

“Working together to inspire  
learning and achievement in  
Highland Communities”



## Standards and Quality Report



### Balnain School

The Highland Council  
Education, Culture and Sport Service  
Inverness West Area

10<sup>th</sup> June 2011

Session 2011-2012

---

#### Our school vision and values

Our vision is to respect and maintain the school's rich historical and social links with the past whilst providing high quality, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning experiences for all its pupils.

#### Balnain School is a place where:

- ⌘ all pupils are valued
- ⌘ a caring attitude is fostered
- ⌘ pupils are prepared for life beyond the school
- ⌘ pupil choice is encouraged
- ⌘ opportunities are made available to all pupils
- ⌘ fitness, health and eco values are very important

*Revised vision and values with staff and Parent Council in September 2010  
Re-evaluation due in 2013*

## Our Key Strengths

- ⌘ Our strong links with the community reinforces the school's importance in Glen Urquhart.
- ⌘ We have provided high quality support for our learners.
- ⌘ Parents and staff are committed to make improvements for learners.
- ⌘ The school promotes pupils' developments in the Expressive Arts.
- ⌘ Eco issues are part of our way of life.
- ⌘ There is a strong pastoral care ethos.

## Our Current Priorities For Improvement

- ⌘ Continue to improve pupils' weak areas in Maths
- ⌘ Develop required ACfE assessment procedures – sharing standards, tracking and profiling
- ⌘ Develop ASG's skills programme in Science

## 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 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 factual 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 in performance

1.1

#### What we do well:

Our strong vision for the school constantly moves it forward with new and innovative projects. Pupils engage in active and mentally challenging opportunities and they are encouraged to achieve their potential in both these fields of learning. Our commitment to improving literacy is high: pupils' experiences of Writer's Craft, Critical Literacy and Reading for Information have been greatly enriched. Our recent Green Flag award gives us confidence to develop new and more complex ideas.. A dedicated staff team meets the needs of the pupils. Almost all pupils are achieving appropriate levels and a few are exceeding expected levels of attainment.

#### What we need to work on:

We need to continue to plug gaps and address pupils' weak areas in Maths. We need to increase our understanding of media devices in supporting learning.

<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<p><b>What we do well:</b> Pupils have a strong sense of identity and allegiance to the school. On the whole, behaviour is very good and pupils speak respectfully to staff and to each other. Pupils have enjoyed their involvement with school committees, making decisions that have made a difference. They are interested in their learning and senior pupils are becoming more experienced in recording their progress in their learning logs. They can now speak more readily about difficulties and successes in their learning. Pupils are good at working in groups. Most of them can work independently. Pupils' confidence increases year by year as we provide challenge in the Expressive Arts and offer real opportunities for pupils to build on prior experiences in performance skills</p> <p><b>What we need to work on:</b> We need to find ways of supporting a few pupils who have difficulty in concentrating and working independently on core subjects.</p>	

<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>5.3</b>
<p><b>What we do well:</b> We are aware of individual pupil needs within the different curricular areas. We targeted these needs by deploying extra Classroom Assistant time to support these pupils in small groups or on a one to one basis. In certain cases, homework is individualised for pupils. Through moderation of work, feedback to assessments etc., we are aware of pupil achievement, and conversely, of any pupil who fails to progress. Pupil choice and suitability of pupil involvement in the expressive arts programme is another key strength.</p> <p><b>What we need to work on:</b> We will need to consider how to maintain this ethos with only 5.5hrs of classroom assistance.</p>	

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<p><b>What we do well:</b> Language subjects - Reading, Writer's Craft, Reading for information, Listening and Talking, Writing are taught well and these have greatly enriched pupils' experiences of literacy. Following diagnostic testing, specific Maths topics were re-visited and strengthened, making pupils more confident. Ideas for curriculum development are planned for the year to ensure wide coverage of skills and interests including active and outdoor learning opportunities eg cycling, gardening, curling, mountain bike training, residential adventurous activities, sewing and watching wildlife. We made a significant contribution to the planning of a skills programme in Science within our ASG.</p> <p><b>What we need to work on:</b> We need to implement the skills programme within our Science plan for session 2011-2012. We need to carry on improving speed and accuracy in the four processes in Maths.</p>	

<b>Improvements through self-evaluation</b>	<b>5.9</b>
<p><b>What we do well:</b> We have agreed on pupil levels of achievement as a starting point for a tracking system. In our annual report to parents, we referred to pupil levels and also described progress in terms of <i>developing, consolidating, secure</i>. We often ask the Parent Council for their views and use parent questionnaires to gauge responses to important issues. We were able to articulate our views and respond to parents about their concerns regarding the delivery of literacy. We evaluate our own teaching on a daily basis and made changes where applicable. Pupils are regularly consulted for their views. We make decisions based on consultation and professional judgements eg changing teaching methods in Maths. Opportunities to develop professional experiences for staff have been taken eg membership of HT Executive, Planning Group, Review of Classroom Support Working Group. We were involved in compiling Standards and Quality reports to parents. We recognise the value of using parent supporters in our practical activities.</p>	

**What we need to work on:**

Planning to cover our need for joint professional dialogue on CAP evenings. We need to improve our understanding of the devolved budget and plan for effective use of our limited financial resources.

## SECTION 2

### SCHOOL USE ONLY

#### A closer look [Balnain School 2011-2012](#)

<b>QI 5.9 Improvements through self-evaluation</b>	<b><u>Key themes</u></b> <b>Commitment to self-evaluation</b> <b>Management of self-evaluation</b> <b>School improvement</b>
Our key strengths are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⌘ having made a start to a school tracking system, with emphasis on the core subjects</li><li>⌘ robust annual reporting to parents using definitive descriptors</li><li>⌘ consulting parents for their opinions and sharing with them our concerns and evaluations of HLP</li></ul> Our required improvements are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⌘ developing a fulsome tracking system</li><li>⌘ planning assessments for the year</li><li>⌘ devising a new way of operating the HLP programme</li></ul>	
Date reviewed: 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2011	

<b>QI 5.1 The Curriculum</b>	<b><u>Key themes</u></b> <b>The development of the curriculum</b> <b>Programmes and courses</b>
Our key strengths are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⌘ provision of rich, engaging tasks for pupils</li><li>⌘ willingness to consult with other schools/staff about learning and teaching</li></ul> Our required improvements are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⌘ developing Health and Well-being tasks for the whole school from the 'Connecting Classrooms' project list</li><li>⌘ planning pupil visits to linked schools to compare and share school experiences</li><li>⌘ linking with a school in Malawi following visit to Ubumwe</li><li>⌘ develop ASG Skills Programme in Science</li><li>⌘ assist in developing an ASG programme for Primary 7 pupils in orienteering and map reading skills</li></ul>	
Date reviewed: 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2011	