last five years almost all young people have achieved National 5 and AH courses at grades A-C. Over the last four years in U5, the majority of young people achieve grade A passes at National 5. In U6, around half of the presentations for Higher are achieved at a grade A.
- By the end of L6, in four out of the five past years, almost all young people have achieved Higher passes at grades A-C. In the latest year, most young people achieved Higher passes at grades A-C. In the latest year, over a third of young people have achieved Higher passes at grade A. In the previous four years, this fluctuated between just under to over a half of young people achieving Higher passes at grade A.
- The school has three years of data on the current curriculum model at National 5. In the latest year, there are improvements in the percentage of young people being presented for 5+ courses at National 5. The school should review the practice of presenting some young people for both National 5 and National 4 in some subjects. This would help reduce any burden that young people may experience from being over assessed. The percentage of young people being presented for 3+ courses at Higher level is the lowest over a five-year period. HM Inspectors endorsed the school's plans to revisit curricular pathways to ensure that the needs of all individuals are being met.

Equity for all learners across the school

- Staff at Kilgraston School are clear about the importance to promote equity for all. Staff emphasise the importance of meeting the needs of each individual girl and are skilled in doing so. This includes meeting the needs of those who need some additional support with their learning. As a result, young people who need some support with their learning are making significant progress.
- Almost all young people's destination on leaving school is Higher Education. A few go onto Further Education.
- In the Junior School, small class sizes and the nurturing environment ensure that the academic, social and pastoral needs of all children are identified, discussed and met very well.

Overall quality of achievement in the junior years

- Children's personal development and skills are enhanced by participation in a wide range of activities and clubs. Children take part in the Kilgraston Merit system which rewards a range of positive behaviour. Children's individual and collective successes are celebrated in weekly assemblies. All children in the reception class to U1 are actively involved in the life of the community. For example, they visit Moncrieff Nursing Home which is reported to enhance the experiences of older people. All children participate in "Brig and Bloom" garden activities. Annually, many children successfully participate in the 'Perform in Perth' competitions. There are various day trips that children undertake. For example, L3 girls have a day trip to Belfast to visit the Titanic exhibition. U3 learners take part in a three-day historical residential trip to Stratford-upon-Avon. All girls may join Junior Years committees providing them with opportunities for responsibility.

Overall quality of achievement in the senior school

- Kilgraston School offers an extensive range of co-curricular activities. These serve to promote and enhance the breadth of young people's learning experiences out with the classroom. Staff show a very high level of dedication in offering and delivering over 50 clubs. Almost all girls are involved in at least two activities a week. These activities are crucial in developing the young people's sporting and creative skills, and provide personal challenge. Many of the young people have gained The Duke of Edinburgh's, LAMDA or CARITAS Awards. Young people in L6 and U6 complete an e-profile detailing their achievements and resultant skills gained. Staff should now be clearer on how they develop children and young people's skills for learning, life and work across the whole school.
- The school values and celebrates the achievements of all young people. This is done in assemblies, weekly newsletters, notice boards, website and in the annual publication, 'COR UNUM'. Young people achieve success in local, regional and national co-curricular competitions. Girls' talents are showcased by music concerts, drama performances, sporting events and art exhibitions. Young people develop their social awareness by making valuable contributions to the local community. They organise successful fundraising events for local, national and international causes.
- Young people are involved in effectively supporting others through a wide range of roles such as the BFG initiative, participation in the house system, sports captains and chaplaincy.
- Global citizenship is encouraged very well. Exchanges take place to a school in India, as well as other Sacred Heart Schools in Europe and the USA. An annual international evening showcases different countries and nationalities by sampling intercontinental food and watching entertaining performances.

Choice of QI: 2.2 Curriculum

- Rationale and design
- Development of the Curriculum
- Learning pathways
- Skills for learning Life and Work

Rationale and design:

- The curriculum offered at Kilgraston School is broadly underpinned by Scottish Government Curriculum for Excellence national guidance. The Board of Governors, the headmistress and all staff have developed a shared vision and goals for the curriculum. The school's goal to stimulate and develop every girl's individual character and personality permeates the distinctive ethos and values as a Sacred Heart school to develop the whole child and young person.
- At all stages, children and young people benefit from a broad and balanced school experience. Aspects of the senior school curriculum are currently under review, with a view to offering a broader and more tailored curriculum to match the needs and aspirations of learners. We discussed with staff ways in which aspects of the senior school curriculum can be further developed to ensure that all girls have the opportunity to be successful. In planning for learning, teaching and assessment, staff are aware of the need to capitalise on the four contexts for learning. For example, there is further scope to develop opportunities for interdisciplinary and cross-curricular learning contexts to make connections in learning across subject areas through the senior school. Commendably, staff are currently developing approaches through STEM as a means to build in connections that are more meaningful across the curricular areas.
- In the junior years, approaches to learning outdoors is an increasingly positive feature which benefits learners in applying skills in different contexts. The school correctly recognises that the facilities lend themselves to outdoor learning. Further plans to build in aspects of outdoor learning across the senior school will help learners to apply new and familiar skills in different contexts. Commendably, a significant number of school staff offer regular and meaningful opportunities for the girls to take part in a vast range of outdoor pursuits and extra-curricular experiences. Staff are correctly exploring ways in which some of these opportunities could be more formally recognised and accredited.

