

St Margaret's Academy



PROGRESS REPORT FOR SESSION 2023/24

(Standards & Quality Report)

Howden South Road,
Livingston
EH54 6AT

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

St. Margaret's Academy is a denominational school, proudly serving the Livingston area and its five associated primary schools. Rooted in our Catholic faith, we are guided by our REACH values— Respect, Equality, Achievement, Community, and Happiness—which inspire every aspect of school life. We are committed to nurturing the God-given talents of each young person, encouraging them to shine the light of Christ in all they do. As of September 2024, our school enrolment stands at 1,132 students, with 14% entitled to free meals. Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is dedicated to fostering a learning environment that reflects Gospel values. The team consists of the Head Teacher, an Area Business Manager, and three Depute Head Teachers, each entrusted with the following key remits:

DHT – Curriculum and Attainment (S5/6)

DHT – Learning, Teaching, and Inclusion (S3/4)

DHT – Wellbeing and Support (S1/2)

Our Extended Leadership Team (ELT) includes six Principal Teachers of Curriculum, each overseeing a distinct curricular area. We also have a Principal Teacher of Religious Education and three Principal Teachers of Curriculum (Support), who support approximately 380 students through our house system, comprised of Dryburgh, Jedburgh, and Melrose.

In keeping with our commitment to the holistic development of each individual, every House is supported by an Assistant Head of House and a Pupil Support Worker, ensuring each student is valued and cared for. Our Principal Teachers of Curriculum lead on vital school-wide initiatives such as Family Learning, Developing the Young Workforce, and Literacy and Numeracy, which contribute to our continuous improvement and shared mission to be a beacon of faith and excellence.

At St. Margaret's Academy we believe in developing every young person's unique gifts, enabling them to flourish and contribute positively to the wider community, all while shining the light of Christ in their actions and achievements.

IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Our improvement priorities are always based on the national priorities in the National Improvement Framework (NIF). Below we have indicated what progress we made with these priorities in Session 2023/24, what the impact has been and what our next steps will be to continue to address these priorities in session 2024/25.

We have also shown which NIF driver for improvement we used – you can find out more about the National Improvement Framework and drivers at:

[Education: National Improvement Framework and improvement plan 2024 - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/nif/2024)
[\(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/)

We have also evaluated our overall provision using quality indicators (QIs) in How Good is our School 4 (HGIOS4) and How Good is Our Early learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC) which is a key aspect of the Scottish approach to self-evaluation and school improvement.

PRIORITY	HOW DID WE DO?
