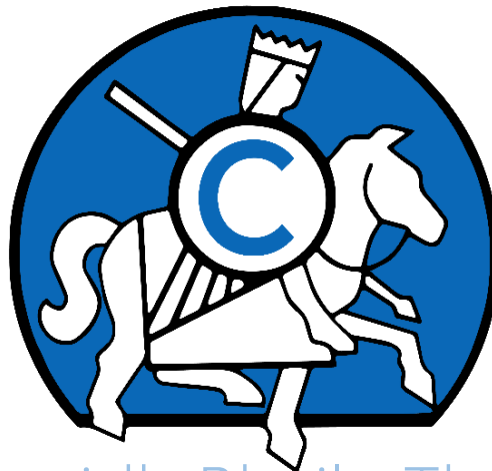




CHARLESTON ACADEMY STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2025-26

2025-2026

Charleston Academy
Achieving success Together



Acadamaidh Bhaile Theàrlaich
A' soirbheachadh Còmhla

In this report the following words are used to describe the numbers and proportions used:

All	Almost all	Most	Majority	Less than half	Few
100%	Over 91%	75% - 90%	50% - 74%	15% - 49%	Up to 15%

School Profile

Pròifil na Sgoile

It is important to remember that statistical data alone is not a measure of how well we are doing. All schools are unique. To understand how well we are doing it is important for us to look at a range of different sources.

Charleston Academy is located in the west of Inverness serving a diverse urban and rural communities that covers the entire western side of Inverness, from the Caledonian Canal and includes Kinmylies, Scorguie, Clachnaharry and Leachkin. Beyond the city, our school catchment includes the towns and villages of the Aird: Bunchrew, Lentrane, Kirkhill, Beaulie, Kiltarlity, Aigas, Glenstrathfarrar, Struy, Abriachan, and Dochgarroch.. We have seven associated primary schools.

At the time of writing this report, there were 671 children and young people on the school roll. The Head Teacher is supported by four Depute Head Teachers, seven curriculum leaders, five Principal Teachers of Guidance, one Principal Teacher Support for Learning.

We have approximately 100 staff, including over 50 teachers operating within a faculty system. Staffing, in line with the national context, continued to present challenges throughout session. The school has had to adapt to a variety of long-term absences which have impacted on our overall provision. However, we are pleased with our summer recruitment, and anticipate a solid staffing base for 2026-27. Significant investment in summer 2024 has led to refreshed décor and furniture in two floors of classrooms, along with the installation of 30 new interactive screens, addressing previous concerns about aging resources.

We are culturally rich, our young people come from varied backgrounds, with 17 main home languages spoken across the school. More than 40% of pupils use school transport. Of our current pupils, 49% of our pupils have recognised additional support needs and 11% are registered for free school meals.

Overall, attainment across the school in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Children achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and numeracy and, across the school, a few children are exceeding nationally expected levels. Most children who face barriers to learning are making good progress towards meeting their individual targets.

We have had only two exclusions this year.

Data relating to our context:

Pupil Numbers	Attendance	Teacher Numbers
671	87.2%	54.6 FTE

S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
117	126	141	146	77	64

SIMD Q1	SIMD Q2	SIMD Q3	SIMD Q4	SIMD Q5	Unknown
18%	18%	32%	25%	4%	3%

ASN	FSM	EAL
49%	11%	11%

Glossary:

FTE – Full Time Equivalent

SIMD – Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

SIMD1 % pupils living in most deprived areas

SIMD5 – % pupils living in least deprive areas

ASN – Additional Support Needs

EAL – percentage of learners whom English is an Additional Language

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Attainment

Literacy and Numeracy in S1-S3 – Broad General Education

2025-26 Proportion of pupils achieving Curriculum for Excellence Levels by the end of S3

Level 3

Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Numeracy
Most	Most	Most	Almost all

Level 4

Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Numeracy
Majority	Majority	Most	Majority

Senior Phase (Leavers) – Attainment Information

% Pupils Lit/Num at level 3/4/5/6 in S4/5/6 compared to VC/National

Charleston Academy	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Level 3 Literacy	97	96	98	98	95
% Level 4 Literacy	97	96	97	97	95
% Level 5 Literacy	91	89	79	91	87
% Level 6 Literacy	62	63	59	60	38