Development of the curriculum:

- The curriculum on offer is reviewed regularly by senior staff, to support the needs of learners and to cater for individual young people's choices, interests and aspirations. Aspects of the senior school curriculum are currently under review. The senior leadership team and staff are seeking to offer more bespoke and sustainable learning experiences for girls whilst ensuring a balance of opportunities across the curricular areas. The school has developed a number of valuable partnerships to support curriculum development and the appropriate application of skills and knowledge. These partnerships include departmental links with school governors who offer valuable support and challenge in the work of the school. In the senior school, teachers continue to develop their understanding of new curriculum pathways.
- There is a need to open out opportunities to engage in moderation activity with colleagues further afield, in order to improve staff's understanding of national standards across both the junior years and senior school. A few departments are using national benchmarks to inform approaches to assessment. The roll out of a consistent approach across all departments will provide greater consistency in designing assessment and will help to provide consistent

expectations of what learners can potentially achieve at each stage of learning, particularly at the earlier stages of the senior school and across the junior years.

- Staff and pupils capitalise on the very attractive school grounds and rich local environment to enhance children's and young people's learning. For example, equestrian pursuits are a strong feature in the wider life of the school for a number of girls. During the inspection, we observed opportunities for learning outdoors, which added value to children's and young people's overall learning experiences.
- This session, in response to pupil and parent request, the school has introduced computing science national qualifications at the senior phase. The whole school approach to computing science is at the early stages of development. There is an opportunity to create dynamic learning opportunities to motivate and engage children within the STEM agenda that works well across the junior and senior schools. Digital technology is used well, overall, to enhance learning. In the senior school, girls are required to bring mobile devices to a number of subject areas. In certain subjects, these are put to very good use to deepen learning and to enhance motivation, engagement and curiosity for learning. There is further potential to roll out these effective approaches across all departments. All staff have been issued with mobile devices to enhance learning and teaching and senior leaders are ensuring that plans for appropriate training are put in place for their use.

Learning pathways:

- In the junior and senior schools, staff take very good account of children's wellbeing, nurturing approaches, and increasingly, the development of skills for life, learning and work. In the junior school, outdoor learning is a continuous focus for the setting. Children's experiences are also enhanced through the input of a number of specialist teachers from the senior school. Staff from the senior school recognise the potential in reaching more children from the junior school in order to provide them with more of an insight into resources, approaches and experiences in learning, throughout the senior school.
- In the junior school, staff design appropriate programmes of study for all areas of the curriculum. The input of subject specialist staff, for example in English, Maths, PE and modern languages, ensures children's experiences in these areas of learning are planned in a progressive, coherent way. This also helps to improve curricular transition between junior and senior schools.
- Aspects of the curriculum in the senior school for National Qualifications are currently under review to meet the needs and aspirations of all young people. Almost all young people study nine subjects at L5 and U5. There are arrangements in place for flexibility around choice for National Qualifications, depending on the individual needs of girls and for those for whom English is not their first language. Girls specialise further at L6 and U6, where they usually choose to study five subjects. Again, the same arrangements are in place for flexibility in their choices. Almost all learners move from school to positive destinations, with almost all gaining places in higher education courses. There is scope for staff to integrate more flexible and personalised pathways for attainment and achievement for girls in the senior school. This will help to ensure success for those girls who may not be able to attain the entirety of the mainstream national courses that are currently on offer.
- Children across the junior school are very confident about making connections in their learning across the curricular areas, as well as the skills they are developing along the way. As planned, the school should continue to work towards building on the skills development agenda across the senior school also. This will help to capitalise on the benefits of the all-through

school setting. The use of national guidance on careers education and skills development would be of benefit in designing these experiences for children and young people. The guidance will also provide a further steer as to how STEM opportunities and skills for learning, life and work can be built in more widely across the junior years curriculum in meaningful and relevant ways.

