
Report to Education, Sport and Leisure Committee

Date of Meeting: 4 February 2014

**Subject: Inspection of Alva Academy
Publication of Education Scotland's Report**

Report by: Head of Education

1.0 Purpose

1.0 The purpose of this paper is to report to the Committee the outcome of the recently published report by Education Scotland on their inspection of Alva Academy.

2.0 Recommendations

The Education, Sport and Leisure Committee agrees to:

2.1 Consider the outcome of the inspection and make comment on the key findings identified in the published inspection report which is attached as Appendix 1.

3.0 Considerations

3.1 Each year, Education Scotland inspects and reports on the quality of education in a sample of pre-school centres, primary schools, secondary schools and other education services, including Community Learning and Development. Alva Academy was inspected in the week beginning 16 September 2013. The inspection report was published on 5 November 2013. The school was last inspected in August 2005.

3.2 School inspection focus on how well children and young people are learning and achieving, and how well the school supports their development.

3.3 The inspection team evaluates the school's capacity to improve and seeks answers to the following questions:

- how well do children learn and achieve?
- how well does the school support children to develop and learn?
- how well does the school improve the quality of its work?

3.4 Inspectors use five quality indicators, taken from the National Framework, *'How good is our school?'* to evaluate specific aspects of school provision and to answer the three key questions. (3.2)

Three of the five quality indicators contribute to the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF):

1.1 Improvements in performance (NPF)

2.1 Learners' experiences (NPF)

5.3 Meeting learning needs (NPF)

5.1 The curriculum

5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation.

3.5 The inspection report was published on 5 November 2013 (Appendix 1). The report takes the form of a letter to parents, which provides a response to the questions highlighted in section 3.3. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the evaluations made.

3.6 A sample of parents, children and young people and members of staff were invited to give their views of the school using a pre-inspection questionnaire. Their views and opinions informed the inspection process. Appendix 3 provides the statistical detail from the questionnaires.

3.7 The inspection report on Alva Academy identified the following **key strengths**

- The purposeful work ethic of staff and young people across the school.
- Young people's pride and sense of identity in their school, and their enthusiasm for learning and contributing to their community.
- The positive, respectful and productive relationships between and among young people and staff.
- The high quality of support which all staff provide for young people, with help from partners.
- The personalised and flexible approach to providing a suitable curriculum for young people from S4 to S6.
- The head teacher's leadership of improvement.

3.8 The following **areas for improvement** were agreed in discussion with the head teacher and the education authority:

- Continue to improve the impact of self-evaluation on school improvement and young people's learning experience.
- Continue to further build on partnership working to improve collaboration across the learning community and outcomes for young people.
- Continue to develop the curriculum to ensure that all young people have suitable opportunities to progress and achieve in line with Curriculum for Excellence.

3.9 **Responding to the inspection and building capacity for improvement**

Following the inspection, Education Scotland is confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, Education Scotland will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The authority will continue to support the school in its plans for continuous improvement. Parents will be informed of the extent to which the school has improved.

4.0 **Sustainability Implications**

4.1 N/A

5.0 **Resource Implications**

5.1 This report has no resource implications for the Service

6.0 **Exempt Reports**

6.1 Is this report exempt? No

7.0 **Declarations**

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities**

The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses	√
Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive	√
People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment	√
Our communities are safer	
Vulnerable people and families are supported	√
Substance misuse and its effects are reduced	
Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing	
The environment is protected and enhanced for all	
The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence	√

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

Not applicable

8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes No

9.0 Legality

9.1 In adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

10.0 Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Education Scotland inspection findings – Alva Academy
- Appendix 2 – Education Scotland quality indicators – Alva Academy.
- Appendix 3 – Education Scotland – Questionnaire analysis.