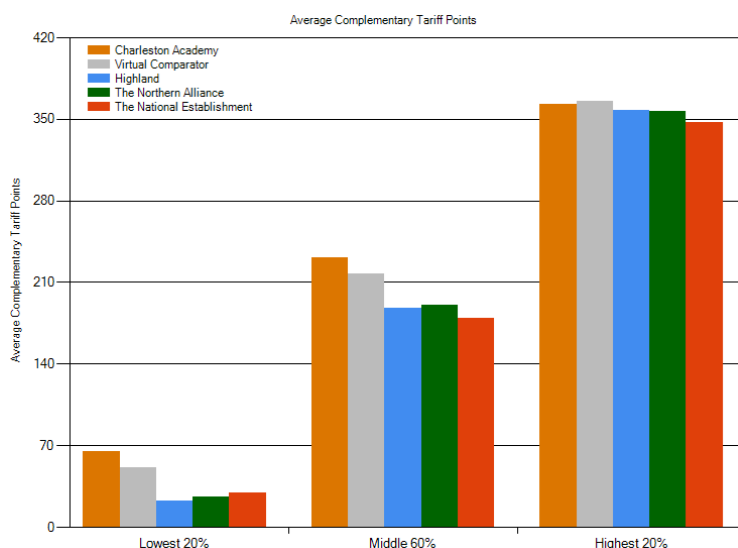
Virtual Comparator	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Level 3 Literacy	97	97	96	96	96
% Level 4 Literacy	95	96	94	94	93
% Level 5 Literacy	85	81	81	83	81
% Level 6 Literacy	54	50	53	52	46

Charleston Academy	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Level 3 Numeracy	97	98	94	97	96
% Level 4 Numeracy	91	90	89	94	92
% Level 5 Numeracy	72	72	66	64	55
% Level 6 Numeracy	36	21	28	29	25

Virtual Comparator	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% Level 3 Numeracy	96	97	95	95	95
% Level 4 Numeracy	93	93	91	92	90
% Level 5 Numeracy	72	68	70	73	68
% Level 6 Numeracy	25	18	25	25	25

Performance in Literacy and Numeracy has remained consistently strong over time. At Levels 3 and 4, attainment has generally matched or exceeded the Virtual Comparator across the five-year period. At Level 5, Literacy attainment has consistently outperformed the Virtual Comparator, while Numeracy attainment was in line with comparator performance until a decline in 2024 and 2025. At Level 6, attainment in both Literacy and Numeracy has remained above the Virtual Comparator throughout the period, although a notable decrease in Level 6 Literacy attainment was evident in 2025.

Senior Phase Leavers – Attainment for All



S4 Leavers (Current S5)

Upper 20% S4 Attainers:

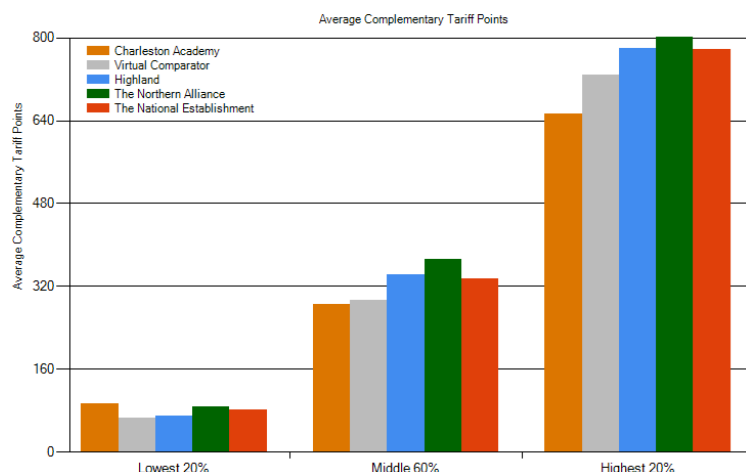
In line with VC, above Highland and National in 2025.

