

Standards and Quality Report

School: Culloden Academy

Head Teacher: J Vance

Date submitted:



Context of the school:

Culloden Academy is a growing school, with a roll 1142 pupils and rising steadily. The fact that the school building was designed for 963 emphasises the urgency of our planned extension work and the pressure that the school is under in terms of rooms and social/eating space.

We are set on the outskirts of Inverness and our catchment area covers 6 primary schools- Ardersier, Balloch, Cradlehall, Croy, Duncan Forbes and Smithton. We also receive a small number of placing requests each session although for session 20-21 these are all being turned down due to the school being over capacity. With the current building taking place in our catchment area our projected roll is due to rise further- to over 1600 pupils by the end of this decade. To accommodate this increase, we are at the planning stages of a project for a significant extension to the school.

Of our current pupils, 39% have recognised additional support needs, 9% are registered for free school meals and 25% travel by school transport.

Alongside space, staffing continues to present the main challenge to progress and Culloden Academy along with other large secondary schools in the Highlands has one of the most challenging staff-pupil ratios in the country. Despite this, our staff work tirelessly to support the youngsters in our care but this undoubtedly affects our ability to offer the variety and scale of learning experiences that we would wish to offer. That said, we are very grateful to the small number of dedicated supply staff who regularly come in and help us deliver a high-quality educational experience for our young people.

School Vision, Values and Aims:

Culloden Academy strives to be a:

CARING community which celebrates the creativity of all of our pupils. A school which works hard to UNDERSTAND the individual circumstances of our pupils and to support them to achieve their potential. Where

LOYALTY and respect towards all members of the community are valued. Where a lifelong love of **LEARNING** is central to all that we do; so that pupils can achieve their best, both now and in the future. We will always work hard to ensure that

OUR ETHOS is warm, welcoming and reassuring to pupils, staff, parents, partners and our community. We have a

DIVERSE CURRICULUM which responds to learners' needs and ensures that our pupils receive the highest quality of learning and teaching. We are a school community where pupils are

ENCOURAGED to excel in many different ways within a

NURTURING space, where the warm and friendly atmosphere enables pupils to thrive.

Summary of Standards and Quality Report/School Improvement Plan engagement process

Participants	Engagement details
Teachers and other staff	<p>SIP draft completed by JV and reviewed by SMT. Thereafter shared with EMT and time given to submit departmental feedback. After requested amendments and the addition of further information, the plan was again shared with staff and a deadline for further comments given. Since we cannot have a whole staff meeting this was felt to be the most inclusive approach.</p> <p>Departments submitted QA reports at two points in the session. These were used to inform the draft Standards and Quality report. Consultation thereafter was as per Improvement plan.</p>
Parents	<p>Invitation given to Parent Council to discuss Improvement Plan and PEF plan. Detailed discussion with Parent Council representatives.</p>
Pupils	<p>Pupil survey carried out on various dates and the feedback included in the plan</p>
Associated Schools Group/Improvement Family Groups	<p>Whilst ASG heads are working well together, priorities for discussion have been around recovery and operational matters. We have agreed a shared ASG Improvement plan for session 22-23 which will be led by the ASG Attainment DHT.</p> <p>Improvement Family Head Teachers collaborate regularly and have shared and commented on the plans for other schools.</p>

Our overall evaluation of the school's capacity for continuous improvement:

* We are confident in our capacity for continuous improvement

* We have some concerns about our capacity for continuous improvement

Our capacity for continuous improvement, like that of every school in the country, has been affected by the high levels of staff and pupil absence and by restrictions in how we operate and collaborate occasioned by the Covid-19 situation.

Review of School Improvement Work against the National Improvement Framework Priorities

What we have done to close the attainment gap:

The disruption to learning occasioned by COVID and the subsequent struggle of some of our young people to re-engage has led to us again recruiting a second CSW to support CYPs and families. They have been working to support CYPs to return to school and engage in their curriculum once they do so. End of session reviews suggest that for the targeted young people this has been very successful.