<p>1.</p> <p>To raise attainment, especially in literacy and numeracy</p> <p>Our measurable outcome for session 2023/24 was to</p> <p>Provide high quality learning experience which engage, challenge and inspire our young people.</p> <p>NIF Drivers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> School and ELC Improvement.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School and ELC Leadership</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher and Practitioner Professionalism</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parental Engagement</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Curriculum and Assessment</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance Information</p>	<p>We have made GOOD progress.</p> <p>What did we do?</p> <p><i>Focus on high quality teaching and learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following our validated self-evaluation, in which we received a 'Good' grading for 2.3 Learning, Teaching, and Assessment we reset our focus on teaching, learning and assessment in order to build professional confidence and curiosity. With the support of our newly appointed Pedagogy Lead, we made pedagogy central to our school improvement efforts. As part of this, we provided dedicated time for staff to deepen their understanding of pedagogy through CLPL workshops focused on feedback, questioning, and creating inclusive classrooms. • A staff pedagogy team was created consisting of PT Pedagogy, DHT Learning, Teaching and Inclusion and key staff interested in developing approaches across the school. • Staff engaged in selecting workshops, collaborating across departments, and participating in mini-practitioner enquiries. This allowed for professional dialogue on pedagogy, with many finding the time useful for reflecting on and enhancing their practice. • We also implemented weekly “Thursday Thoughts” emails with practical ideas and frameworks to help guide teachers, which has been well-received by staff. Additionally, collaborative sessions and mini-enquiries provided the opportunity to test small-scale changes in classroom practice, leading to tangible improvements in teaching approaches. • Allowed for dedicated inset time on all collaboration afternoons focused around pedagogy and professional enquiry time. • To improve attainment, we utilised pupil profiles and TMR (Tracking, Monitoring, and Reporting) data to design targeted interventions for students identified as at risk of not achieving in key areas, including Level 4 and 5 Literacy and Numeracy, as well as SQA qualifications like National 5 Maths and English. These learners received intensive support at critical points throughout the year from our numeracy post holder and English staff. • To strengthen teachers' professional judgment when assessing pupil work, particularly in the BGE (Broad General Education), we deepened staff engagement with moderation practices and the sharing of standards supported by our literacy pedagogy officer. • The moderation cycle is now consistently implemented across all departments, and the sharing of standards within the BGE is a regular part of departmental discussions. Cluster-wide approaches to moderation were scheduled throughout the year, promoting professional dialogue around Second and Third Levels. • The Literacy Pedagogy Officer worked with the English staff in St Margaret’s and primary teachers across the cluster to ensure greater consistency in judgements across levels two and three. Work commenced in other faculties looking at consistency of assessment judgement across levels.

