

"Working together to inspire learning and achievement in Highland Communities"



Standards and Quality Report

The Highland Council
Education, Culture and Sport Service

Tain Royal Academy
October 2015

Our school vision, values and aims

School vision, values and aims were revised in 2014 by staff, pupils and parent council.

School Vision statement

" Raising attainment for all"

School VALUES

- Respect
- Integrity
- Compassion
- Relationships/Community/Cooperation

OUR AIMS

The needs of the individual will be at the centre of everything we do.

To achieve this:

- We will design courses, homework and extra-curricular opportunities in such a way as to encourage learners to develop their full potential.
- We will measure progress, make learners aware of how well they are learning, and give special help to those who need it.
- We will offer courses suited to individual needs.
- We will raise attainment by setting appropriate individual targets for all learners.
- We will encourage everyone to develop helpful relationships with one another.
- We will apply a fair and consistent behaviour policy to promote the wellbeing for all.
- We will encourage a partnership between school and home.
- We will develop the concept of a community school, by encouraging public use of available facilities, and promoting contacts within the local community and with outside agencies.
- We will encourage staff to develop their full potential by offering opportunities for staff development.
- We will seek to create a school for the community, where individuals respect and care for each other, a place where everyone feels valued, happy, safe and successful.
- We will offer a variety of opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and their wider community.

In so doing, we will prepare our students to take their place in the modern world.

Our Key Strengths

Pupils benefit from very positive relationships between staff and pupils.

Pupils feel safe and most pupils are happy and get on well together.

All staff continue to be committed to raising attainment and achievement for all by consolidating good practice and further develop identified areas for improvement.

Enrichment of learning experiences which improves the confidence of pupils to develop skills that will help them in later life.

Our Priorities For Improvement

Continue to raise attainment through review and development of School Improvement Plan with clear focus on:

- Develop a collegiate approach to Learning and Teaching with a clear focus on pace and challenge, differentiation, personalisation and choice.
- Continue to develop a robust system of monitoring and tracking to ensure close monitoring of progress in Broad General Education (S1-S3) and Senior Phase (S4-5-6).
- Review of Curricular rationale to inform course choices and timetable structure to maximise educational gains and meet learners' needs.

In addition we will:

- Develop leadership opportunities and responsibilities for pupils and staff
- Further develop pupil and parental engagement in the life of the school

The Core Areas of our Practice

This report summarises the strengths of our school and what needs to improve further. We gather this information throughout the year in a variety of ways so we can make sure our report is as accurate as possible. The report also takes into consideration the Inspection report May 2015 carried out by the Highland Council Quality Improvement Team in conjunction with HMI. We take time to compare what we do with national examples of best practice. We visit each other's classes to share standards in learning and teaching. We look at young people's work to see how they are progressing. We cross mark work. We make use of factual data and information including attainment results, responding and adapting our teaching in line with children's needs. We assess using our own expertise, standardised testing, cross marking and results tracking. Children peer assess and self-assess. We gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We use all of this information to arrive at our view of the quality of education we provide.

1. How well do young people learn and achieve?

1.1 Improvements in performance

(Virtual comparator school: The virtual comparator is made up of pupils from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the pupils in our school. It allows us to see how the performance of our pupils compares with a similar group of pupils from across Scotland).

Pupils' attainment improved in 2014 and the school has spent a good deal of time analysing data to help to make sure that this improvement continues. In S4 pupils generally do better in exams than pupils with similar backgrounds in other parts of Scotland. In some subjects this improvement is being carried forward into S5 and S6.

When pupils leave the school, an increasing percentage move on to positive destinations, such as college, university, employment or training. The percentage of pupils moving on to positive destinations is higher than the average figures for Highland and for Scotland as a whole.

Attainment by the end of S6

Improvement in attainment is noted for 80% of the cohort performing above or in line with virtual comparator school. The attainment for pupils from most deprived areas is significantly above the virtual comparator school.

However results in the top 20% attainment cohorts show an underperformance in comparison with the virtual comparator school.

Attainment by the end of S5

Results show that the highest 20% attainment cohort are performing above our virtual comparator school.