Simultaneously we have been very fortunate to retain our PEF PSA in school who has supported significant numbers of our learners to qualifications that they would otherwise not achieve. This has proven very successful as evidenced in certificated attainment.

Impact and data

A more comprehensive assessment of our PEF activities can be found in the School Improvement Plan.

We have individual pupil level data on the impressive number of qualifications that have been achieved by working with the PEF funded PSA. Whilst it is not appropriate that these are published in this document, they are available if required.

With regards to attendance, we have had some success but some pupils whose attendance has deteriorated.

The fact that it was another year of significant disruption through anxiety and absence caused by COVID-19 cannot be discounted but we will utilise additional datasets next session to more closely monitor this- this is explained in the plan.

What we have done to address the other National Improvement Framework Priorities:

- **Raise attainment, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy**
- **Improve children and young people's health and wellbeing**
- **Improve employability skills and help our children and young people achieve sustained, positive leaver destinations**

With regards to **NIF priority 2** the staff have been consulted on and agreed a three year Raising Attainment strategy which will have different areas of focus each section to improve our capacity in certain areas. Details of the plan can be found in the School Improvement Plan which starts to develop these agreed improvements.

We continue to develop the curriculum offer and add new courses and types of qualification to allow our young people to demonstrate success. Beyond this, the English and Maths department have started to make extensive use of literacy and numeracy units distinct from whole course awards to address gaps between school performance and VC performance. The full impact will become apparent over the next two Insight updates. Beyond that, departments are designing courses which have specific literacy and numeracy success criteria.

With regards to **NIF priority 3** a pupil led group has developed an Equalities policy. We have submitted our evidence for Bronze Level as a Rights' Respecting school and have a plan in place to achieve silver level this coming session. Our Positive Relationships policy has ensured that pupils have a say in key decisions that affect their learning and we will continue to develop our practice in line with the philosophy of the Rights Respecting school programme and the expectations of the UNCRC. We have also established Pupil Voice/ leadership groups for all year groups and these meet with the Year Head to share information and discuss key issues. We organised a *Mikeysline* workshop for all year groups which signposted a wide range of support available to young people struggling with mental health. We also ran two well attended parental online sessions. We have also reconfigured the House system to reduce Guidance teacher caseloads from 290 to approximately 190 which will significantly improve their capacity to support CYPs health and wellbeing.

With regards to **NIF priority 4** we started the session by sharing information on intended destinations for all pupils with staff so that they could reference the ways in which their subjects would help pupils in their career aspirations. Anecdotal evidence is that this helped improve pupil engagement.

Our positive destination figures for leavers in 2021 rose to 93% from 87.5% the year before. Guidance have worked assiduously to ensure that we have good communications with all leavers and can support them after they leave- SDS noted that they were able to locate 99.5% of leavers post school.

This session we organised mock job interviews for S4-6 pupils and overwhelmingly pupils reported that this was a positive and worthwhile experience. One Guidance teacher has been responsible for a regular careers bulletin capturing all local opportunities. By sharing this with staff, subject teachers can highlight opportunities to pupils they know well. The bulletin will shortly migrate to a school Google site which all pupils can access from their Chromebooks. Furthermore funding has been secured to install a “DYW board” which will have QR Codes that pupils can scan to take them to local job opportunities.

Impact and data:

This section is harder to complete than usual- in part that is due to the interruptions and absences that challenged our work throughout the session but more importantly, it is because after two lockdowns we have started new initiatives which are not yet far enough along to give robust data.

With regards to **NIF priority 2** the impact of this will be evidenced in coming sessions- we are certain that we will see improved literacy and numeracy data in Insight and through the additional courses and changes in S3 course content, improvements in our Breadth and depth data. Through improvements in pedagogy and ethos in the coming session we are confident that we will be improving the capacity of our learners to achieve and attain. The School Improvement Plan lists the data that will be used to monitor this.