11.0 Background Papers

None

Author(s)

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Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
David Leng	Head of Education	Signed: D Leng
Elaine McPherson	Chief Executive	Signed: E McPherson

5 November 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

**Alva Academy
Clackmannanshire Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well young people are learning and achieving and how well the school supports young people to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including planning for progression in young people's achievement and attainment. We also looked at young people's skills development, including leadership. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving young people's education.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Most young people learn well and achieve successfully in a wide range of activities. Relationships between young people and staff, and between young people themselves are of a consistently high standard. Most young people feel safe and cared for and believe that they are treated fairly and equally. Young people feel that they receive help when they need it and that they get along well with their school work. They regard most of their teachers as being approachable and supportive of their learning. Young people work well together when learning activities allow them to do so. Almost all are willing and attentive during lessons. However, too many lessons are teacher-led and, as a result, young people on these occasions are passive in their learning. They need more opportunities to work independently and to take on greater responsibility for their own learning. They would welcome more opportunities to have a say in improving the way they learn. We have asked teachers to extend the range of active learning approaches used across the school. This will help ensure that young people's learning experiences are of a more consistently high standard overall.

Young people are developing new skills through taking part in a broad range of activities. However, they are not always sufficiently aware of what these skills are. Young people who participate in the School of Football, School of Rugby and School of Dance are achieving well in these specialist areas. The school achieves considerable success in a range of competitions and events. These include young people winning medals at the Royal Scottish Academy Arts competition, the Additional Support Needs Athletics Championship at Grangemouth Stadium and receiving a gold award for the No Knife-No Crime initiative. A few young people receive accreditation for the skills for life and work they develop through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. The school is planning to seek further opportunities to accredit young

people's achievements formally. Young people across the school are developing citizenship skills through raising considerable funds for charity, including through the very successful Macmillan Cancer Support fundraising activities. Young people in S6 have a range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Such opportunities need to be offered from S1 onwards, so that young people can develop their leadership skills progressively. Staff are developing approaches to ensure they have reliable information about how well young people are progressing from S1 to S3. Young people's attainment in national qualifications is above the national average and is better than in schools serving those with similar needs and backgrounds. The school is taking important steps to address underperformance in identified areas.

How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

The school meets the needs of its young people well. Across the school, staff are caring and support young people skilfully in their learning. Pupil support staff, together with the school's support worker, know young people's families very well and use this knowledge to improve outcomes for young people. The highly effective work between the attendance and welfare officer and the pupil support staff has had a significant impact on tackling issues related to young people's poor attendance. Young people with additional support needs (ASN) are well supported in making progress across the curriculum through targeted programmes of work in the ASN department. The school is working to improve its approach to developing and using individualised educational programmes (IEPs) and the quality of targets within these plans. This will support young people with IEPs in improving their progress and achievement. Across the school, staff need to use a greater range and variety of learning and teaching approaches so that young people are engaged more fully in their learning.

Over the last year, the new headteacher has led an extensive review of the curriculum. This is to ensure that the school moves away from early presentation of young people for external examinations, and delivers a curriculum that meets national expectations for Curriculum for Excellence. This important exercise has involved wide-ranging consultation with staff, pupils and parents and has resulted in a clear plan for improving the curriculum over the next few years. Staff need to monitor these improvements carefully to ensure an appropriate pace of change. The school needs to develop its positive work with its associated primary schools to enable young people at S1 to build successfully on their earlier learning. The curriculum from S4 to S6 offers a varied range of progression pathways for young people to meet their individual needs, including one- and two-year programmes of study. From S4 to S6, the curriculum has an important focus on supporting young people in their transitions beyond school. This includes developing young people's financial awareness, providing work experience and enhancing their enterprise and employability skills. The school also provides a well-targeted employability programme in partnership with Forth Valley College as well as Skills for Work courses. The school has a broad range of partners engaged in supporting and delivering aspects of learning. The headteacher is aware of the need to involve partners further in developing and delivering the curriculum.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The headteacher is committed to involving all staff in improving the school. She has a clear picture of the strengths of the school and the aspects of its performance which

need to improve. Staff are enthusiastic and willingly lead a range of activities and working groups to contribute to improvement. They are extremely positive about their Teaching Learning Communities which are helping them share the school's good practice in learning and teaching. The school uses a range of approaches in evaluating and improving its work. These include a detailed analysis of examination results, 'learning visits' and peer observations where staff observe others' teaching with a view to sharing good practice. These approaches are not yet used consistently across the school and have not always been successful in improving learning and teaching where necessary. Staff would benefit from collaboration with other schools and partners in self-evaluation activities, and in sharing an understanding of standards and quality. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and is highly respected in the school, among parents and the wider community. Under her leadership, supported by her senior managers, the school has already improved and has a very strong capacity for further improvement.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- The purposeful work ethic of staff and young people across the school.
- Young people's pride and sense of identity in their school, and their enthusiasm for learning and contributing to their community.
- The positive, respectful and productive relationships between and among young people and staff.
- The high quality of support which all staff provide for young people, with help from partners.
- The personalised and flexible approach to providing a suitable curriculum for young people from S4 to S6.
- The headteacher's leadership of improvement.

