



EDINBURGH  
**STEINER**  
SCHOOL

**Standards and Quality Report  
2024**

## **Vision statement**

Edinburgh Steiner School aspires to develop responsible, creative and freethinking young people, who will contribute to society and a sustainable environment with vision and purpose.

## **Mission statement**

Inspired by the pedagogical insights of Rudolf Steiner, we commit daily to awakening the mind, will and spirit of each individual pupil.

### **1. School aims**

- To provide a high-quality pedagogical service and a welcoming, secure, happy and caring environment for all
- To recognise and support each stage of child development and to deliver an age-appropriate curriculum that underpins this
- To recognise that rhythm, kinaesthetic learning and movement are integral parts of the curriculum
- To address the learning needs of all pupils
- To acknowledge the importance of non-formal and informal learning
- To encourage personal, social and moral development for the children and staff in the school
- To provide a child-friendly, aesthetically beautiful environment, where learners are encouraged to know and love the world and where each child's innate abilities are allowed to blossom
- To enable children to take responsibility for their own learning in an environment of peace and mutual respect
- To develop self-reliance, rigour and resilience
- To embrace all people regardless of race, religion or gender
- To work in partnership with parents/carers to foster a sense of community
- To support and encourage staff development and CPD and demonstrate a commitment to improvement in all areas
- To continue to foster links with outside agencies, mainstream schools and the wider community

## 2. The school in context

Edinburgh Steiner School is located in the Southwest of Edinburgh and was opened in 1939.

The School's client group mainly comprises people from a multicultural, professional backgrounds from a large catchment area. A wide range of first and second languages are spoken by pupils. The School is a partner provider with Edinburgh City Council.

The School is situated in four different main buildings, plus a purpose-built hall and Kindergarten; a former coach house has recently been renovated to provide new classrooms and craft spaces.

In November 2024, our Early Years Department was registered to accommodate 80 children for ages 2 to 7. There were two Seedlings Groups (2-3 year olds), and three Kindergarten groups (3 to 7 year olds). In November 2024 the school was running several additional community programmes: one Baby Group, and five Parent and Child Groups, comprising 36 families. These groups met weekly, with one family attending twice a week. In November 2024 there were 62 children registered in Seedlings and Kindergarten Classes.

In November 2024 there were 21 children who had an Additional Support Plan in Kindergarten and Seedlings. These were as follows:

- 9 children with ASPs for English as an Additional Language
- 2 children with ASPs for social/emotional/behavioural issues
- 1 children with an ASP for speech and language development
- 11 children with an ASP for allergy/intolerance/medical needs

In November 2024, the main school had 12 classes (year groups) varying in size from 9 to 23 pupils, which provide education for young people aged 6-18 years. The total school roll was 249. Being a small school, teachers, pupils and parents know and appreciate one another. There is mutual support and recognition of both strengths and weaknesses.

Teachers and other staff work with support from a Senior Management Team and with guidance provided by the ethos and curriculum of the international Steiner Waldorf framework. Some key decisions continue to be made by consensus at a weekly meeting of the College of Teachers—a committee which holds the spirit of the education. Consensus decision-making has allowed for wider participation and ownership of issues and decisions.

The School has a broad-based curriculum where head, heart and hand are addressed in equal measure. Pupils are not judged solely on academic achievements, but are equally valued for their social, moral, spiritual and practical abilities.

Parents are encouraged to be committed to the School and be pro-active: by being Class Convenors, serving actively through the PTA, serving on the Board of Trustees, taking part in workdays, Christmas Market, concerts and clubs.

### **3. Factors affecting the development of the school**

- The ethos of the School is based on the premise that people are as important as policies, if not more so.
- Formal literacy and numeracy programmes do not begin until the child is six and a half-years-old (Class 1). The School does not select pupils on the basis of academic ability.
- ICT does not normally feature in the School's curriculum or teaching methodology until the late Middle School and Upper School.
- The School is a partner provider with Edinburgh City Council (Early Years) and participates in the funded early learning and childcare scheme.