With regards to **NIF priority 3** a survey of pupils during the session highlighted how many did not feel safe and respected. These results have driven a lot of the work that has taken place since and pupils will be surveyed again once 12 months have passed. Pupil feedback on the Equalities plan and Rights Respecting schools work has been very positive.

With regards to **NIF priority 4** improved positive destinations figures with plans for further improvements, an evolving system for communicating job and career opportunities and increased engagement of subject staff in talking about future opportunities and linking learning to skills needed for life and work means our pupil body is better supported and better informed than they were at any previous point.

QI 1.3

Leadership of change

Themes

- Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- Strategic planning for continuous improvement
- Implementing improvement and change

Question 1

How are we doing? What's working well for our learners? What are the features of effective practice in our school?

- We have introduced a **Promoting Positive Relationships** policy, introduced **new houses** and are working to secure Silver and eventually gold level as a **Rights Respecting School**. All of this work, and the work of the pupil led **Equalities group** underpin our ambition to be a nurturing and pupil-centred school where the values of kindness and inclusion sit alongside ambition and respect in defining our school.
- All staff were consulted in the design of a **Raising Attainment Strategy** paper for Culloden Academy. This will define our improvement work for the next three sessions- it is discussed in QI 3.2 below and evidenced in the School Improvement Plan.
- We have amended the **departmental improvement planning and quality assurance plan** to streamline the work of all departments more precisely with the School Improvement priorities and ensure that quality assurance discussions are focused on the learning experience of all pupils. Staff are confident that this will lead to more focused analysis of improvement work and timely interventions if required.
- Introducing **Teaching Sprints** to the school calendar has been a very positive experience for all staff and departments report new and interesting teaching techniques being trialled and implemented.
- With the **new modular accommodation** in place, both Languages and Social Subjects have been able to build a new identity and to better engage pupils in what their curriculum has to offer. At the same time, the move to put all of Pupils Support in the same area of the school which is now possible for the first time, will have positive results for collaboration and support for young people as they need it.
- The Physics department have been supporting the **Institute of Physics initiative- Limit Less-** to open up Physics and STEM subjects to underrepresented groups such as girls, pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds, those with a disability, LGBT+ pupils and pupils of Black Caribbean descent. We also have **STEM Ambassadors who are introducing a Young STEM leaders programme** to increase knowledge, employability skills and STEM careers information.
- After the last two years, there is a new dimension to our work in this area. Specifically the need to analyse and judge whether changes are back to pre-COVID-19 approaches, to synthesise some of the essential changes into our future planning or whether in light of the impact of these years on CYPs and communities it is something new that we need to implement. We are no different than the rest of society in this but we acknowledge and are ready for the challenge.

Question 2

How do we know? What evidence do we have of positive impact on our learners?

- Pupils have been and will continue to be regularly surveyed on the initiatives mentioned above. Pupil Voice will be key in any analysis of the effectiveness of our initiatives.
- Departmental minutes and EMT discussion confirm that Teaching Sprints was a positive change to the ethos of the school. The timings will be refined and the process retained for this session.

Question 3

What could we do now? What actions would move us forward?

- A lot of good work has been started with Equalities, Promoting Positive Relationships, Rights Respecting School awards, a raising attainment strategy and a refined QA process. Through the School Improvement Plan, departmental improvement plans and regular monitoring with pupils and staff, we need to keep these improvement tasks moving forwards.

Our current evaluation of this QI using the *How good is our school?* (4th edition) six-point scale – based on an incomplete analysis of our progress (because of the periods of remote learning).

good

QI 2.3

Learning, teaching and assessment

Themes

- Learning and engagement
- Quality of teaching
- Effective use of assessment
- Planning, tracking and monitoring

Question 1

How are we doing? What's working well for our learners? What are the features of effective practice in our school?