Middle 60% S4 Attainers:

Above all comparators, in 4 out of 5 years, in line with VC in 2022 and above Highland and National.

Lower 20% S4 Attainers:

Above all comparators.



S5 Leavers (Current S6)

Upper 20% S5 Attainers:

Lower than VC, Highland and National dipping from 2025, where Charleston was above all comparators.

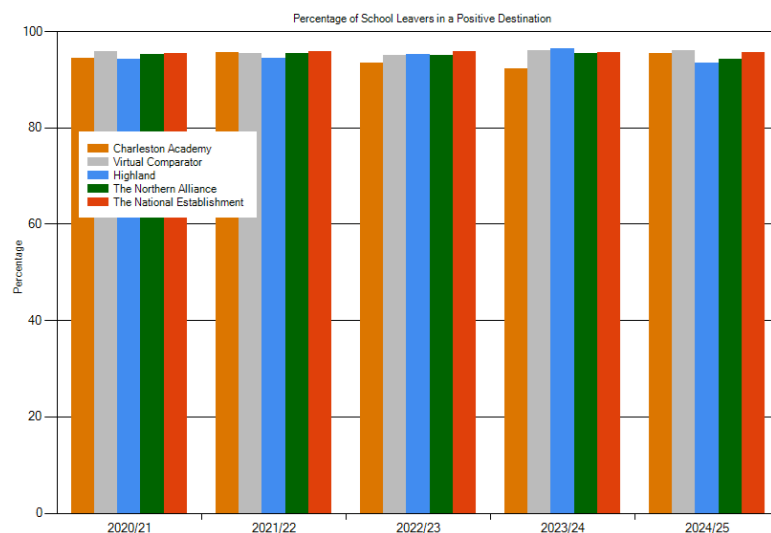
Middle 60% S5 Attainers:

In line with VC, below Highland and National in 2025 and 2023. Above comparators in 3 out of 5 years.

Lower 20% S5 Attainers:

Above all comparators in 4 out of last 5 years.

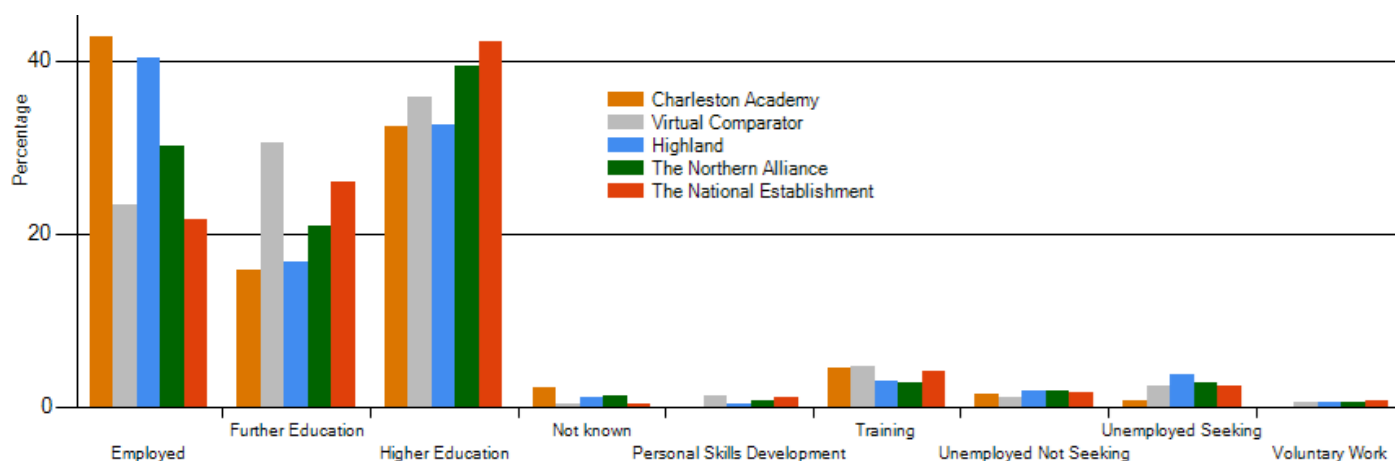
Destinations of School Leavers



95.5% of leavers have maintained a positive destination, our highest level in 5 years.