#### 4. Attendance, attainment and progress (2023-2024)

Attendance 2023/24 - Full Academic Year (29/08/23 - 04/07/24)									
	Total Periods	Present		Late		Authorised Absence		Unauthorised Absence	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Seedlings	2045	2048	88	23	1.1	250	11.1	9	0.4
Kindergarten	6635	6693	88.9	100	1.5	756	10.4	29	0.4
Class 1	2553	2557	92.7	34	1.3	198	7.3	4	0.1
Class 2	2552	2589	91.6	115	4.4	230	8.3	5	0.2
Class 3	1971	1993	94.5	81	4.1	112	5.5	5	0.2
Class 4	2560	2589	91.9	97	3.7	219	8.0	6	0.2
Class 5	2412	2502	86.6	279	11.2	373	12.9	1	0.0
Class 6	2710	2794	91.4	52	1.9	256	8.6	6	0.2
Class 7	3907	4093	94.8	130	3.2	222	5.2	3	0.0
Class 8	2628	2963	88.9	233	7.9	368	11.0	0	0.0
Class 9	2346	2535	91.5	94	3.7	224	8.3	7	0.2
Class 10	2827	3220	87.6	316	9.8	419	12.3	33	1.1
Class 11	3045	3275	93.9	196	6	196	6.0	15	0.4
Class 12	1355	1733	73.6	386	22.3	574	25.4	24	1.7
TOTAL	39546	41584	89.9	2136	5.1	4397	9.8	147	5.3

## Exam results 2024

Edinburgh Steiner School										
Year Group	Total Pupils in Year	Examination	Number of Candidates	Total Present'ns	A	B	C	D	U	
Class 12	13	Adv Highers	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
		Highers	13	47	27	12	6	1	1	
		National 5	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	
Class 11	16	Highers	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
		National 5	16	32	19	8	1	4	1	
Class 10	17	National 4	7	11 Pass	-	-				
		National 5	17	45	30	5	6	2	2	

In session 2023/2024 the majority of SQA National Courses reintroduced full coursework assessment following the disruption caused by the pandemic. Despite this additional pressure, Edinburgh Steiner School's Higher exam results in 2024 were outstanding, with particularly strong performances in the sciences, history, English and art. The overall pass rate (A-C) for Edinburgh Steiner School (ESS) Higher results was 96%—the highest of recent years—with 60% of all Higher results graded 'A' and the combined percentage of 'A' and 'B' grade results totalling 82%. Over the long term, these results continue a gradual upward trend in exam performance for our pupils (especially in the top grades), taking the 5-year running mean pass rate for Higher—a combined average of the results for the current year plus the previous four years—back over 91% and close to an all-time high. The national pass rate (A-C) was significantly lower (74.9%, down from 77.1% in 2023). Several pupils received 'straight As'.

The Edinburgh Steiner School pass rate (A-C) for National 5 (for exam courses which were sat mostly by pupils in Classes 10 and 11) was very good (86.2%), with the vast majority (77.5%) of results at grades A or B. Well over half (61.2%) of all National 5 results in 2024 were at grade A and a large proportion of pupils received 'straight As'. The national pass rate (A-C) was 77.2%.

Advanced Higher results (Art & Design) were outstanding, with all candidates achieving an 'A' grade. Of the 12 presentations for National 4, all candidates passed.

GCSE is offered in Art & Design only. The GCSE grade system changed from letters (A\* - G) to the new numerical system (9 - 1) in 2018: 9 is the highest. Grade 7 is broadly equivalent to an A, with 9 being above an A\*. The 'pass' grade - Grade 4 - is equivalent to a C on the former system or a C at National 5. In 2024, 100% of grades awarded to ESS candidates were 7, 8 or 9. The UK average 'pass' rate was 67%.

