



high school  
**braes**

# STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 25/26

Braes High School is pleased to present our Standards and Quality Report (SQR) for 2025-2026. This report provides a summary and record of the successes and achievements in delivering improvement relating to the identified priorities in the improvement plan 2025-2026.

## OUR VISION, VALUES AND AIMS

Our vision at Braes is to ensure that every pupil in our care feels valued, respected and challenged. Braes High School aims to be a school of the highest quality, providing an education which is appropriate yet challenging to all our young people.

Our motto "Build Respect and Earn Success - Be Part of It!" defines the school and remains significant in building our school vision and ethos which continues to flourish. Our pupils fully immerse themselves in the wide and vast ranging opportunities available - both in school and within the community. We are certain that by developing skills, both academic and personal, that our young people will thrive throughout and beyond their school years at Braes High School.

## SCHOOL CONTEXT

Braes High School is a six-year comprehensive school serving the communities of Avonbridge; California; Standburn; Maddiston; Shieldhill and Wallacestone. Our school roll is estimated to be 1152 pupils in session 2026/27. We have an active Pupil Voice Group, Parent Council and an association from parents and friends entitled Friends at Braes (FAB) who fundraise and support us at school events.

In line with the Agile School Leadership improvement methodology, which has been adopted across Falkirk Council, our school improvement priorities for 2025-2026 were based around:

- Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Culture, Ethos, Relationships, Equality and Inclusion
- Improving Outcomes

We are clear that our school must continue to look forward, be ambitious and continually seek to improve further. This view is based on the recognition that our young people in school deserve no less than this, and that we as colleagues wish to continue our professional development.



## CURRICULUM, LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT

### S3 Curriculum Development

Our S3 curriculum review consultation involved our entire school community as all stakeholders had the opportunity to give feedback on the proposed curriculum models. **Almost all stakeholders supported a change to our S3 curriculum** to allow for greater specialisation, depth of learning and appropriate learner pathways. Following this outcome, we have been planning for this change to begin in August 2026.

### Learning, Teaching & Assessment Framework

There has been a clear focus on Adaptive Teaching strategies this session. The impact of this has been that across a range of areas **most learners, and in some areas almost all learners, feel that they experience high quality learning and teaching** in relation to adaptive approaches. Examples of the areas evidence has been gathered on include; learners understanding their next steps; learners feeling supported and challenged; and experiencing pedagogy that improves their understanding. This evidence has been triangulated through our self-evaluation procedures, including lesson observations, learner-led learning walks and learner surveys.

### Pupil Leadership

There is an ethos of pupil leadership embedded across our school community and we continue to grow our offering to ensure there is a clear pathway for young people to participate, lead and achieve from S1 through to S6. **Most pupils continue to participate in leadership opportunities across the entire school.** Our leadership strategy for S1 pupils has seen an increase in the number of S1 pupils participating in clubs and leadership opportunities, with a majority contributing regularly across the school year.

### Braes Meta-Skills

The Braes Meta-Skills Framework is a strategic initiative designed to update the school's existing skills development approach. **It ensures that learners possess a consistent vocabulary** to identify and document their progress as they move toward positive post-school destinations. The framework is introduced through a "Skill of the Month" focus. Teachers refer to these skills during learning intentions or plenaries, while learners reflect on their development during PSE (Personal and Social Education) periods. The framework categorises development across six core areas: Communication, Organisation, Resilience, Leadership, Adaptability and Critical Thinking. This will continue to be a priority moving into the next session.

## CULTURE, ETHOS, RELATIONSHIPS, EQUALITY & INCLUSION

### Cost of the School Day

Our continued focus on Cost Of the School Day, as part of our Onwards and Upwards Strategy, means that **all staff consider costs when planning and delivering opportunities across the curriculum.** We have embedded interventions in our school community that ensure all young people are able to access learning and wellbeing opportunities including take what you need trolleys, Prom and seasonal Pop Up Shops, Pupil Premium payments direct to faculties, extra-curricular experiences support, benefits review support and our year leads work with identified families and young people to ensure they are aware of supports. Furthermore, we have worked to develop our communications to remove stigma and encourage all young people and families to request help when needed.

### Equity

This session we have continued to prioritise our work with targeted young people. For young people achieving one Level 5 and Level 6 SCQF qualification, we have **reduced the gap between Q1 and Q5 to its lowest ever.** Improvement in attendance and reduction in the attendance gap between our young people least and most affected by poverty, has been reduced to 6.4%

### Everyone Is Welcome

Our Everyone is Welcome strategy, built on a foundation of positive relationships, has developed this session across numerous areas. We have formed learner forums across a number of areas including ASN and disabilities to extend the work of our groups in Rights Respecting Schools, Racial Literacy, LGBTQ+ and we have introduced our celebrating diversity calendar, identifying events throughout the year that our learner forums highlighted.

