

# "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 2012 2013

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## **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 school values are**

**Respect  
Responsibility  
Honesty  
Determination**

**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.**
- **Attainment at Higher Level.**
- **Quality of support provision and the inclusive culture of the school.**
- **Staff willingness to engage with new Learning & Teaching initiatives and in particular the Tapestry and Co-operative Learning initiatives.**
- **The commitment of all to move forward with Curriculum for Excellence.**
- **Quality of reporting to parents.**

## **Our Priorities For Improvement**

- **Further implementation of Curriculum for Excellence with the development of new National 4 and 5 courses a key priority.**
- **Improvement of attainment at S4.**
- **Use of e1 tracking system to monitor pupil progress.**
- **For pupils to be more involved in their own learning.**
- **To establish a school policy on sharing standards.**
- **More opportunity for sharing good practice based on Highland Learning & Teaching Policy**

## 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:

The school community has developed a more strategic approach to self evaluation. During last session all staff were made aware of the value and purpose of self- evaluation. All PTs completed an evaluation of 1.1 and 5.1. All departments are now required to submit a departmental improvement plan, this plan builds on the authority and school improvement plans. As part of the self-evaluation process the authority quality improvement team visited the school. The team observed teachers and met with pupils, parents and staff. Discussion with staff during the QI visit indicated that staff now have a clearer understanding of the purpose of self evaluation.

Staff have together devised a classroom observation sheet and staff are required to undertake 4 classroom observations during the session.

All PTs are asked to complete STACs reviews. The format of reviews has been changed this session to allow PTs to meet in small groups.

#### What we need to work on

Programme for evaluating all 5 QIs to be published.

The system for classroom observation needs reviewed – the system needs to allow for teachers to share standards both across the school and in departments. There needs to be more rigour applied to the process of classroom observation.

Pupils and parents need to be given more opportunity to contribute to self-evaluation.

Staff to be give the opportunity to participate in professional development and review.

### Improvements in performance

#### What we do well:

Higher Results this year were the best since statistics were published with 17% of pupils achieving 5 Highers in S5. In a national context this places us in the top 40% of schools. The number of pupils achieving 5 Highers by the end of S6 rose to 27% and the number of pupils achieving 3 Highers by the end of S6 rose to 41%. There were particularly strong performances in Higher Administration, Higher Art & Design, Higher Geography, Higher Graphic Communication, Higher Information Systems, Higher Human Biology, Higher Mathematics, Higher Physics, Higher Philosophy and Higher Technological Studies.

Pupils in Dingwall Academy have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities and their wider achievements are recognised through assemblies, the school newsletter and e1 monitoring. The parent community have welcomed the introduction of a monthly newsletter. The publication of the newsletter has also helped contributed to a culture of sharing and recognising wider successes.

#### What we need to work on:

Statistics show a declining trend in S4 with 31% of pupils achieving 5 or more subjects at level 5 by the end of S4. This trend needs to be made clear to all PTs during STACs reviews. A formal system for monitoring and tracking pupil progress needs to be established. S4 pupils need to be given the opportunity to discuss and set targets for both their prelims and final SQA exams. Parents need to be given more information to help them support their children in their learning. Targeted support to be given to those departments showing negative values.

## Learners' experiences

### What we do well:

Nearly all learners are motivated and keen to do well.

During last session all staff were made more aware of the Highland Learning Teaching policy and the emphasis it places on active learning. The Highland Learning Teaching Policy was used to help staff devise the classroom observation sheet. The QI visit revealed that in almost all classes there was good classroom management with pupils on task, pupils on the whole were very engaged in their lessons. In class pupils receive feedback in different ways – this can include formative assessment from the teacher but also from self and peer assessment.

S1 and S2 pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on their learning based on the 4 capacities.