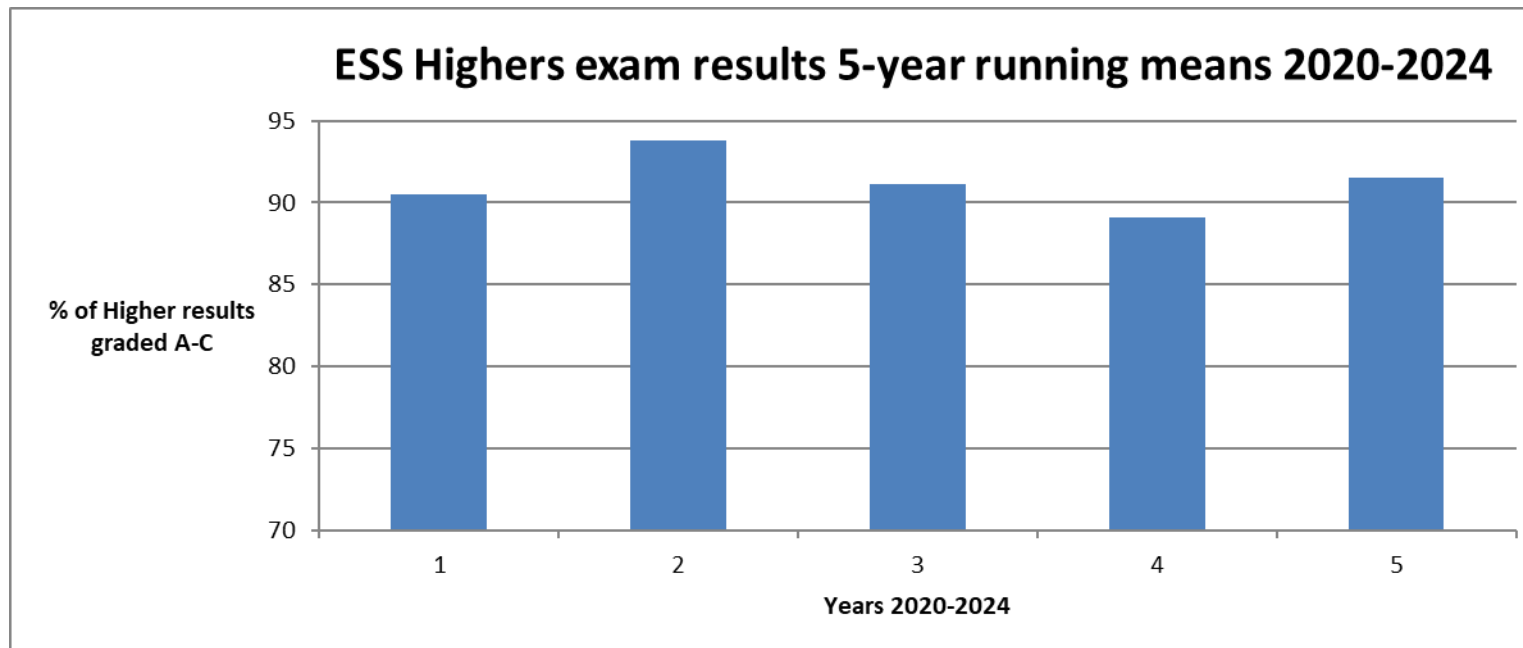


Figure 1: Higher exam results 5-year running means (i.e. year 5, 2024, is compiled by averaging the results from 2020-2024 inclusive)