We have been successful in **achieving our LGBT Youth Scotland Bronze Charter** and have continued to work with Equally Safe At School to identify areas of development through learner and staff surveys. The majority of staff have completed a module of e-learning relating to gender based violence and with key staff completing enhanced training.

### Staff Leadership

All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have engaged in our in-house professional learning programme focused on learning, teaching & assessment, wellbeing, and leadership. This has continued to enhance the learning experiences for young people - evident through our learner surveys and learning walks. Furthermore, **all teaching staff have engaged in our cluster working groups and school improvement groups** that are able to demonstrate progress in their areas of focus related to our SIP.

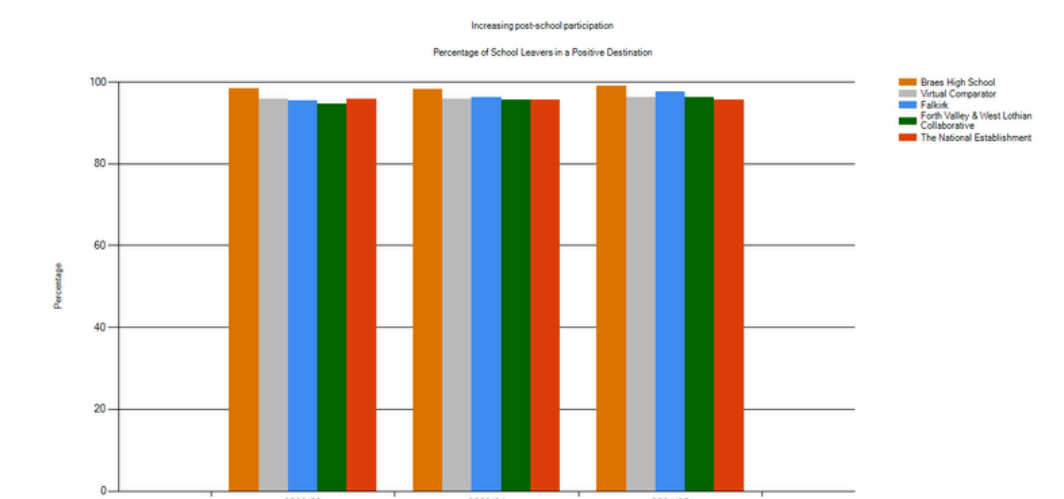
## IMPROVING OUTCOMES

### Attainment

Braes High School continues to advance its Rigour, Aspiration, Perseverance ethos, embedding it as a core working principle across our school community. Recent performance data indicates a highly positive attainment and achievement journey, with actual results closely matching projected tracking figures due to our robust monitoring systems.

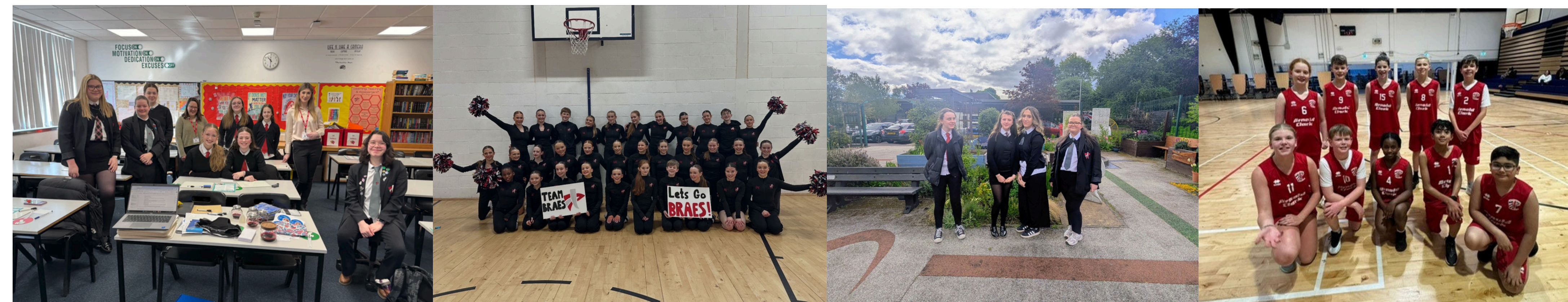
In S4, almost all young people secured at least five qualifications at National 4 and 55% of learners achieved 5 National 5 qualifications, **improving on previous sessions.** S4 literacy and numeracy outcomes remain sustained above the Virtual Comparator (VC) over the last five years, with Level 4 combined at 98.4% and Level 5 combined at 84.31%. This upward momentum is mirrored in S6, which delivered one of its **strongest performances in ten years** by outperforming the previous session across all measures, highlighted by three young people achieving three A grades in their Advanced Highers.