We discussed with staff and Clackmannanshire Council how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Improve the impact of self-evaluation on school improvement and young people's learning experience.
- Further build on partnership working to improve collaboration across the learning community and outcomes for young people.
- Continue to develop the curriculum to ensure that all young people have suitable opportunities to progress and achieve in line with Curriculum for Excellence.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, Clackmannanshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Mary Hoey
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/AlvaAcademyClackmannanshire.asp>

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *How good is our school?*¹.

Here are the evaluations for Alva Academy.

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/AlvaAcademyClackmannanshire.asp>

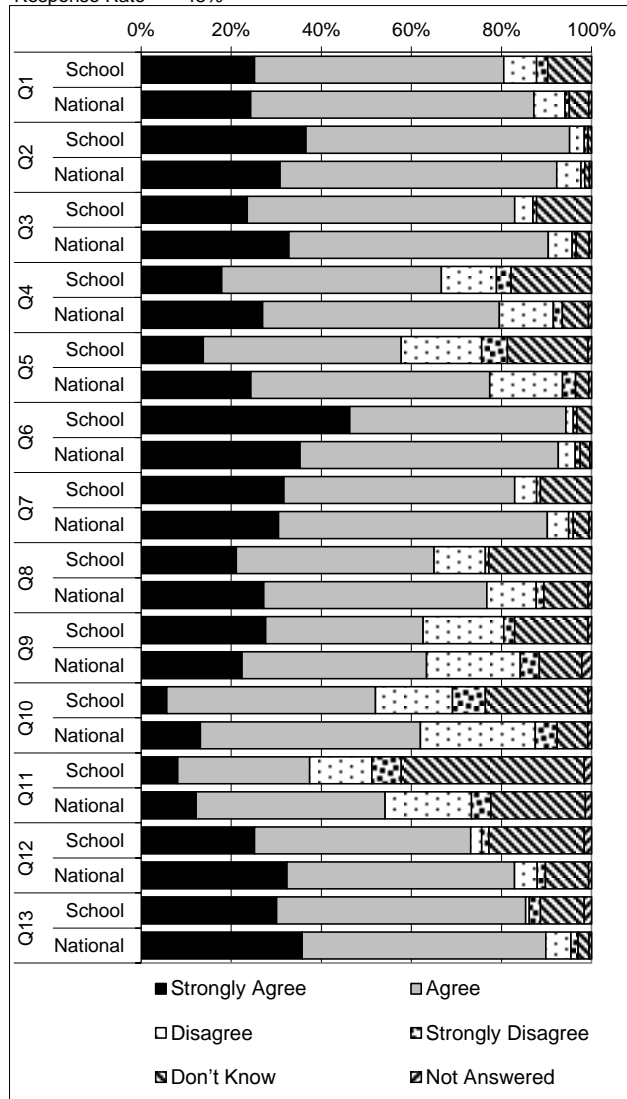
¹ *How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence: part 3*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf. Please note that the term "adequate" in the document has been replaced with "satisfactory".

A sample of parents, children and young people, and all members of staff were invited to give their views of the school using a pre-inspection questionnaire. Their views informed the inspection process, including the nature of discussions in a number of meetings. Strengths and issues identified were explored by the inspection team, and the findings are included in the inspection report. The following information gives the statistical detail from those that returned questionnaires.