- Senior leaders are aware of the need for all children and young people to experience a consistent approach to developing and applying their literacy and numeracy skills across their learning. A more rigorous approach to whole school tracking and monitoring of girls' progress in literacy and numeracy will help to develop a clearer picture over time of the areas of strength and those for further development, in literacy and numeracy across the curricular areas. Importantly, learners would benefit overall from planned opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all curricular areas. Staff should continue to share practice and seek ways to develop literacy and numeracy skills across the whole school curriculum. Almost all staff across the school demonstrate an awareness of the key aspects of health and wellbeing that are the responsibility of all. Staff should continue to develop health and wellbeing programmes that are relevant to the needs of all learners. This should include opportunities for all learners to continue to self-assess their own progress in health and wellbeing regularly. This will allow staff to continue to monitor progress and improve the wellbeing outcomes for all.

Skills for life, learning and work:

- Learners at all stages are increasingly gaining an awareness of key skills for life, learning and work. This is as a result of staff increasingly planning to embed these skills this through all areas of the curriculum. A number of partners are involved in developing enterprise activities and holding information events for pupils and parents. There are opportunities for senior girls to develop their knowledge of key STEM themes to help with entry to undergraduate university courses. A next step is to explore the national Careers Education Standards (3-18) to enhance the current programme for developing skills for learning, life and work across the junior years and into the senior school.
- Girls at Kilgraston School have many opportunities to engage in a wide range of very rich learning opportunities out with the core curriculum and through wider learning experiences. This is an important strength which helps to define the uniqueness of the 'Kilgraston offer' to its pupils. Participation rates in high profile initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh and prominent national and international sporting competitive events are very high. This demonstrates the motivational and high quality wider learning experiences on offer at Kilgraston. Children and young people also have opportunities to achieve the Kilgraston Diploma and certificate. These awards celebrate participation in a variety of learning and development activities, such as music, the arts, sports and volunteering in the community. Staff are aware of the potential and advantages of exploring formal accreditation of young people's personal achievements. Staff are also developing ways to track children and young people's participation in wider learning activities, and importantly, the associated skills being developed as a result.
- Staff provide regular opportunities for additional supported study, as well as subject specific 'surgeries' which provide additional help and specialist input for students across all stages of the senior school. The majority of staff provide regular feedback through various forms of digital technology in home learning tasks, which helps to sustain the momentum of consolidation from work undertaken in class. Almost all staff play an active role in facilitating and organising activities in the evenings and at weekends. Young people feel cared for and nurtured by most boarding staff. There is a clear mutual respect between staff and the children

and young people across stages within the 'Kilgraston family.' Girls feel much supported in their academic work as well as developing their wider interests and skills.

1. Quality of care and support

The service had effective systems for keeping young people safe from harm and abuse. There was very good awareness of the impact of bullying and a robust approach to prevention and management. Staff also supported young people to develop skills for keeping themselves safe when using the internet and social media.

Young people had a tasty and varied diet with plenty of choice, seasonal items and themed events to meet a range of needs and preferences. Not surprisingly, they made a range of comments about food. However, the school actively sought their views and the catering service was very responsive to feedback, implementing improvements as the need arose. The school had a Healthy Living Plus award in recognition of the high standards.

With support where required, young people received the medication they needed. Storage and recording followed best practice, however stock control and auditing procedures needed to be reviewed. Decisions about students managing their own medication should follow formal assessment.

Young people accessed a wide range of energetic activities and sports. The school also promoted positive mental health as part of a holistic approach to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They had access to an independent listener (counsellor), chaplain, school nurse and GP and were referred for specialist support as required. The service provided a welcoming, nurturing environment in which students were clearly thriving and developing. There was a strong sense of community and mutual support.

Older girls were encouraged to take on additional responsibilities, for example supporting younger pupils. Young people had made a contribution to developing the anti-bullying policy. They helped interview prospective staff and welcome new arrivals. The school celebrated students' many accomplishments and successes. For example, their impressive art work was displayed around the school. The importance of wider achievement was recognized and young people took part in activities they enjoyed to promote wellbeing and self-esteem. The extent of involvement in the community was impressive. Examples included offering free activities for younger children, musical events and riding for children with disabilities.

Managers had identified the need to further develop the system for planning for individual young people, including integrating care and support plans with those for meeting learning needs. Some good quality, outcome-focused plans were in place for some students with additional support needs. However the criteria for additional support were not sufficiently clear and needed to be reviewed, along with systems for evaluation and review.

(See Recommendation 1)

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

2. Quality of environment

The school was set in a beautiful, natural location and was within relatively easy reach of larger towns with a range of facilities. The extensive school grounds were very attractive and well-maintained and provided a very pleasant environment for pupils. They were able to visit the local community or go further afield, dependent on age and ability.