Notable achievement includes one pupil achieving five grade A Higher awards. Another two S5 pupils achieved five Highers with 4 at grade A and 1 at grade B.

There is a slight increase in pupils achieving 4 or more Higher awards in comparison with 2014-2015.

Attainment results by the end of S4

Overall attainment results show that the school is underperforming in comparison with our virtual comparator school. However, exceptional achievement includes five pupils achieving seven grade A National 5 awards, 3 pupils 6 grade A National 5 awards and 3 pupils achieving 5 grade A National 5 awards. This results in over 10% of the cohort having achieved 6 grade A awards at National 5 and approximately 14% achieving 5 grade A awards.

Standards of Literacy are above the virtual comparator school, in particular for pupils from most deprived areas.

There is an increase of pupils achieving 3 or more awards at National 4 and National 5 level in comparison with 2014-2015

Improvements targets for 2015-2016

Continue to raise attainment of all learners by:

- Continue to improve the rigour and impact of monitoring and tracking attainment systems across the school - designed to track pupil progress and address underachievement as it arises: making meaningful use of learning conversations, performance data, target setting, etc.
- Develop whole-school system to set targets, track and monitor individual progress in the Broad General Education.
- Continue to support learners in taking more responsibility for their own learning through assertive mentoring in the Senior Phase and skills-oriented mentoring in the Broad General Education Phase.
- Continue to raise attainment through a robust self-evaluation for improvement culture becoming embedded across the school.
- Create opportunities for pupils (pupil views) to reflect on the quality of learning and teaching with a view to providing feedback to staff.
- Explore opportunities for parents' engagement in the review of learning and teaching across the school.

1.2 Learners' experiences

Opportunities for Personal Achievement

Our young people achieve through the provision of an extensive range of opportunities to learn and develop their skills in a range of contexts, such as Sports, Drama Youth Club, Music (Gizzen Briggs), Debating, STEM Club, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Youth Philanthropy Initiative, Youth Achievement Awards, Dynamic Achievement Awards, Saltire Awards, Lord-Lieutenant Awards scheme. A strong link with Highlife Highland as a partner enables our staff and pupils to work together to ensure appropriate accreditation for activities carried out beyond the classroom.

With regards to Gaidhlig education the following opportunities were offered to pupils:

- Gaelic drama group performed at Eden Court Drama festival September 2014
- National Gaelic debate in Stornoway November 2014
- S2/3 attended Gaelic Careers event in Eden Court November 2014
- Film-G short film competition December 2014
- S4/5/6 talk from Bòrd na Gàidhlig about Gaelic careers May 2015
- S1/2 talk from Gaelic author Donald Murray May 2015
- 2 Gaelic folk groups participated at the Inverness Mod June 2015
- S4/5/6 Trip to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Gaelic college June 2015
- Gaelic drama group performed play at Eden Court September 2015
- Gaelic Bookbugs – 2 pupils the first Wednesday of every month assist with the Gaelic bookbugs group for toddlers at the public library
- 2 Pupils participated in the national Gaelic debate and reached the final round at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh

An overview of outstanding achievements

- Pupils' achievements in Sport and other areas have been outstanding with many successes at local and national level in: Football, Athletics, Cross Country Running, Cycling, Swimming, Scottish Dancing, Archery
- Gizzen Briggs, our traditional fiddle-led music group has gone from strength to strength over the past 20 years.
- PE department gained Bronze School Sport Award endorsed by SportScotland. This bronze award formally recognises a school's achievement in putting quality physical education and school sport at the heart of their planning, practice and ethos. The award will also highlight and celebrate successful physical education and school sport models across Scotland.