During the broad general education pupils are given the opportunity to experience learning in a number of contexts and staff work hard to ensure that pupils find courses motivating and engaging. Departments are making increasing use of outside speakers and off site visits to enrich the learners' experiences. For example, Social Subjects take all S2 pupils to Culloden Battlefield and a number of S1 pupils were given the opportunity to visit an archaeological dig in Dingwall. One group of S1 pupils have started working on an integrated creative and aesthetic course and attended a performance by the Massai Warriors. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a number of school trips and last session this included trips to Paris, Germany and Italy. A number of senior pupils are working with the World Challenge organisation, a successful trip has already taken place to Morocco and next summer another group will embark on an expedition to Malaysia.

Pupils are taking the opportunity to contribute to the life of the school through a number of additional activities including prefects, buddies, extended work experience, pupil council, exhibitions, school concerts, Dingwall Academy Drama Society and extra curricular sport. Younger pupils contribute to the life of the school through some of the interdisciplinary courses – this includes the recycling of paper and the maintenance of the school garden and indoor plants.

Fund Raising is an important part of Dingwall Academy and the school has taken a more co-ordinated approach to fund raising activities. The Teenage Cancer Trust Day is an excellent example of where pupils are given information about the charity and its work – pupils then take a very conscientious approach to the fundraising. A number of senior pupils have taken part in defibrillator training from the *Lucky2bhere* charity and part of the proceeds from the school sponsored walk will be donated to the charity. Fundraising is organised so that it allows pupils to demonstrate the school values respect and responsibility.

### What we need to work on:

The Highland Learning and Teaching Policy needs to become more of a focus for discussion and reflection. 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 still needs to be a more consistent approach to the sharing of learning intentions and success criteria at the start of all lessons.

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

Pupils need to experience quality dialogue and feedback in all lessons.

We need to provide more opportunities for younger pupils to contribute to the wider life of the school and develop their leadership skills.

## Meeting learning needs

### What we do well:

We take time to ensure that where possible, 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. The school is currently establishing new partnership agreements with Morrison Facilities and Conon Bridge Community.

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 QI visit found the relationships between pupils and support staff to be excellent. 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 a 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. All pupils in S5 and S6 receive one period of PSE per week and this has allowed Pupil Support staff to provide more regular support to senior pupils.

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

#### What we need to work on:

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. Work has started on S3 profiles and needs to be finalised.

All staff require an update in Child Protection Training.

The role of the assessment co-ordinator needs to be clarified and a sharing standards policy devised.

There are an increasing number of pupils whose needs are not met by the current curriculum and at times the behaviour of these pupils can have a negative impact on the learning experience of others.

There needs to be clearer targets for pupils working in the autism base.

We need to ensure that there is a system in place for pupils to report concerns about whole school issues.

## The curriculum

#### What we do well:

We have continued to develop the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence guidance. In S1 and S2 pupils follow interdisciplinary courses 2 periods per week and in S3 pupils opt into an extended study programme. The extended study programme includes dance and photography and these courses are proving very popular with pupils.

We have revised the broad general education S1 – S3 to allow pupils to make choices midway during S3. The rationale for the S3 curriculum has also been re-written and staff have welcomed the move towards more challenge and depth. The new curriculum has also been examined at authority level and it is seen as having a clear rationale and meeting many of the requirements of curriculum for excellence.

While this change has been seen as a positive step it is acknowledged that it does place significant additional demands on teaching staff.

In order to better meet the needs of all our learners the school has continued to increase the range of curriculum opportunities available. This includes partnerships with both Inverness and North Highland College, partnership agreements with local estates, Lifescan and extended work experience with local businesses. Partnership agreements are also being developed with Conon Community Council, Pefferside Park and Morrison Facilities.

#### What we need to work on:

Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Wellbeing groups are to provide short policy statements to be added to the Learning & Teaching Policy.

The authority are to provide an updated steer on the broad general education – following the publication of this there will be a decision taken on the format of the S3 curriculum for next year. We need to track the coverage of Es and Os in the broad general education. This must include an evaluation of the S1 and S2 interdisciplinary projects. We need to consider how we can increase the range of options in the creative and aesthetic column.

Once the structure of the broad general education is finalised there must be a focus on senior phase provision.