Parent Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name Alva Academy
 SEED Number 5702836
 Quest. Issued 256
 Quest. Input 123
 Response Rate 48%

Appendix 3

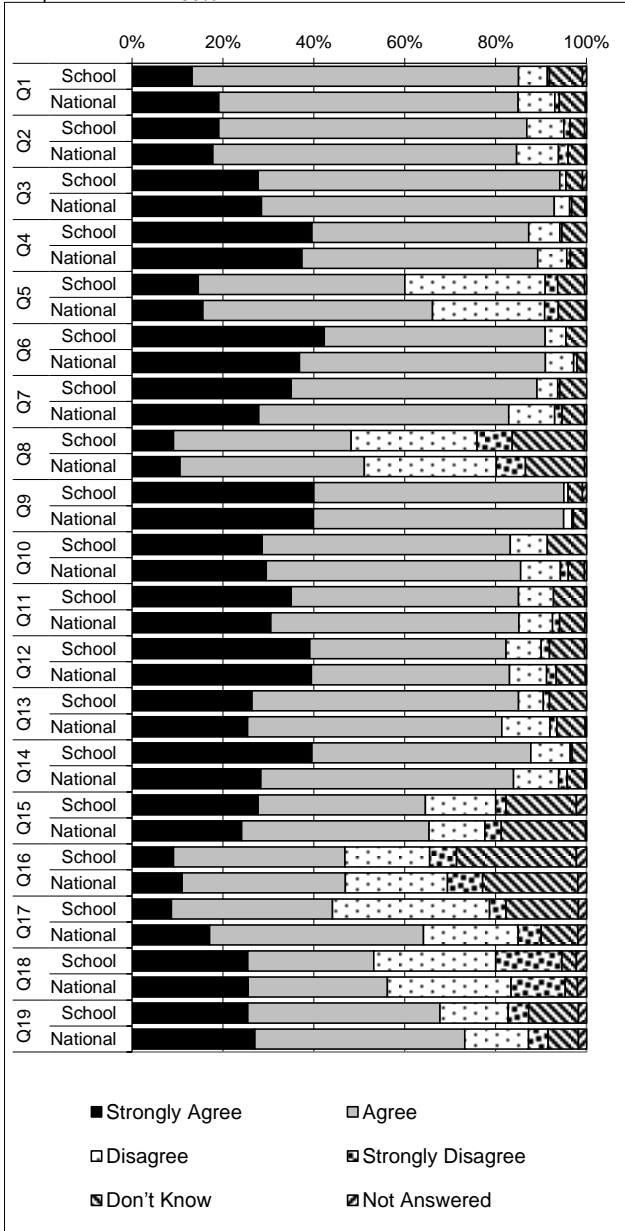


		Percentage %							
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Agree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
Q1	The school helps my child to be more confident.	25%	55%	7%	2%	10%	0%	80%	10%
Q2	My child enjoys learning at school.	37%	59%	3%	1%	1%	0%	95%	4%
Q3	My child's learning is progressing well.	24%	59%	4%	1%	12%	0%	83%	5%
Q4	My child is encouraged and stretched to work to the best of their ability.	18%	49%	12%	3%	18%	0%	67%	15%
Q5	The school keeps me well informed about my child's progress.	14%	44%	18%	6%	18%	1%	58%	24%
Q6	My child feels safe at school.	46%	48%	2%	1%	3%	0%	94%	2%
Q7	My child is treated fairly at school.	32%	51%	5%	1%	11%	0%	83%	6%
Q8	I feel staff really know my child as an individual and support them well.	21%	44%	11%	1%	23%	0%	65%	12%
Q9	My child benefits from school clubs and activities provided outside the classroom.	28%	35%	18%	2%	16%	1%	63%	20%
Q10	The school asks for my views.	6%	46%	17%	7%	23%	1%	52%	24%
Q11	The school takes my views into account.	8%	29%	14%	7%	41%	2%	37%	20%
Q12	The school is well led.	25%	48%	2%	2%	21%	2%	73%	4%
Q13	Overall, I am happy with the school.	30%	55%	1%	2%	10%	2%	85%	3%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

Pupil Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name Alva Academy
 SEED Number 5702836
 Quest. Issued 256
 Quest. Input 220
 Response Rate 86%