To maximise learner potential and address specific areas for marginal gains, we have adopted a forensic, proactive approach to attainment tracking. A comprehensive tracking and attainment calendar is now fully operational, enabling continuous, long term monitoring across each young person's full school journey from entry to leaving. A range of attainment groupings have been formally identified to directly inform the remit of our newly formed Attainment Task Force. Concurrently, to support pupils at risk due to attendance, those with additional support needs or potential early school leavers, we have implemented a targeted early leavers' courses. These pathways ensure vulnerable learners receive the necessary support to attain the "Braes Standard" of school qualifications and successfully transition into positive post school destinations. This has resulted in **99% of young people leaving across S4-S6 moving into positive destinations.**



### Be Here & Go Far!

Our positive attendance strategy, Be Here and Go Far!, has been re-launched this session, placing a greater focus on positive attendance through a number of interventions with young people and families. We continue to track attendance for all ages and stages, and specifically for vulnerable learners from target groups, creating individualised learning plans for young people to support attendance. To the end of April 2026 we have seen a **0.12% improvement in cumulative attendance** in comparison to April 2025 and sit below the local authority average for learners with more than 10%, 20% and 50% absence.





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## PARENT COUNCIL

Our Parent Council has again this session supported the school's ongoing strategic development in a range of ways. Among the pupil groups the Parent Council have engaged constructively with this session are :

- Sports Council
- Period Dignity Pupil Group
- Pupil Voice Group
- Self Evaluation Leaders
- School Captains
- Stepping Stones group
- Holocaust Education Ambassadors
- STEM Leaders

The Parent Council have also focused on, provided advice and participated in discussion on:

- Attainment patterns and plans
- positive destinations data and plans
- Everyone is Welcome strategy and the LGBT Charter
- S3/4 curriculum structure
- school transport consultation
- Parent Portal
- School Improvement Plan priorities

The school has also been grateful for support from the Parent Council towards the new Dux Medal and also the Pupil Voice Group, who have chosen to spend the money on revamping the courtyard area in conjunction with the Pupil Support faculty.

## FRIENDS @ BRAES

Friends at Braes (FAB), our parent-led fundraising group have had another positive and productive year, engaging constructively with Braes staff and supporting a wide range of pupil projects, clubs and events. Among those receiving financial support from FAB have been :

- Braes Youth Theatre's installation of new stage lighting
- Modern Languages Ambassadors' purchase of new resources to support their work with fellow pupils in Braes Cluster primaries
- Art and Design pupils working with new lightboxes
- Braes Dance Team's ongoing development and successful participation in competitions
- PE's new sound equipment
- School Captains' funding for a refresh of the Senior Social Space
- Creative Arts Ambassadors new print making equipment as part of the Big Draw event #Drawing Together
- Braes Lego Club's entry into the Robotics competition

In addition, FAB has supported a range of events in practical terms, providing refreshments and other support. These have included :

- the FAB Welcome Disco
- Braes Youth Theatre shows
- the Sports Day
- the Braes Brightside Walk
- Family Fun Day
- Christmas Concert
- School Show

Our young people also benefit from FAB's uniform recycling service. This commitment to eco-friendly reuse of school uniform helps maintain our school identity and ethos, whilst also supporting our efforts to control the cost of the school day.

## NEXT STEPS...

Our School improvement priorities for 2026-2027 will be based around the following 3 pillars:

- Curriculum
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Health, Wellbeing and Relationships

### CURRICULUM

- Analyse the impact our S3 curriculum model in further improving the depth of young people's learning
- Review our Senior phase column structure to maximise learners pathways
- Review the outcomes of the national Curriculum Improvement Cycle guidance to be released across 2026-2027
- We want our learners to continue experiencing as many leadership opportunities as possible - both in the classroom and through participation opportunities across the school community.

### LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

- Continue to develop pedagogical practice so that all learners experience high quality learning and teaching
- Work to further refine our Cluster collaboration activities, focusing on the progress of young people between P6-S2
- Develop our Home & Family Learning Strategy to support the learner journeys of all young people
- Further develop and implement our skills framework
- Continue to further improve overall levels of attainment and achievement, and positively impact on localised and authority wide stretch aims

### HEALTH, WELLBEING & RELATIONSHIPS

- Continue to develop our positive attendance strategy - Be Here and Go Far! to support young people's attendance at school
- Launch our Everyone Is Welcome Charter for next session
- All young people can access the same opportunities regardless of background or financial situation
- Ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, continue to develop through professional learning opportunities

## CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Below are just some of the achievements of our young people this year...

- Our S2 Football team reaching last 16 of Scottish Cup
- A group of S2 girls competed in the CyberFirst National Cyber Security Centre competition and placed 4th, gaining recognition in the Scottish Parliament
- The Senior boys football team winning the U18 Forth Valley League
- The Senior Girls Basketball team reaching the semi-final of the Scottish Cup
- Our Learning for Sustainability Ambassadors being awarded for their work by Keep Scotland Beautiful
- Our Dance teams winning numerous awards across competitions
- Braes High School became the third school in Scotland to be awarded the Gold CyberFirst Award, which recognises excellence in this area
- The STEM group, undertook re-accreditation of the STEM Nation Award, focussed on celebrating and promoting our effective STEM Education programmes
- Our Cost of the School Day Ambassadors presented to Scottish parliament about the impact of their work