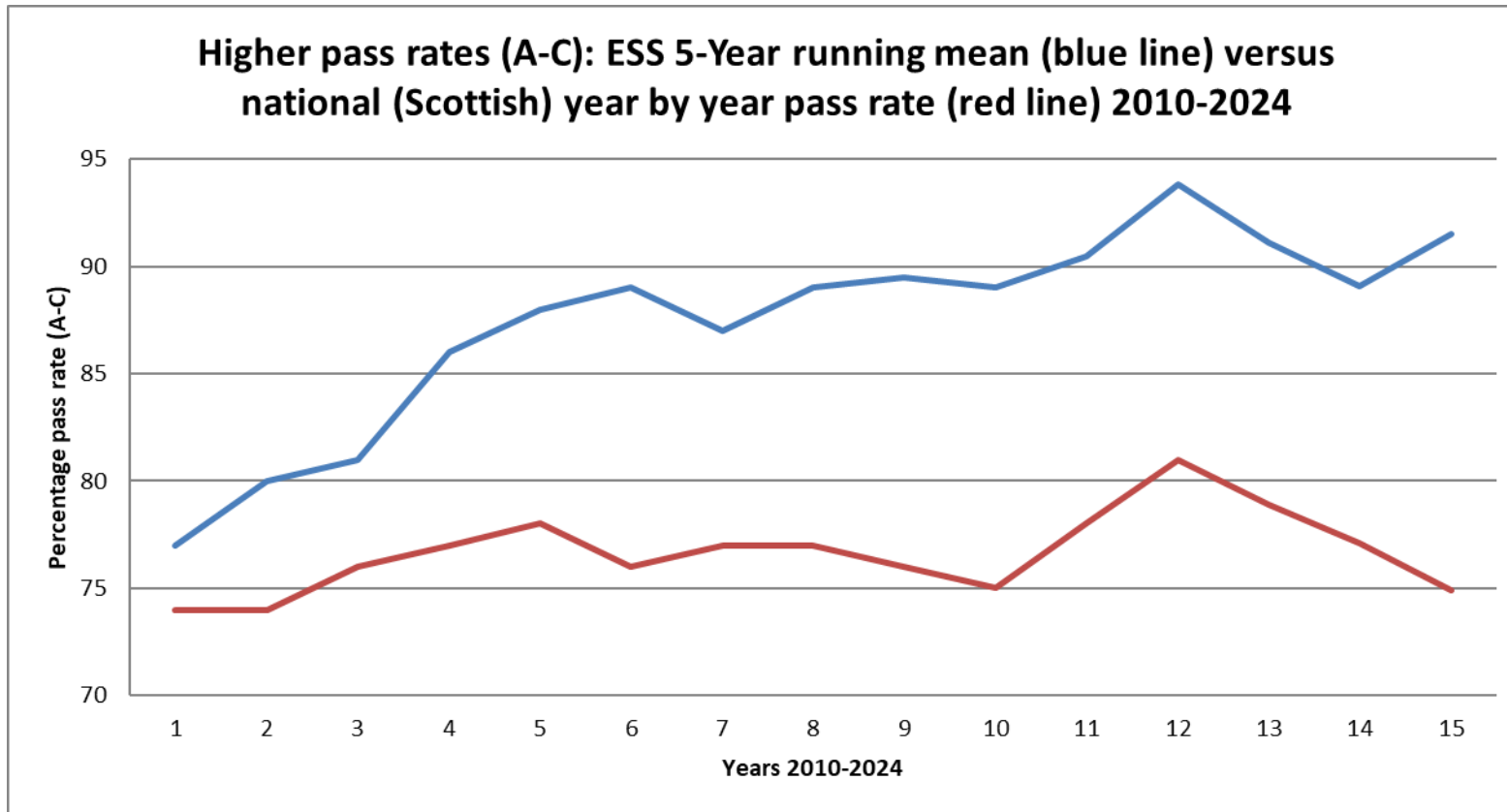


Figure 2: Trend against national pass rate: blue line, ESS Higher exam A-C pass rate, year by year 5-year running mean; red line, national pass rate by individual year



## Exam results (English as an Additional Language) 2023-2024

CEFR Level	%A	%B	%C
B2	-	70%	30%
C1	-	-	-

## **5. Progress and achievement**

### **Early Years (including Kindergarten)**

- One of our EY teachers completed an accredited Forest School kindergarten training through a partnership with another local setting.
- EY practitioners engaged the local community by performing a series of puppet shows for children and parents at the local Morningside Library. These sessions also allowed members of the public to ask questions about Steiner Waldorf education.
- The installation of the first of two climbing frames in the Kindergarten garden enhanced the outside provision, giving pupils a different level of challenge when climbing and hanging.
- An Early Years addendum has been created to the whole school positive behaviour policy. This allows for more consistency in how staff promote positive behaviour and deal with any challenges.
- Staffing: during 2023/2024 there was a reduced turnover among EY assistants. In addition to choosing to work full-time in most cases, assistants stayed in post for longer providing more stability and delivering a greater depth of experience to the team.
- A system of Afternoon Leads (AL), with the help of assistants, has been fully implemented. The aim is to elevate support workers by offering them lead roles for the afternoon session. This has meant more stability for the children and a structured programme of activities in the afternoons.
- Early Years staff now share aspects of their practice weekly in their pedagogical meetings. Sharing practice develops cooperation between staff and ensures a consistent approach. It is also supportive.
- In autumn 2024, members of the Senior Management Team, EY Pupil Support and Office staff met weekly to discuss applications and admissions to Seedlings and Kindergarten. This included reviewing procedures for admissions and initial conversations with prospective families.