In partnership with Highlife Highland Youth Services following wider achievements have been awarded

- 2 pupils received Summit Saltire Awards for volunteering which is a huge achievement considering there are only 5 young people who received this award in Highlands. One of the pupils has been asked to become the Saltire Award Ambassador for the Ross-Shire area.
- 12 pupils received Saltire certificates with 3 pupils at 'Approach' level and 7 pupils at 'Ascent' level. Currently there are 135 pupils signed up for the Saltire Awards.
- 1 pupil was the runner-up for the Lord-Lieutenant Award for helping others, the YPI group received the group award and 22 pupils received Lord-Lieutenant commended certificates for their achievement in sports.
- Two Bronze Duke of Edinburgh awards were completed with 14 pupils having done their Bronze Award Expedition.
- 53 Youth Achievement Award were completed and awarded

Achievement is promoted, tracked, recognised and celebrated through positive referrals, assemblies, screen displays, newsletters, facebook/twitter, local press. Our Annual Awards Ceremony allows parents and carers an opportunity to celebrate a wide range of pupil achievements.

There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles. Our senior pupils have leadership opportunities through our buddy system in which they assist in the learning experiences of S1 pupils. In addition the positions of school captains, S6 leadership team and our prefect system allow senior pupils to take responsibilities in a variety of initiatives which involves the whole school community.

Two S5 pupils were chosen to take on a role of Young Ambassador for Tain Royal Academy. They lead a team of 8 S4 pupils who have gone through the LEAD programme. Together they have worked hard to encourage participation and promoted the positive values of school sport. There is a representation of all year groups in the Pupil Council.

Citizenship

Our pupils are given many opportunities to deepen their knowledge and develop their skills in and outwith the school. International Learning experiences enable pupils to view themselves as global citizens: Paris Trip (S3), Malawi Link, Belgium Battlefields trip (S4), etc.

Citizenship is also developed through the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (S2) and projects within the community such as Intergenerational work on ICT skills, supporting community council, etc.

This session the school has achieved the Foundation International School Award endorsed by the British Council for outstanding work on global citizenship.

S3 Gaelic in Canada topic in which pupils have pen pals with a school in Cape Breton, Canada.

Improvement targets for 2015-2016

- Wider Achievement: monitor, track, identify opportunities/gaps and recognise wider achievement
- Continue to pursue all opportunities to recognise wider achievement in partnership with Highlife Highland and other partners.
- Seek more opportunities to promote leadership and citizenship enabling young people to develop their social skills.
- Work towards gaining Intermediate International School Award.

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

5.1 The Curriculum

Our school works in a 31 period per week plus 5 minutes registration class every morning. Year Group Assemblies are held once per week.

Our curriculum has a clearly stated rationale based on improving attainment, and maintaining a breadth of experiences for young people. To ensure articulation between Broad General Education and Senior Phase the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence are embedded from S1 to S3, allowing for specialisation in S3 and further progression to National Qualifications in Senior Phase.

The S3 course maintains breadth while giving young people a choice of subjects within five curricular areas, along with English, Mathematics, Science, Modern Languages, PE, RME, and PSE.

The S4 course allows pupils a free choice of six subjects, with the intention that these will be studied in depth and lead to better attainment, matching the school's rationale. Young people will also be able to pick up new courses in S4, thus giving flexible progression pathways.

In the S5/S6 curriculum young people study five subjects and this allows for a wide range of progression routes to Advanced Higher.

We offer Gaidhlig medium education in our curriculum in Broad General Education and Senior Phase (National 4, 5 and Highers). Gaidhlig is also offered in Hospitality.

29 pupils attended North Highland or Inverness College one day per week. Courses include: Higher Psychology, Early Education and Childcare, Skills for Work Hospitality, Skills for Work Construction, Fabrication and Welding and Uniformed and Emergency Services.

12 pupils were on extended work placements including: Primary Schools, Nurseries, Care Home, Architect, Accountant and Fujitsu.

To help primary secondary transition staff work with Mathematics, English and Science lessons in P7 to improve mutual understanding. Supported transitions for young people with additional support needs, are happening throughout the year. P7 have a 3 day visit to their S1 classes, and a buddy system in S1, which supports their entry to secondary school.

Improvement Targets for 2015-2016

- Review and further develop Curriculum Rationale in line with Developing Scotland's Young Workforce report.
- Review Broad General Education curricular plans and framework ensuring smooth progression from third and fourth level experiences and outcomes to unit outcome for National 4 and National 5 programmes of work.
- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with national and authority guidance.