	<p>Evidence indicates the impact is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff indicated that engagement in the subject network professional learning programme helped in their understanding of inclusive approaches in classrooms. This will be further developed this session as we pursue a focus on universal and targeted support in classrooms. • Staff indicated that engagement with the pedagogy programme in St Margaret's built confidence in developing a greater range of approaches to meet learners needs. This was in direct response to VSE feedback. • Across all formal observations positive relations were identified as a key strength; this was also supported by VSE feedback. • Learner feedback indicates that learners feel well supported in most of their classes. • Majority of parents feel that their children are known well and making good progress in their learning.
<p>2.</p> <p>To close the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children</p> <p>Our measurable outcome for session 2023/24</p> <p>NIF Driver(s)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> School and ELC Improvement.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School and ELC Leadership</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher and Practitioner Professionalism</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parental Engagement</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Curriculum and Assessment</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance Information</p>	<p>We have made GOOD progress.</p> <p>What did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school was awarded £109,000 of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). The new PEF planning tool was used effectively to identify gaps for learners impacted by poverty, to plan and design interventions to support them and to gather evidence of the impact on their learning. • PEF was used effectively to support a Family Link Worker and to support a Pupil Support Worker focused on attendance. • Interventions this year have focused on increasing attendance, addressing gaps between literacy and numeracy and in reducing the Cost of the School Day. • PEF was also used to support a breakfast club and homework club through the year. • Specific examples include support with participation with trips and excursions and activities at no cost, provision of school uniform to support equity, the Reading Wise project, numeracy interventions and counselling support. • We also supported young people at risk of missing out to attend the Larder to engage then in wider school life before returning to full time school. 13 priorities were planned and 31% of these priorities were fully achieved with 62% making good or better progress (7% moderate progress) • PEF was used effectively to recruit a literacy pedagogy officer to provide training for staff in literacy approaches and interventions and to fund an additional PSW to support attendance measures. <p><i>Evidence indicates that the use of Pupil Equity Funding has had the following impact on learners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified pupils increased their reading age by a minimum of 1.5 years. • Identified pupils increased their ability to demonstrate an increase of 4 key reading targets. • All targeted pupils felt they were well supported by the school with regards to costs they faced in the school day the majority of young people do not feel cost is a barrier to school life as a result of Take What you Need Trollies, Breakfast Club, Homework Club involvement and REACH room approaches. • All targeted pupils in S3 achieved a baseline of level 4 literacy and numeracy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target pupils demonstrated clear progress in literacy and numeracy levels. • 100% of pupils involved in counselling indicated that it has a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing both from SMILE and also our in-house counsellor (J Lindsay)
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<p>3.</p> <p>To improve children and young people’s health & wellbeing</p> <p>Our measureable outcome in session 2023/2024 was</p> <p>Embed our recently refreshed school values of REACH (Respect, Equality, Achievement, Community and Happiness ensuring all members of the school community feel respected, valued and part of the school community.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>School and ELC Improvement.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/>School and ELC Leadership</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/>Teacher and Practitioner Professionalism</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/>Parental Engagement</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/>Curriculum and Assessment</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/>Performance Information</p>	<p>We have made GOOD progress.</p> <p>What did we do?</p> <p>Well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We identified priorities by analysis of a Wellbeing Survey which was undertaken by our pupils and repeated to show progress at points in the year. Heads of House becoming more confident in using data to target specific improvements for young people. • Staff worked collegiately to support the health and well-being of all our learners, including participation in case conferences and engaging with pastoral notes and ASN information including those attending Nurture and the Almond Room (Small Group Setting). <p>Culture and Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil and staff working group was created to promote racial equality ensuring all young people felt safe and valued in school and that anti-racist education was a central focus of our school working. • A series of events carried out across the year to celebrate our vibrant and diverse community including cultural dress days, celebrations for Black History Month and Holocaust Memorial Day. • Culture and Diversity group fed into the positive relationships working group with a focus on tackling anti-racist language and behaviours. <p>Catholic Social Teaching and Development of Laudato Si</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have continued this session to develop faith life across the school community. Laudato Si and Care for the Common Home was further developed through work with the West Lothian Litter Pickers and regular litter picking opportunities in and around the school grounds allowing young people to take responsibility for their local area. • Our Eco Group promoted sustainability as they provided every young person with a water bottle to cut down on our whole school plastic us. • Our S6 pupils led on ‘Take what you Need’ trollies based around the school ensuring that every young person has all of the equipment they need to feel safe and valued in school. • Our school community engaged with YPI this session allowing a significant contribution to be donated to Neil’s Hugs. • The Youth Club continues to provide support to young people requiring a supportive and welcoming space over breaks and lunches for young people and we have seen a considerable increase in the numbers of S1/2 pupils accessing the youth club across the week in school. • We continue to develop our commitment to Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme and had two of our pupils achieve their gold award this session. • Our school community worked together on a number of charitable initiatives across the school year and the S6 Charity Committee raised