In line with VC and National, above Highland.

In 2025, the majority of our leavers went straight into employment. An increased in trades and apprenticeships on offer locally has contributed to this.



School vision, values and aims

Lèirsinn, luachan agus amasan na sgoile

We have a welcoming ethos built on our core values. There is a strong sense of shared responsibility amongst pupils and staff and we have an active, engaged and supportive Parent Council.

During session 2023-24 we refreshed our core values, involving all pupils, parents, partners and staff.

Charleston Academy values are important for the school. These are:

TEAMWORK – RESPECT – AMBITION - KINDNESS

Charleston Academy must be a positive learning environment for all. We aim for togetherness across our school. We aspire for all young people to be happy, achieving and attaining. We want to support and develop our staff team and value all members of our school community.



Review of progress of improvement plan projects for session 2025/26

Ath-sgrùdadh air adhartas airson an t-seisein

These projects are linked to the priorities for Scottish Education based on the National Improvement Framework aimed to deliver excellence and equity. Parent/Carer information is available [here](#).

School Priority 1: Raising Attainment & Achievement	
School Improvement Plan Priority 1	
Summary of progress	Next steps
• Staff training, MidYIS baseline information and improved use of Progress and Achievement data strengthened tracking across the BGE. • Most faculties established moderation calendars and external links, although not all completed their planned S3 course and assessment reviews. • The Academic Interventions tracker enabled earlier identification and regular review of senior-phase learners at risk of underachieving. • The Qualifications Scotland (former SQA) Presentation Policy was also updated and embedded. • Senior-phase pathways were broadened, including additional certificated and Higher-level unit courses in S6. • Supported study, mentoring and targeted intervention were expanded, although evaluation of their impact remains variable. • A replacement whole-school BGE tracking system was delayed by GDPR requirements. • Unifrog and approaches to tracking wider achievement, participation and equity began to be introduced but not yet fully embedded.	• Implement a reliable whole-school BGE tracker. • Complete faculty review and moderation of BGE courses and assessments. • Use cohort and intervention reviews to identify underachievement earlier and evaluate impact for FSM, ASN and other identified groups. • Continue to review senior-phase pathways and presentation decisions, with particular focus on S5/S6 depth, Level 5 numeracy, high-quality passes and appropriate S6 challenge. • Target supported study, mentoring and catch-up using tracking evidence and record their impact on progress.
Impact	
• BGE tracking and moderation are providing a more consistent picture of progress, and staff report greater confidence in making professional judgements. However, consistency between faculties and over time is still developing. • Raw 2026 results show Charleston's strongest overall S4 breadth and depth in seven years, a strong recovery in S5 and improvement across the principal S6 measures. Most National 5 and Higher course pass rates were above Highland, and many were also above national performance. • The broader S6 offer and earlier intervention processes appear to have supported improved attainment and progression. Published Insight data are not yet available to confirm the full comparative impact of the 2026 results. • Positive destinations remained strong, with almost all leavers progressing to employment, training or further/higher education.	

School Priority 2: Learning, Teaching & Assessment	
School Improvement Plan Priority 2	
Summary of progress	Next steps
• Refreshed classroom expectations linked to Teamwork, Respect, Ambition and Kindness were introduced and are increasingly visible across the school. Almost all pupils can identify the school values. • Our Learning and Teaching Standard is used more consistently in professional dialogue, faculty observation and self-evaluation. In almost all lessons visited, its key routines and expectations were evident. • All teaching staff participated in Teaching Sprints and sharing practice focused on questioning, pace and challenge. • Most faculties also established moderation schedules and external links, and the new ASN profile system improved staff access to support information. • Work on learner-led learning and digital pedagogy is ongoing.	• Introduce a bi-annual validated self-evaluation cycle using the Learning and Teaching Standard, learning visits, learner feedback and scrutiny of work. • Continue Teaching Sprints focused on embedding our Learning and Teaching Standard. • Agree and implement a whole-school feedback framework that gives learners clear next steps and time to respond. • Develop digital pedagogy so that digital tools increasingly support active learning, creativity, collaboration, learner agency and formative assessment.
Impact	
• Relationships and classroom climates are positive, with clear routines, explanations and high expectations generally well established. Staff have a stronger shared language for discussing learning and teaching and a growing range of practical strategies. • Learning visits, pupil feedback and staff reflection show effective practice in questioning, active learning and digital learning in a number of classrooms. However, cognitive challenge, purposeful pace, learner independence, success criteria, plenaries and the impact of feedback are not yet consistently strong across the school.	