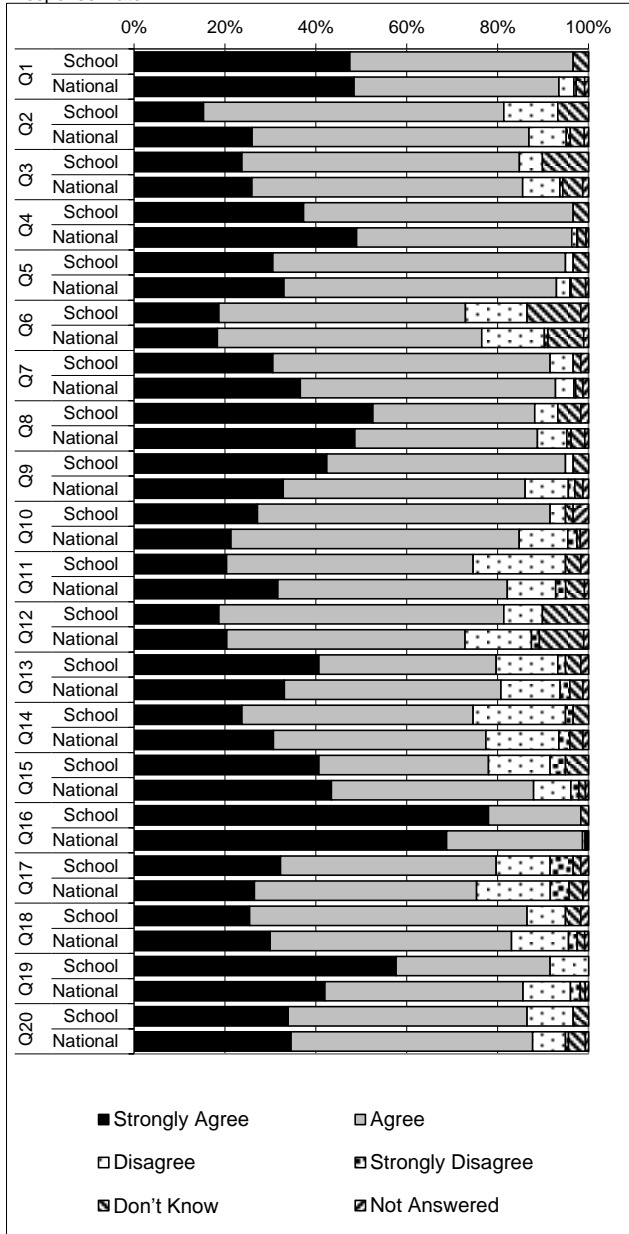


		Percentage %							
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Agree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
Q1	School	13%	72%	6%	0%	7%	1%	85%	7%
	National	19%	68%	8%	1%	3%	0%	87%	10%
Q2	School	28%	66%	1%	0%	4%	1%	94%	1%
	National	40%	48%	7%	0%	5%	0%	87%	7%
Q3	School	15%	45%	31%	3%	6%	0%	60%	34%
	National	42%	49%	5%	0%	5%	0%	91%	5%
Q4	School	35%	54%	5%	0%	6%	0%	89%	5%
	National	9%	39%	28%	8%	16%	0%	48%	35%
Q5	School	40%	55%	1%	0%	3%	1%	95%	1%
	National	29%	55%	8%	0%	9%	0%	83%	8%
Q6	School	35%	50%	8%	0%	7%	0%	85%	8%
	National	39%	43%	8%	2%	8%	0%	82%	10%
Q7	School	26%	59%	5%	1%	8%	0%	85%	7%
	National	40%	48%	9%	0%	3%	0%	88%	9%
Q8	School	28%	37%	15%	2%	15%	2%	65%	18%
	National	9%	38%	19%	6%	26%	2%	47%	25%
Q9	School	9%	35%	35%	4%	16%	2%	44%	38%
	National	25%	28%	27%	15%	3%	2%	53%	41%
Q10	School	25%	42%	15%	5%	11%	2%	68%	20%
	National								
Q11	School								
	National								
Q12	School								
	National								
Q13	School								
	National								
Q14	School								
	National								
Q15	School								
	National								
Q16	School								
	National								
Q17	School								
	National								
Q18	School								
	National								
Q19	School								
	National								

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

Teacher Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name Alva Academy
 SEED Number 5702836
 Quest. Issued 90
 Quest. Input 59
 Response Rate 66%