## Lower School

- In December 2024, four Class 8 pupils were accepted to the Weir-Wyse Engineering programme run by Strathclyde University. Applications for places on this programme are very competitive with only 300 for the whole of Scotland
- In April 2024, Class 8 presented their independent Class 8 Projects, most of which were assessed for the first module of the Integrated Education Certificate. A wide variety of fascinating projects were completed and presented, including board game designs, food preparation, a self-built go-kart and an in-depth exploration of skateboarding culture, including a 3-D model design for a skatepark.
- A pupil in Class 7 contributed to the first children’s novel about dementia, as one of an intergenerational group of writers and illustrators. *My Wonky Brain* was a project led by the University of Edinburgh.
- A full programme of trips and outings was delivered in 2024. In the summer term, Class 8 exchanged with their counterpart Class in Coburg and spent four weeks in Germany—the first Class 8 exchange since the programme was disrupted by Covid. Classes also visited Garvald Farm and embarked on residential trips to, for example, Hadrian’s Wall in Northumbria and Michael Hall for the annual Olympics. Class 7 enjoyed an outward-bound experience. Dozens of other half-day and full day outings were also organised locally along the union canal, to the mining museum, Dawyck botanic gardens, Inchcolm Island and other places of interest connected to the curriculum.
- In Autumn 2024, the School continued its relationship with a land management initiative at Caldercruix in Lanarkshire. Several Classes, including Class 3, travelled there to spend a day planting trees.
- The School’s U15s basketball team competed in two competitive leagues: the Scottish Schools Cup and the Edinburgh Schools Basketball League for High Schools across Edinburgh. The team achieved consecutive wins in January 2024 against North Berwick and George Heriots and a string of victories in November and December 2024.
- In February 2024, pupils in Class 5 created and put up colourful posters to remind the school community what can go on the campus compost heaps.
- Lower School pupils produced exquisite project work connect to the Main Lesson curriculum, including models of houses made of natural materials, lifelike animals, masks and a wide range of felting, woodwork and handwork.
- The extra-curricular programme continued to offer a wide selection of popular activities, especially in circus skills and acrobatics. Other popular clubs included basketball, chess, drama and the Bird Club.

- In April 2024, Class 8 performed 'One Stoplight Town', a story about people from a town so small that you might drive through without taking a second look.

## **Upper School**

- The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme was introduced as a Main lesson in Class 10 for the first time. All pupils therefore had an opportunity to learn some essential skills, such as map-reading, while those pupils who had chosen to pursue the Award itself were able to have time with their teacher to prepare for the expedition and completed vital paperwork. Upper School pupils later tackled the highest peak of the Southern Pentlands for their expedition, walking almost 20 kilometres over two days.
- Upper School pupils enjoyed a full programme of trips and excursions during 2024. Class 12 visited Lake Como in Italy for their Trip. Class 11 spent five days surveying in the Cairngorms and Class 9 spent two weeks at Garvald Farm in September. Day and evening outings connected to the curriculum took Classes to the theatre on several occasions; to the mining museum at Wanlockhead; and to the Mosque in Edinburgh.
- In Autumn 2024 a pupil in Class 10 was selected to play under 19s American Football for Scotland. The Assistant Head Coach described it as a 'significant achievement'.
- The Upper School Choir met three mornings a week from September 2024 under the direction of Nick Brett, practising compositions from a variety of genres and traditions. The choir performed pieces at assemblies and the Polwarth Christmas Concert.
- Pupils from Class 10 received their Independent Education Certificate in Autumn 2024, having completed the second and third modules (Creative Thinking Skills and Personal and Social Learning) to add to their Independent Project module from the previous year. Most of the learners achieved the top grades of Merit and Distinction.
- The Upper School drama club produced their play 'Extremism' in February 2024. This ensemble play, with relevant social themes for teenagers, saw participation from pupils in Class 7 up.
- The PSHE programme in the Upper School was revised and improved from autumn 2024. Classes 9 and 10 benefited from a programme of outside speakers, including experts representing a variety of charities and agencies in the health, security and care sectors.
- The Student Council continued to meet regularly and was involved in a variety of projects and initiatives throughout 2024, including social events to enhance community spirit among pupils and the Christmas Jumper Day in December which enjoyed wide participation and raised money for The Wee Hours, a homelessness charity. The Student Council also took on the task of organising the donations by

Classes to the Edinburgh Food Project as part of the Michaelmas Festival and members of the Council spoke about the importance of these efforts at the whole school meal. Since 2015 the School has donated over 2,000kg of food to food banks.

- The visiting overseas pupil programme continued in 2024, with most of the visitors joining Classes 10 and 11. Many of the visitors come as a result of recommendations from pupils who have been to our school before. Exam results in EAL (English as an Additional Language) remain strong (see above).
- SQA Higher exam results in 2024 were excellent against a national trend of falling pass rates. National 5 results were very good (see above for details).
- Towards the end of the summer term in 2024, Class 12 produced their play 'Cinderella'. This was an exuberant production, with spectacular costumes and innovative special effects. The play included singing, dancing and teacher participation.