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	<p>awareness across the year for groups such as SCIAF, Mary's Meals, UNICEF, Water Aid and the Red Cross.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our emphasis on the rights of workers was apparent through our promotion of Fairtrade; we had lessons in RE about Fairtrade and the moral implications of consumer decisions as well as developing a whole school approach to Rights Education as shown in our Silver Award from UNICEF. <p>Evidence indicates the impact is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people feel safe when they are in school. 89% compared to 84% - WL average. • Young people feel they are treated fairly and with respect. (92% compared to 85% - WL average) • Young people have an awareness of their rights and a clear understanding of the diverse community they are a part of. Young people are confident to share their views as part of regular pupil voice and participation opportunities. • Most young people can talk confidently about the school values and how their rights are enacted.
<p>4.</p> <p>To improve employability skills, and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people</p> <p>Our measurable income for session 23/24 was to develop a range of positive destinations while also developing skills in life, learning and work for all young people.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>School and ELC Improvement. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>School and ELC Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>Teacher and Practitioner Professionalism <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>Parental Engagement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>Curriculum and Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>Performance Information</p>	<p>We have made GOOD progress. What did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted a Skills Across the Curriculum event during May for learners in S1-S3 which offered a wide range of interactive activities with industry professionals. The week included sessions such as "Managing Your Money," delivered by financial planning experts, which equipped students with practical budgeting and financial literacy skills. • Additionally, the "Meet the Employer" event connected pupils with professionals across various sectors, including STEM, creative arts, and hospitality, providing them with invaluable insights into future career opportunities. These activities were carefully designed to enhance students' awareness of real-world applications of their learning and to support their journey towards meaningful post-school pathways. • Through this initiative, we ensured that pupils from S1 to S3 had direct access to role models and relevant industry knowledge, reinforcing our dedication to providing a broad and dynamic educational experience. • All staff participated in further SDS training on developing skills across the curriculum and from this staff began to engage with Meta Skills 4.0 incorporating language of skills in teaching and learning. • All faculties have reviewed how well the Careers Education Standard is embedded in faculty planning as well as discussions on how to further embed the skills framework. • We have continued to develop a number of external partners to support the curriculum including BEAR Scotland and Land Technologies who have supported with work experience opportunities and training days to develop a project and gain valuable hands on experience. • All PTCs Curriculum have engaged fully with SCQF and NPA programme to ensure, as far as possible, all young people undertaking a course can have success at SQA and SCQF level if possible. This has allowed young people to have success at the level most appropriate to their progress.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continued to work with our SDS partners and staff at MCMC to ensure positive destinations for our young people, including those who faced significant barriers. • Most learners experienced an opportunity to engage with the world of work and find out about career related interests and progression pathways to support their future planning. • 93.75% of young people achieved an initial positive destination with pupils largely moving into Higher Education. • There was a continued focus on closing the gap with students in lower SIMD working with agencies such as LEAPS, SDS and MCMC. Continued work to be undertaken to ensure early intervention for pupils at risk of a negative destination through Head of House and Family Link Worker in 2023/24. • Started to take forward the meta-skills 4.0 toolkit with all staff building confidence in young people around articulation of skills. • Learning Zone and Martlet Wing provided a safe space for young people who require employability support. • SCQF level 5 courses successfully ‘bundled’ into bespoke packages for potential leavers or those at risk of not achieving including Creative Industries, Retail and Customer Service. <p><i>Evidence indicates the impact is:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widened range of courses on offer throughout Senior Phase providing breadth of experience and depth up to and including AH in a range of subject areas. • Greater engagement from young people who were at risk not attending or engaging in school life through Learning Zone and Employability Hub. • Almost all young people in school can access a wide range of both SQA and SCQF qualifications within the school day • From consultation around skills framework all young people will undertake two new courses as part of their BGE curriculum focused on skills development and Laudato Si. Both courses will allow young people to identify and discuss their skills. REACH Course and Learning for Sustainability will be a key part of the BGE Curriculum moving forward.
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Rights Respecting Schools and UNCRC

