

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



Standards and Quality Report Dingwall Academy



The Highland Council
Education, Culture and Sport Service

Session 2011 2012

Our school vision and values

A school with a sense of community – a school, where by taking a collective responsibility, pupils and staff have the opportunity to achieve extraordinary things.

*The values of the school are Respect, Responsibility, Honesty
S1 and S2 pupils have still to choose the 4th and final aim.*

The aims of the school are to provide pupils with the opportunities and experiences that will allow them to develop the four capacities of a curriculum for excellence.

- Successful Learners
- Confident Individuals
- Responsible Citizens
- Effective Contributors

Our Key Strengths

- **Strong and positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents.**
- **Curriculum provision – particularly the range of alternative opportunities available through partnership agreements.**
- **Attainment across the school, particularly at Higher Level.**
- **Quality of support provision and the inclusive culture of the school.**
- **Staff willingness to engage with new Learning & Teaching initiatives.**
- **The commitment of staff to move forward with Curriculum for Excellence**

Our Priorities For Improvement

- **A more strategic approach to self evaluation and improvement.**
- **Review of behaviour code and positive reward scheme.**
- **Audit of support provision including tutor time.**

- **Further implementation of Curriculum for Excellence – this will include**
More opportunity for sharing good practice based on Highland Learning & Teaching Policy
Sharing of assessment standards and further development of Aifl Strategies.
Development of *e profiles in S1 and S2*
Use of e1 for reporting, monitoring and tracking

The Core Areas of our Practice

This report summarises the strengths of our school and what needs to improve. We gather this information throughout the year in a variety of ways so we can make sure our report is as accurate as possible. We reflect on the progress we have made with our improvement priorities. We take time to compare what we do with national examples of best practice. We visit each others' classes to share standards in learning and teaching. We look at children and young people's work to see how they are progressing. We make use of a range of data and information including attainment results. 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.

Improvements through self-evaluation

What we do well:

Staff support each other well and staff consider SMT to be approachable. Probationer staff and new staff are well supported. A number of staff have taken part in the Tapestry Initiative and this has encouraged them to take a more evaluative approach to their practice. In-service days have been used to share good practice and to encourage more professional dialogue. STACs reviews are carried out on an annual basis giving staff the opportunity to discuss examination results. Pupils have been given the opportunity to inform change through the pupil council – a priority last session was a review of the school dress code. S1 and S2 pupils were given the opportunity to evaluate their experiences in the new Interdisciplinary courses. Staff and pupils were given the opportunity to comment on the introduction of the 33 period week

What we need to work on:

SMT need to demonstrate a more strategic approach to self evaluation and to demonstrate a commitment to the process. A planned programme linking self evaluation to improvement should be published and made available to all stakeholders. This programme should include classroom observations and Staff Development and Review. The process for Self Evaluation and Review needs to be seen as a continuous cycle. Staff and parents need to be given more opportunity to inform school improvement. Training needs to be provided for all staff on the use of performance indicators and gathering evidence. Self Evaluation should be apparent in all areas of the school and should be recognised as a positive and constructive process.

Improvements in performance

What we do well:

In S4 the number of pupils achieving 5+ level 3 and level 4 showed the highest performance for 5 years. There was a slight decline in the number of S4 pupils achieving 5+ level 5. The number of pupils in S5 achieving 5+ level 6 was the highest in the last 5 years with 28 pupils achieving 5 Highers. By the end of S6 the number of pupils performing well at level 6 is good. There are particular strengths in Int 2 History, Engineering, Hospitality, PE and Higher Art & Design, Chemistry, English, Geography, Graphic Communication, Human Biology and Modern Studies. Areas for improvement include Higher French, Mathematics, Music and Philosophy. The overall quality of the learners, achievements is very good – there are an increasing number of extra curricular clubs including Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Lego Club, School Sport teams, Chess Club, Gardeners Club. In S1, pupils were given the opportunity to record their wider achievements on a pupil profile.

What we need to work on:

Curriculum design must reflect the need to provide alternative opportunities for a number of pupils. The process for monitoring and tracking pupils' performance needs to be formalised. The system for monitoring and tracking pupils' performance must also be able to records pupils' wider achievements – both in school and in the community. Pupil successes need to shared regularly with parents and the wider community. There needs to be a more systematic approach to STACs analysis and where underperformance is identified action points put in place.

Learners' experiences

What we do well:

Nearly all learners are motivated and keen to do well.

Pupils have the opportunity to experience a range of activities through both the formal curriculum and the wider curriculum. In S1 and S2 pupils now follow a number of interdisciplinary courses and evaluation shows that they value this experience. Pupils have been given more opportunities to experience active learning – particularly in S1 and S2. Pupils in S1 have been given the opportunity to reflect on their learning experiences in relation to the 4 capacities and this was detailed in the S1 end of term report. A small group of S1 pupils starting building an *e profile* using Glow.