School Priority 3: Wellbeing & Ethos	
School Improvement Plan Priority 3	
Summary of progress	Next steps
• The wellbeing tracker was introduced across all year groups and is supporting targeted pastoral intervention. • Our Charleston Charter, refreshed values and Staying on TRAK expectations strengthened the positive ethos. • Attendance was reviewed weekly and targeted support included family contact, mentoring and partnership intervention. Overall attendance was 87.2%, below the 90% target, and persistent absence and school refusal remain significant barriers for a minority. • Pupil voice structures, SHANARRI/UNCRC resources and the Rights Respecting Schools programme developed during the session. • Wider accreditation and celebration also increased, with new leadership, vocational and achievement opportunities. • Unifrog, participation tracking, the Equalities and Positive Relationships policy and RRSA Silver work are progressing. • Suitable restorative and trauma-informed professional learning was not secured and will continue next session.	• Continue to use SHANARRI information twice yearly. • Strengthen pupil voice and ensure almost all learners can identify a trusted adult and know how to seek support. • Continue the attendance improvement cycle, with coordinated support for learners below 85%, school refusers and those accessing off-site provision. • Publish and implement the Equalities and Positive Relationships policy, complete restorative and trauma-informed professional learning and achieve RRSA Silver. • Use Unifrog to track wider achievement, leadership, participation and accreditation, and address gaps for FSM, ASN and other underrepresented groups.
Impact	
• Most young people report feeling safe, nurtured, respected and included, and relationships across the school community are positive. The school maintained a very low level of exclusion, with only two exclusions during the session. • Targeted PEF and partnership programmes improved confidence, emotional regulation, engagement and school connectedness for participating learners. For some of the most vulnerable young people, these supports maintained meaningful contact with school when full attendance was not possible. • Young people have a broader range of opportunities to gain accreditation, contribute to school life and have achievements celebrated. Participation and impact are not yet tracked consistently enough to demonstrate that all groups benefit equitably.	

Progress and impact of Pupil Equity Fund

Adhartas agus buaidh Maoin Cothromas Sgoilearan

During 2025/26, targeted Pupil Equity Funding interventions had a positive impact on learner inclusion, engagement and participation across Charleston Academy. Programmes were specifically designed to support learners at risk of poor attendance, school refusal, low engagement and socioeconomic disadvantage.

Attendance and Engagement

The S1 First Year Freshers programme successfully supported learners identified as vulnerable to poor attendance and school refusal. All participating pupils reported benefiting from the intervention, with improvements in confidence, emotional regulation and engagement in learning. Six of the seven pupils who regularly attended school improved their attendance over the session, while two highly vulnerable learners maintained daily contact with school through the programme when they would otherwise have disengaged completely.

The Expeditionary Learning Programme for targeted S2 and S3 learners also demonstrated a positive impact on engagement and inclusion. Through outdoor learning, physical activities and wider achievement opportunities, learners reported increased confidence, improved mental wellbeing and stronger peer relationships. Seventy-five percent of participants reported clear benefits from the programme, while all pupils who identified behaviour as a challenge reported improvements in classroom behaviour and engagement.

Attainment and Achievement

Targeted literacy and numeracy interventions ensured that learners at risk of leaving school without key qualifications received intensive support. Despite the targeted group having an average attendance of only 71.9%, 88% achieved a literacy qualification and 87% achieved a numeracy qualification. Most learners achieved Level 5 Literacy (69%) and half achieved Level 5 Numeracy (50%). These interventions contributed to a significant reduction in the attainment gap between FSM and non-FSM learners. The Level 4 literacy and numeracy gap for leavers was effectively eliminated, while the Level 5 gap reduced by 12.6 percentage points.