Children and young people had access to a range of comfortable communal areas in the boarding areas for relaxation and a range of activities in small or larger groups. They had contributed to making some of the areas cheerful and attractive with the use of bright paint colours and other decoration. They had also personalised their bedrooms with their own possessions. However, some areas of the boarding houses would benefit from redecoration and refurbishment, and the addition of soft furnishings to provide a more homely and welcoming appearance. This had been identified and formed part of the service improvement plan. All young people had individual lockable space to keep personal possessions safe.

There were effective systems for ensuring young people's safety at the school and in the community. This included ongoing maintenance and repair of the premises. A programme of more extensive renovation and refurbishment included the recent replacement of shower facilities in one of the boarding houses. Staff also monitored entry to the school to prevent unauthorised access. Young people had freedom of movement within school grounds but were expected to make sure their whereabouts were known to staff.

Comments from a number of pupils indicated that arrangements for cleaning the showers in some boarding houses needed to be reviewed, so that they were kept to a high standard of cleanliness at all times of the day. Kitchen facilities for children's and young people's use were more limited in one of the houses. This resulted in reduced opportunities for them to develop cooking skills and learn to take responsibility for keeping them clean and tidy. Managers were considering how best to address these.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

3. Quality of staffing

Recruitment and selection included important aspects of best practice. However, the school should ensure that staff do not commence employment before receipt of satisfactory checks (**See Recommendation 2**). Staff took part in an appropriate induction to help familiarise them with their responsibilities. Managers had identified improvements to this process for the next round of appointments. Staff were also registered with the appropriate professional body and there was an effective system for monitoring ongoing registration. However, further discussion needs to take place with the Scottish Social Services Council about whether those staff with management and supervisory responsibilities are on the correct part of the register.

The school had a system of staff appraisal. This identified clear objectives for most staff, and provided an opportunity for reflection, implementation of learning and development and forward planning. Staff took part in a suitable range of training but they would benefit from additional learning and development in key areas to ensure they are able to meet all young people's needs.

Senior boarding staff had regular opportunities to meet with the head of care and boarding to discuss young people's progress, events in the boarding houses and individual learning and

development needs. However, there was no similar system of supervision in place for other boarding staff. This is outlined in the Scottish Social Services Council's (SSSC) code of practice for employers.

There were largely very positive, nurturing relationships between boarding staff and young people. They told us that they felt cared for by most staff and usually had someone to go to if they were upset or anxious. The staff we spoke with were enthusiastic and motivated in their work. They knew the students in their care very well. Gap students usually formed part of the support system for young people and were a popular addition to the staff team. At the time of the inspection however, none were in place, though appointments should be in place in the new term. Whilst we were confident that managers were able to identify and address any staff practice issues and address, we suggested that they consider putting in place interim arrangements to ensure that young people always had someone to approach in times of need.

There was an effective system in place to ensure that school-appointed guardians, who looked after some young people at weekends and during short holidays, were suitable and provided a good standard of care. However, arrangements for appointing guardians may need to be reviewed to ensure the school complies with relevant legislation. We will discuss this further with managers in the near future.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

4. Quality of management and leadership

The very capable senior leadership team worked collaboratively to provide clear direction and vision. They were positive role models for both staff and students. They effectively communicated and promoted the supportive, caring ethos that was the foundation of life at the school. They also ensured that policies, procedures and frameworks for practice reflected the school's child-centred culture and values of respect and inclusivity, were regularly reviewed and consistently implemented.

Kilgraston had an impressive culture of self-evaluation, learning and continuous improvement. This enabled the service to provide high standards of care and support and very positive outcomes and experiences for young people. They successfully implemented a range of quality assurance methods and provided ongoing opportunities for students to express their views and contribute to developments.

The manager with responsibility for care and boarding was a strong and visible presence in the boarding houses, providing support and guidance to staff, observing their practice and keeping in touch with students to ensure their needs were met.

There was a robust system for external management and governance of the service. Trustees and governors maintained close links, both formally and informally with the school at all levels. They took their responsibilities for providing strategic leadership and support, and exercising corporate parenting, very seriously and were well-informed about the school's performance and improvement plans. Governors had clearly defined roles and responsibilities, ensuring they made best use of their experience, skills and interests for the benefit of the school. Two sub-committees ensured effective oversight of key governance areas. We suggested that governors extend and formalise their programme of visits to the boarding houses.

Care Inspectorate grade: very good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the school had no requirements and one recommendation. This recommendation was met. As a result of this inspection, there are two recommendations.

Recommendations

1. In order to meet the full range of needs of children and young people, the provider should improve the quality of personal plans.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'my personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

2. In order to ensure that only suitable staff are appointed to work in the service, the provider should carry out appropriate pre-employment checks before any new staff start work.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited'(HSCS 4.24).

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.