- This session as part of our focus on UNCRC approaches young people took part in decisions around use of the participatory budget and also participated in a pilot on supporting the evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Our young people provided vital feedback around our mobile phone policy and teaching and learning policy.
- Our young people also worked with our Collaboration for Impact partner schools to discuss improvement planning at a pupil level. This will be continued next session working with our partner schools in Edinburgh, Falkirk and Fife.

Attendance and Exclusions

- The school has taken a pro-active approach to targeting attendance data. Weekly updates are shared with the extended leadership team and Heads of House make regular contact with pupils who have attendance less than 80%.
- Exclusions are the lowest in the authority demonstrating a commitment to alternative and restorative approaches at 3.62 inclusion incidents per 1000 compared to a WL average of 17.65 per 1000.
- The attendance figures for session 2023/24 is 87.01%. (Above WL average of 85.9%)
Continued work to engage with parents and carers of pupils facing difficulty in attending through the use of counselling, bespoke curriculum packages and nurture.

Parental & Partner Engagement

- Parental engagement remains a key focus and a number of initiatives were continued to ensure that all parents and carers are aware of what was happening in the school and how to address any concerns or queries that they may have. We continued to develop our parental communication for parents called 'The Round Up' as this was well received by parents and carers over session 23/24. Sharing of pupil successes and events in school has been a useful way of reaching out to our community.
- Increased partnership working with parent council led to supportive discussions about PEF spending, uniform policy and mobile phone policy.
- Curriculum evenings were very well attended demonstrating a clear appetite for these type of engagement events from parents.
- In session 24/25 we will move from a family engagement to a family learning approach and want to develop this strategy across the school community and will begin by hosting a family learning event focused on numeracy during the school day.
- A series of events including P7 Transition, Supporting your Child in St Margaret's, UCAS and pathways and course choice showcase evenings were held across the year and were well attended and supported by the parent body.

Developing in Faith

- S1 and S6 Retreats: Led by Net Ministries, our retreats provided opportunities for pupils to deepen their faith, reflect on their spiritual journey, and strengthen their connection to the wider school community through prayer, reflection, and fellowship.
- Regular Masses held throughout the year, aligned with the liturgical calendar, brought the school community together in worship, fostering a strong sense of spiritual unity and shared faith.
- The RE club provided a safe space for pupils to gather, enjoy snacks, and participate in faith-based activities, discussions, and reflection, encouraging spiritual growth and fellowship.
- During the special week of Catholic Education Week, the school focused on the theme of 'Pilgrims of Faith', inspiring young people to explore and strengthen their faith journeys. This theme was integrated into classroom activities, school-wide events, and discussions that helped students see themselves as active participants in the faith community.
- Caritas Group allowed our senior students to live out their faith through community service, leadership, and acts of charity, fostering a sense of compassion and responsibility. The Charity committee organised various fundraising and awareness initiatives, reinforcing the school's commitment to service and generosity.
- The Eco Group engaged in promoting sustainability and caring for creation, in line with Laudato Si, demonstrating a commitment to environmental stewardship and Gospel values.
- This year we undertook a review of our Religious Education curriculum, supported by our school chaplain, who has been instrumental in ensuring that our curriculum remains challenging, engaging, and deeply rooted in Gospel values. His guidance has helped ensure

that our RE program continues to promote these values effectively in every classroom, while providing a robust and enriching faith-based education for all pupils.

- Continued commitment to Morning Prayer in classes every morning across the school community.

Our Wider Achievements this year have been:

- S6 pupils undertaking Caritas Award
- Selected as the West Lothian pilot school for Film in a Year project which involved our young people creating their own film for the Scottish Youth Film Festival and completing all roles with support from the Scottish Youth Film Foundation.
- UNICEF Silver Award – ‘We Are Rights Aware’
- Black History Month – Culture and Diversity Event led by Culture Club
- Culture Club led a Diversity Week of Events including a Cultural talent show and cultural dress day to allow all young people to share in their heritage.
- Third year of delivery of SQA Polish Language for Work purposes at Level 5 and Level 6 in partnership with No Boundaries Polish School
- Continued engagement with West Lothian Litter Pickers to continue to develop our strategy around Learning for Sustainability.
- First Scottish school to win the RTX National Quadcopter Challenge at RAF Cranwell.
- Achieved Green Flag status through community working with Keep Scotland Beautiful and WLLP.
- Development of The Abbey Coffee Shop developed by our S6 pupils leading to a meaningful Skills for Work pathways for our young people.
- 40 DoE Silver participants
- 10 Duke of Edinburgh Gold participants
- Three senior pupils attended the Holocaust Memorial Event at Howden Park Centre commemorating this event and leading on the fragility of freedom.
- Pilot project working with Flosverse on encouraging women into STEM careers.
- Our S2, S4 and S6 pupils participated in the Equally Safe at School survey looking at gender based violence in school in order to support our work in tackling this issue. All of our S6 pupils have been trained in the Mentors in Violence Prevention training.

How good is our school? The quality indicators* evidence that:

1.3 Leadership of Change	Good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Very Good

*(Indicators used in How good is our School? 4th Edition, Education Scotland 2015 and How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare? 2016)