Staff were given the opportunity during in-service to reflect on the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence. Learning and Teaching is discussed at SMT, EMT and Departmental Meetings.

Faculty Heads have an overview of pupils' performance and in the upper school there are strategies in place for dealing with areas of concern. PTs Pupil Support have an overview of all pupils in their caseload and work to establish good links with parents.

Pupils have the opportunity to contribute to the life of the school through a number of additional activities including prefects, buddies, extended work experience, pupil council, creative and aesthetic exhibition, school concerts and extra curricular sport. During last session there were a number of successful fund raising events including Red Nose Day and Malawi Awareness Day. We value all achievements and recognise that learning takes place in a variety of environments.

What we need to work on:

The Highland Learning and Teaching Policy needs to become a focus for discussion and reflection. The experiences of those staff involved in the Tapestry and Co-operative Learning initiatives need to be shared with all staff. Staff need to be given more opportunities to discuss good practice and pupils need to be given more opportunities to evaluate their own success in learning.

There needs to be a more consistent approach to the sharing of learning intentions and success criteria at the start of all lessons.

The behaviour policy and positive reward scheme both need to be reviewed.

We need to audit the outcomes and experiences covered in S1 and S2 and to ensure that pupils are developing the skills that will enable them to move onto the senior phase.

Meeting learning needs

What we do well:

We take time to ensure that pupils receive a curriculum appropriate to their needs – much work has been done to extend the range of alternative curriculum provision available to pupils. We have established positive links with outside agencies and partners including Calman Trust and Day One mentoring. Strategies are in place to identify learning needs and information is then communicated to all staff. Pupil Support staff work to establish positive relationships with pupils and parents. The support provided by Auxiliary staff is significant and highly valued.

All Staff have been made aware of GIRFEC procedures and are making increasing use of the system to highlight areas of concern.

The School Liaison Group meetings continue to be strength and provide a real opportunity for a multi agency approach to problems.

At transition times pupils are well supported and we have good links with Skills Development Scotland. A very successful transition week takes place for new S1 pupils during the Summer Holidays.

All pupils are made aware of 16+ Learning Choices and a number of pupils spent one day a week taking part in a 16+ project organised by Youth Workers.

All pupils in S5 and S6 now receive one period of PSE per week and this has allowed Pupil Support staff to provide more regular support to senior pupils. Vertex provided a programme for a number of senior pupils covering employment skills.

Staff have started to share assessment standards and a number of departments have created individual pupil profiles.

The introduction of the Tutor Time in S1 created an additional layer of support and part of this time was used for pupils to reflect on their own progress and learning.

What we need to work on:

We need to ensure that the reporting timetable provides the best opportunities for PTs pupil support, pupils and parents to communicate.

The Tutor Time programme needs to be extended and we need to consider the outcomes and experiences covered during both Tutor Time and PSE time.

Staff need to be given more opportunity to share assessment standards.

The curriculum

What we do well:

We have continued to develop the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence guidance and last session changed to a 33 period week. This enabled the provision of House Tutors for S1, increased Physical Education across the school and the reintroduction of Social Education in the Upper School. In S1 and S2 pupils now follow interdisciplinary courses 2 periods per week and this has also allowed us to introduce a small element of choice. Pupils in S1 experience learning designed around experiences and outcomes. Pupils experience breadth and coherence through eight learning areas rather than a subject approach. The planned classroom experiences provide challenge, relevance and enjoyment along with opportunities to enhance pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Staff have a better understanding of the place of Literacy across the curriculum.

In S1 British Sign Languages was introduced as a language choice and has proved to be very successful. Standard Grade and National Qualification continue to be the basis of the curriculum in S3 – S6. Departments reflect on courses on offer and make changes where required – Social Subjects have introduced Travel & Tourism at Intermediate level and this proved to be a popular choice with pupils. In order to better meet the needs of all our learners the school has continued to increase the range of alternative curriculum opportunities available. This includes partnerships with both Inverness and North Highland College, partnership agreements with local estates and extended work experience with local businesses. A small number of senior pupils followed Open University short courses and some completed courses in partnership with Eden Court Theatre.

We are part of the National BOCSH programme; a self help group on building the curriculum, our new curriculum design will be included in a national publication on curriculum design.

What we need to work on:

Working groups for Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Wellbeing need to have co-ordinated remits that will impact on learning and teaching.

The new S3 curriculum needs to be finalised and time provided for consultation with staff and parents.

Planning for the new senior Phase of a Curriculum for Excellence (due to be implemented from 2013)