Family Engagement and Equity

Family engagement and equity-focused drop-in sessions led to significant improvements in access to Free School Meals and associated supports. Through targeted family support, application guidance and home visits, the proportion of pupils registered for FSM increased from 9.2% to 16% of the school roll. Among incoming S1 pupils, FSM registrations increased from 19 to 44 learners, representing an increase of 232%. This has strengthened the school's ability to identify and support families experiencing financial hardship.

Overall Impact

The work undertaken through PEF has strengthened inclusion by improving attendance, increasing engagement in learning, supporting wellbeing, reducing barriers created by poverty and narrowing attainment gaps. The most significant gains were seen in learner confidence, participation, school connectedness and family engagement. While attendance remains a key area for further improvement, particularly for FSM learners where a 7.5% attendance gap remains, interventions have successfully maintained engagement for some of the school's most vulnerable young people and contributed to improved outcomes across wellbeing, attainment and equity.

Wider achievements

Coileanaidhean nas fharsainghe

- All of our S3 Pupils participated in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative with the swimming team being awarded money for their chosen charity.
- Our Engineering Science, senior Maths and Hospitality classes were supported through several talks by employers throughout the session.
- All S5 and S6 pupils took part in a series of activities promoting Road Safety with the Fire service and other professionals.
- We had a Young Enterprise Company running this session and were successful in winning an award at the regional finals as well as making a profit.
- Our senior phase pupils organised a fundraiser challenge and successfully ran a World Cup Themed afternoon for junior pupils. In the process they raised over £4000 for school funds.

Choir

- Our Bee the change choir has been growing in number and confidence. They have now performed at a number of events including Highland's got talent, various fundraising events for Mikeys Line and supporting Nathan Evans and Callum Beattie at large Music events, including Belladrum.

Sport

- Various extra-curricular clubs and teams met throughout the session with many pupils going on to represent the school and region in various sports. These pupils went onto help their house group in the different interhouse competitions including Shinty, Basketball, Cross Country and Football. 3 senior pupils have also achieved sports Leader Awards for their support of sport in school and the community.
- Our Athletics, Football, Rugby and Shinty teams have participated in several competitions. On the Shinty Field our teams had an excellent trophy haul that included the McBean, Robertson and Macpherson Cups. Almost 40 pupils represented the school in the North of Scotland Cross Country Championships. We returned with 1 gold, 2 silvers and 1 bronze from individual and team events.
- Several of our pupils also had success at a regional and national level representing their sports club including, Shinty, Rugby, Basketball, Swimming, Rowing and Cheerleading.

Trips

- A group of 9 pupils took part in a climbing trip to the west of Scotland.
- Various groups have been working towards their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- 50 pupils and staff travelled to France and Belgium visiting various World War 1 and 2 sites and taking part in the ceremony at the Menin Gate.
- 10 intrepid S2 and S3 pupils braved the cold weather to take part in various outdoor activities at Loch Eil.
- 45 staff and pupils travelled to Italy for a ski trip.
- Throughout the session there were other curricular day trips including almost all Senior Phase Geography pupils visiting the Moray Coastline, a group attending a Mock COP event, Maths Challenge competitions and Public Speaking competitions.
- Additionally, almost all BGE pupils had one day trip as part of our activity days. These included trips to Landmark, Innoflate, Paintball, Gorge walking, Ziplining and Kincaig Wildlife Park

Comments from learners, families, stakeholders and staff

Beachdan bho luchd-ionnsachaidh, teaghlaichean, luchd-ùidhe is luchd-obrach

Pupils

- ✓ *Teachers take the time to help you when you're struggling and explain things clearly.*
- ✓ *There are more opportunities now to get involved in school and share our opinions.*
- ✓ *I feel comfortable speaking to staff if I have a problem or need support.*
- ✓ *The school gives us lots of opportunities to achieve outside the classroom.*
- ✓ *I enjoy the trips, events and activities that are organised throughout the year.*
- ✓ *Most teachers make lessons interesting and try to make learning enjoyable.*
- ✓ *The school has become more positive and welcoming over the past couple of years.*
- ✓ *I like how teachers encourage us to do our best and believe in ourselves.*
- ✓ *The house events and school activities help create a good sense of community.*
- ✓ *The support available for mental health is really helpful.*