		Percentage %							
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Agree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
Q1	Staff regularly discuss how to improve achievement for all pupils at both stage and whole-school level.	47%	49%	0%	0%	3%	0%	97%	0%
Q2	All pupils are given activities which meet their learning needs.	15%	66%	12%	0%	7%	0%	81%	12%
Q3	Pupils are involved in setting learning targets.	24%	61%	5%	0%	10%	0%	85%	5%
Q4	Pupils are provided with regular feedback on what they need to do to improve.	37%	59%	0%	0%	3%	0%	97%	0%
Q5	Pupils are provided with opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others.	31%	64%	2%	0%	3%	0%	95%	2%
Q6	Staff regularly ask for pupils' views on how their learning experiences could be improved.	19%	54%	14%	0%	12%	2%	73%	14%
Q7	Pupils take an active part in their learning.	31%	61%	5%	0%	2%	2%	92%	5%
Q8	Staff treat all pupils equally.	53%	36%	5%	0%	5%	2%	88%	5%
Q9	Staff and pupils respect each other.	42%	53%	2%	0%	3%	0%	95%	2%
Q10	The pupils are well behaved.	27%	64%	3%	0%	2%	3%	92%	3%
Q11	Support for pupils with additional support needs is effective.	20%	54%	20%	0%	3%	2%	75%	20%
Q12	Parents are fully involved in the school and their children's learning.	19%	63%	8%	0%	10%	0%	81%	8%
Q13	I have been actively involved in developing the school's vision and values.	41%	39%	14%	2%	3%	2%	80%	15%
Q14	I am actively involved in setting priorities to improve the school.	24%	51%	20%	2%	3%	0%	75%	22%
Q15	I have regular opportunities to help shape the curriculum by having staff discussions and working groups.	41%	37%	14%	3%	5%	0%	78%	17%
Q16	I am aware of the school's procedures for protecting children.	78%	20%	0%	0%	2%	0%	98%	0%
Q17	Leadership at all levels is effective.	32%	47%	12%	5%	2%	2%	80%	17%
Q18	Staff communicate effectively with each other.	25%	61%	8%	0%	3%	2%	86%	8%
Q19	I have good opportunities to take part in continuing professional development.	58%	34%	8%	0%	0%	0%	92%	8%
Q20	Staff across the school share good practice.	34%	53%	10%	0%	3%	0%	86%	10%

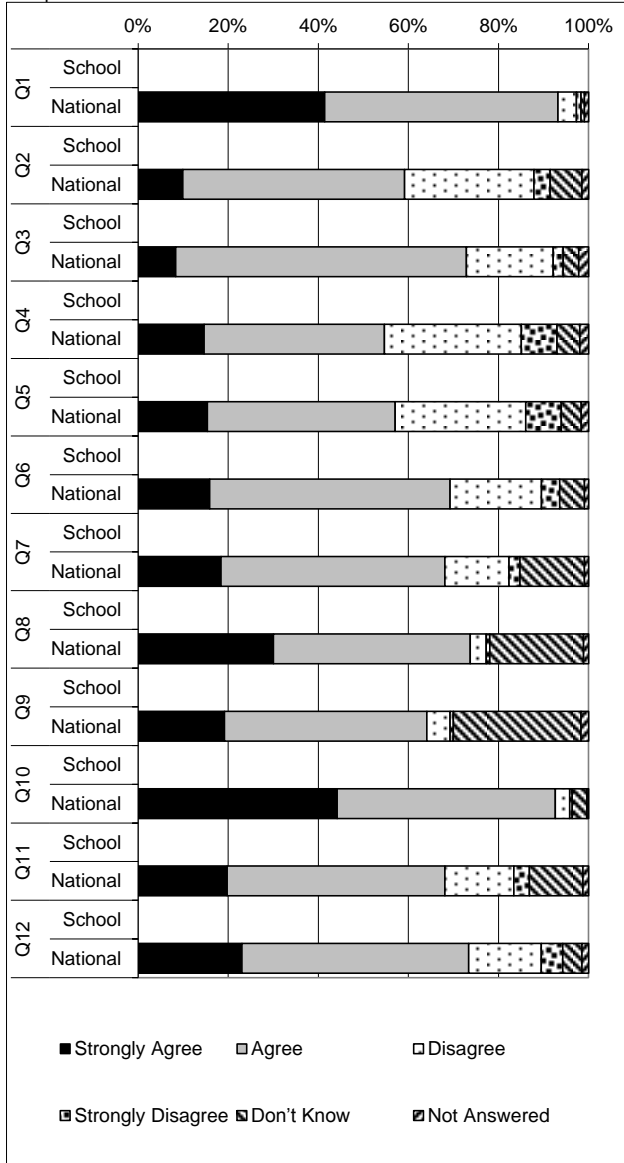
Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

DISCLOSURE CONTROL APPLIED

Non-Teaching Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name Alva Academy
 SEED Number 5702836
 Quest. Issued 20
 Quest. Input 6
 Response Rate 30%

Fewer than 10 responses received therefore the data has not been published.