## **Whole School**

- The Community Choir reformed in Autumn 2024 and met on Wednesday afternoons. They supported the Upper School Choir and performed at events such as the Christmas Market.
- The PTA (Parent Teacher Association) continued to be very active, and the committee met monthly. The remit of the PTA was clarified during 2024 and a new constitution was ratified. The PTA has been involved in policy formation, streamlining communication between parent groups in the school, supporting extracurricular activities and enhancing the community spirit within the school by holding social evenings connected to festivals, including a successful Michaelmas celebration. The PTA also hosted a series of timely information evenings from January 2024 focusing on digital safety, which were well received.
- In September 2024 a 'New Friends, Familiar Faces' evening was held in the Hall and attended by about 50 people. This evening, which included refreshments and an exhibition of pupils' work, was especially helpful for new parents, who had an opportunity to meet members of the Senior Management Team, Trustees and the PTA.
- The College of Teachers tightened its focus on the curriculum as the new Senior Management Team took on more responsibility for aspects of administration, staffing, policy and procedure. With more time to consider the curriculum in depth, College established a number of Working Groups to explore new approaches to delivering the curriculum, which will feed into a new, longer term strategic improvement plan (see below).

- Two Adult Education taster days were held in November and December 2024, to gauge interest in a proposed Adult Education and Teacher Development Course. These days, held at weekends, included opportunities to experience a range of activities from the Waldorf curriculum, including movement, singing and crafts.
- The School continued to provide places for up to five children and young people who are currently refugees from the conflict in Ukraine.
- Several open parents evenings were organised in the summer and autumn of 2024 to discuss the impacts of VAT on independent schools and to share ideas for generating non-fee income.
- All three plays in the Oberufer cycle were performed in 2024: The Kings Play by Class 12 in January, and the Paradise Play and Shepherds Play in December. Public performances were well attended.
- In June, the School took a stall at an established Edinburgh community event, the Meadows Festival. The stall was attended for two days and showcased the School with information and a display of work by pupils.
- A February half term Kindergarten camp and two weeks of Summer Camp were successfully hosted on campus during August 2024. A new initiative for younger children was successfully hosted in the Kindergarten this summer. Children and young people in all these camps participated in a variety of healthy and enriching activities including arts and crafts, circus skills, gymnastics and games.
- A full programme of assemblies and festivals was delivered during 2024, including Michaelmas, Martinmas, Advent, Easter, Whitson, the Ascension Walk up Craiglockhart Hill. The Michaelmas Festival in September gathered the whole school community in the Hall for a sit-down meal. The Burns Supper and Celidh in February, organised by Class 11, and the Halloween Ceilidh, organised by Class 12, in October were sell-out events and open to the whole community.
- The traditional Christmas Market, led by parents of Class 4, was a huge success, raising over £10,000 despite—ironically—a heavy snowfall early in the morning which made travelling to the event a challenge. In the end, hundreds of people managed to attend to enjoy delicious homecooked foods, craft workshops and stalls selling a wide range of handmade items and artistic gifts.
- The School campus hosted a Spring Fair in May 2024. It was very well attended with visitors enjoyed fresh food, craft sales (which many crafts items made by pupils), fairground activities and music. On the same day the School celebrated its 85<sup>th</sup> birthday by hosting an Alumni lunch which was attended by—coincidentally—85 former pupils, many of whom left school decades ago.
- Good relationships have been maintained between the School and its regulatory bodies, Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate, via ongoing visits and communication with a designated ‘link inspector’ (Education Scotland), whose most recent visit was in December 2024.

- During 2024 the Maintenance Team completed a number of small and medium-sized projects, including painting and decorating of outside walls and woodwork (with substantial help from parents), refurbishment of Office spaces and the relocation and decoration of the new Pupil Support Department 'hub' in Edinholme.

## **6. Summary of key priorities (Improvement Plan)**

- The School will begin to implement longer-term Improvement Plans (stretching over 2-3 years, as opposed to annual covering an annual cycle) from 2025 to reflect a focus on wider strategic priorities, including the continued implementation of the transition to an alternative whole school structure for leadership, governance and management. The next Improvement Plan will therefore be published early in 2025.

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