Parents

- ✓ *"Our family thoroughly enjoyed the 2026 leavers Graduation ceremony It's another indication of the increasing standards and strong morale and togetherness that is building in the school."*
- ✓ *"I think the school has really improved in the last year."*
- ✓ *"Thank you to all the teachers for all their hard work in helping my child to progress."*
- ✓ *"I just want to say thank you for your continued resilience despite the learning environment being so challenging."*
- ✓ *We can't thank you enough for the effort the school has made in providing support for X via the Freshers Group. It's been a hugely positive experience for her. She's made friends and grown confidence.*
- ✓ *"My stepson attends the school, and he can't speak highly enough for the school and all the staff."*
- ✓ *"I think the school use lots of different mediums to let me know about the progress of my child and of the wider achievements of the school. The creative subjects also have great presentations that celebrate lots of achievements."*
- ✓ *"Staff are approachable and always willing to listen when I have concerns. I feel that my child is well supported."*
- ✓ *"Communication has improved significantly and I now feel more connected to what is happening in school."*
- ✓ *"We really like that the school celebrates a wide range of achievements, not just academic success, which allows every child to shine."*

Partners

- ✓ *"I've had a really positive experience working as a supply teacher at Charleston Academy. From day one, the environment has felt incredibly supportive and welcoming. Staff genuinely look out for one another and there's a real sense of community and teamwork. The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and are eager to learn and do their best, they're curious and motivated, which makes teaching here especially rewarding. The standard of teaching is high and inclusive, and each department works together in a really professional and supportive way. Any issues that have come up, have been handled quickly and effectively, which has made a big difference. Overall, it's been a pleasure working in such a reliable, caring, and positive environment."* – Supply Teacher
- ✓ *"The school provides a consistently welcoming environment, where I have found the staff to be polite, courteous, and supportive." I feel that I am part of a team around the young people at Charleston, there is good communication and professional respect."* – PMHW
- ✓ *"I absolutely love the enthusiasm for DYW within Charleston Academy. We are building a very strong foundation of introducing curriculum-based learning and have some very exciting plans for 26/27. Since joining my DYW leads have been very passionate about showcasing careers to the pupils and incorporating career learning into their studies."* – DYW
- ✓ *"I would say that Charleston is probably the school we get the most engagement from. The 16+ meetings are always productive, and your staff are quick to reach out if they have any questions about a referral before submitting the form. This certainly has an impact on the conversion rate from referral to registration."* – Employability Team
- ✓ *"Charleston Academy is a great school to work at, and I receive great support from the senior leadership team, guidance team and other school members of staff so I can do my job effectively as a careers adviser. It is a very welcoming school and I enjoy working in the environment."* – SDS
- ✓ *"Charleston have been fantastic to work with. They are extremely efficient with communication over email when I am arranging sessions, particularly Aspire North's main contact, guidance teacher Harry Barton. All the staff at Charleston we work with such as SLT, guidance and office staff are very kind, helpful and always make me feel welcome at the school and appreciated."* – SHEP

Capacity for continuous improvement

Comas airson leasachadh leantainneach

Using indicators from 'How Good is our School 4' together with learner, parent, carer, partner and community feedback we believe we have made progress as follows:

QI 1.3 Leadership of change	Satisfactory
QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Satisfactory
QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion	Satisfactory
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and Achievement/Securing children's progress	Satisfactory

Our overall evaluation of our capacity for continuous improvement is:

We are confident in our capacity for continuous improvement.

Key priorities for improvement planning

Prìomhachasan airson planadh airson leasachadh

Improvement Priority Title
1. Raising Attainment & Achievement
2. Learning, Teaching & Assessment
3. Wellbeing & Ethos
4. Enhancing Gaelic Culture and Awareness

Planning ahead

A' planadh air adhart

Full details of the school's 2026/27 improvement priorities and actions are detailed on the school improvement plan, which can be accessed on our website or by contacting the school office.