		Percentage %							
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Agree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
Q1	I have access to the information I need to carry out my work.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q2	All staff and pupils respect each other.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q3	Pupils are well behaved.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q4	I am involved in staff discussions about how to achieve school priorities.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q5	I have good opportunities to be involved in making decisions.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q6	Staff communicate effectively with each other.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q7	Staff treat all pupils equally.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q8	Support for pupils with additional support needs is effective.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q9	Parents are fully involved in the school and their children's learning.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q10	I am aware of the school's procedures for protecting children.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q11	Leadership at all levels is effective.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q12	I have good opportunities to take part in training activities.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

DISCLOSURE CONTROL APPLIED

Additional inspection evidence

Selected attainment information

Inspectors use this information together with a wide range of other information gathered during the inspection to evaluate and report on young people's overall achievement. It helps inspectors and schools to understand how successful young people are in SQA qualifications compared to young people nationally and to those in other schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds¹. However, this is only one aspect of young people's achievement, and it is only by blending these results with a wide range of other information, including achievement in the four capacities of curriculum for excellence², the quality of learning in lessons and other activities, the impact of the curriculum, and the extent to which learning needs are being met, that a well-informed evaluation of achievement can be made. You can find this evaluation of young people's overall achievement in the report on the school, published on this website.

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:

7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C

6: Higher at A-C

5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2

4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4

3: Access 3 Cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6

Percentage of relevant S4 roll gaining awards by end of S4

		2011	2012	2013 ³
English and Mathematics @ Level 3	Alva Academy	96	99	101
	Comparator schools ¹	94	94	95
	National	93	93	94
5+ @ Level 3 or better	Alva Academy	98	101	102
	Comparator schools	93	94	96
	National	92	93	94
5+ @ Level 4 or better	Alva Academy	94	91	95
	Comparator schools	81	81	84
	National	78	79	80
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Alva Academy	51	41	42
	Comparator schools	36	37	39
	National	36	36	37

Percentage of relevant S4 roll gaining awards by end of S5

		2011	2012	2013 ³
5+ @ Level 4 or better	Alva Academy	88	94	93
	Comparator schools ¹	84	85	85
	National	80	81	82
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Alva Academy	58	72	57
	Comparator schools	53	53	52
	National	49	51	52
1+ @ Level 6 or better	Alva Academy	55	69	52
	Comparator schools	46	47	46
	National	43	45	47
3+ @ Level 6 or better	Alva Academy	31	35	30
	Comparator schools	27	27	27
	National	25	26	27
5+ @ Level 6 or better	Alva Academy	9	15	12
	Comparator schools	12	12	12
	National	11	12	13

Percentage of relevant S4 roll gaining awards by end of S6

		2011	2012	2013 ³
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Alva Academy	59	62	76
	Comparator schools ¹	54	57	58
	National	50	53	55
1+ @ Level 6 or better	Alva Academy	57	62	74
	Comparator schools	50	53	54
	National	47	50	52
3+ @ Level 6 or better	Alva Academy	40	45	50
	Comparator schools	35	37	38
	National	33	35	37
5+ @ Level 6 or better	Alva Academy	23	28	31
	Comparator schools	24	25	25
	National	22	24	26
1+ @ Level 7 or better	Alva Academy	26	29	27
	Comparator schools	15	16	16
	National	15	16	16

More attainment information and other statistics for this school can be found on the Scottish Schools Online Website <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/scottishschoolsonline/>

¹ The comparator schools taken into account in HMIE's evaluations are those schools (up to 20) which are statistically close enough to the school in terms of the key characteristics of the school population.

² The four capacities are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors.

³ 2013 Pre Appeal