5.3 Meeting Learning Needs

Classroom observations undertaken by the Senior Management Team indicate that learners have increasing opportunities to undertake tasks and activities appropriate to their needs although this remains a target for continuing improvement. In best practice observed, learning tasks were open ended, collaborative learning activities were provided and teachers were more actively involving learners in identifying their strengths and next steps in learning. We will however continue to increase the level of challenge for all learners and develop higher order thinking skills and continue to work to support young people to take more responsibility for their own learning at all stages.

The school is well supported by our Support for Learning Team of 3.6 classroom teachers and 12 Pupil Support Assistants. Our most vulnerable young people are monitored closely by their named key teacher to ensure they achieve their best. In 2014-2015 approximately 160 pupils had a recorded additional support need covering all aspects of potential barriers to learning and 12 pupils were Looked After and Accommodated.

As well as supporting all young people with an Additional Support Need the team also:

- Provide support plans that are developed in conjunction with pupils and their parents.
- Provide pupil profiles with individual pupil detail and strategies for staff to support those young people
- Provide and coordinate readers and scribes for prelim and SQA exams, and class assessments as required, for pupils who have this entitlement.
- Provide lunchtime and interval support for vulnerable young people.
- Offer extensive support, advice and consultation for all teaching staff on supporting pupils with Additional Support Needs
- Deliver CPD to staff on a range of barriers to learning/ASN

Staff in our school work with parents/carers and all relevant partner agencies to ensure potentially vulnerable young people are supported appropriately at all transition stages. Partner agencies include: Psychological Services, Social Services, CAMHS, School Nurse, Youth Development Officer, Active Schools Coordinator, Youth Action Team, Police Liaison Officer, Skills Development Scotland, ASN outreach, Children's Reporter, etc.

Our current practice in developing Individual Education Plans, Coordinated Support Plans, GIRFEC are in line with legislative requirements and Council procedures.

Improvement targets for 2015-2016

- Further develop Personal Support Provision as Universal Support for all pupils.
- Faculties to ensure consistent learners' experiences for pupils with a focus on improving challenge and pace for all.
- Learning Conversations between pupils and their teachers should be consistently focused on helping young people understand what next steps they need to make in their learning.
- Continue to develop systems to track and profile the achievements and next steps of learners in the Broad General Education
- Improve the identification of learners' needs and early intervention through closer monitoring of the progress of individual learners via electronic reporting by classroom teachers next session.

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

5.9 Improvements through self-evaluation

All staff in our school demonstrate a commitment to self-evaluation for school improvement.

With a view to ensuring a systematic approach to self-evaluation for school improvement (SISE) a whole-school calendar of self-evaluation activities has been agreed and will be kept under annual review. This series of activities includes a rolling programme of classroom learning visits, evaluative reports on pupils' work, moderation activities, quality assurance of reporting, etc.

Line-managers meet with Faculty Leaders at least twice per year to discuss the analysis of performance data and review agreed departmental improvement plans.

Departmental Standards and Quality reports as an audit document were introduced last session. These evaluative reports are produced twice per year.

Classroom learning visits focused on QI 2.1 Learners' Experiences with a focus on Challenge and Pace. Through the use of collegiate time all teachers were engaged in reviewing current practice and sharing good practice. All visits were written up and followed up with a professional dialogue. When concerns arose a further visit took place.

All pupil reports have been quality assured by PT's/Faculty Leaders, Guidance and SMT before being issued to Parents.

All teaching staff are committed to and engaged in Continuous Professional Development throughout their teaching career:

- Many staff have attended a variety of in-service courses run by the Highland Council and other outside bodies. As a school we see the impact that these learning opportunities are giving to our staff and in turn our pupils.
- Bringing an expertise in understanding standards, many teaching staff are SQA markers, verifiers and assessors including a nominee.
- Two members of staff are involved in subject working groups set up by the authority.

Improvement targets for 2015-2016

- Involve Young people even more in evaluating the work of the school and ensure feedback is provided.
- Continue to develop the school's self-evaluation structure to ensure that it is rigorous, systematic and transparent.
- Develop a variety of ways for taking account of stakeholder views: parents, learners and staff.