- As COVID-19 restrictions recede, departments are looking to reintroduce **greater variety into the pupil learning experience** with external visits (all S2 recently visited the Newton Rooms at UHI for a Space and coding experience and S3 Drama students worked with "Dogstar" Creative Learning workshops and are now linked with a school in Sweden), employer engagement in learning (BAM Nuttall in S3 Graphics being one powerful example) and the reconfiguring of classrooms to support group work, debate, dialogue and collaboration. The Business Education department have made extensive use of partners such as Culloden Battlefield, West Fraser and Johnstons of Elgin in creating real and relevant learning opportunities for young people.
- Departments are working hard to find the **balance between online and face to face course content**. Some are putting all content online but are concerned that this may negatively impact on pupil attendance when the in-class experience is so important to learning and achieving. For most a blended approach is working well and has supported pupils during periods of absence.
- There has been a real focus through the Teaching Sprints work on **reviewing pedagogy and introducing small but sustainable changes in practice**. Staff are talking more about teaching and learning than they were previously, new techniques and strategies (retrieval practice being one popular example) are being piloted and departmental meeting time is increasingly being used to discuss and refine teaching approaches rather than for operational matters.
- A Working Group has been in operation to support the development of our approaches to **differentiation**. Departments have been trialing new materials and using attainment data and pupil feedback to monitor the effectiveness of these changes.
- **Pupil engagement** in their learning continues to be a high priority as witnessed by the English department's use of learning logs to gather feedback and allow pupils to set their own next steps, the reintroduction of House competitions by the PE department in response to pupil requests, the Tech departments use of 'Confidence builders, recaps and "what it looks like" boards to demonstrate different levels of achievement.
- Departments are reviewing course content to ensure there is **sufficient pace and challenge in BGE courses** and are now introducing pupils to skills and content previously held back until further up the school. Technology has assisted with this in terms of the Tech department's use of Google Sketchup which allows them to give skills and opportunities much sooner than previously possible. Maths and Social subjects are also using scaffolded assessments further down the school to embed some of the skills needed in Senior Phase assessments.

Question 2

How do we know? What evidence do we have of positive impact on our learners?

- As part of our established QA processes, pupils are surveyed about their learning and experience by departments. In the preparation of this report, departments shared extensive pupil feedback.
- Departmental minutes are increasingly reflecting discussion on pedagogy.

Question 3

What could we do now? What actions would move us forward?

- The School Improvement Plan for session 2022-23 has Pedagogy as one of the two high priority areas which will lead to considerable time being allocated at Staff meetings and in-service days to further reviewing and developing our practice next session. Specific actions are itemized in the School Improvement Plan.
- More in house training and support for approaches to differentiation.
- Consult with pupils about where it is working well.

Our current evaluation of this QI using the *How good is our school?* (4th edition) six-point scale – based on an incomplete analysis of our progress (because of the periods of remote learning).

good

QI 3.1

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

Themes

- Wellbeing
- Fulfilment of statutory duties
- Inclusion and equality

Question 1

How are we doing? What's working well for our learners? What are the features of effective practice in our school?

- The move to **six guidance houses** has taken place to reduce Guidance caseloads and allow them to spend more time per pupil supporting their wellbeing and helping them prepare for life after school.
- A pupil led group devised, consulted on and launched an **Equalities policy** for the school. They also started an Equalities magazine and have produced two very high quality editions so far.
- We have sought out and established a range of **new partnerships to support our most vulnerable CYPs** towards positive destinations. The main groups were Calman Trust, Enable and the Ross County Football Club Schools programme and they worked with our young people throughout the session. We have also engaged Young Carers Scotland who are working closely with our Young Carers to provide them with information and support. This will culminate in the very visible support for Young Carers week on w/b 6th June.
- Whole school **positive destinations data** improved significantly this session. In working closely with SDS we better understand some of the systemic problems that have impacted on our data and Guidance staff are working hard to ensure that published data accurately reflects the pupil experience.
- We are working closely with **SDS** to ensure that their input has maximum impact- we anticipate an increase the number of career sessions allocated per pupil.
- Throughout session 21-22 we have offered a **breakfast club** for S1-3 pupils which 15-20 pupils have used to give themselves a better start to their learning. Alongside breakfast we ensure pupils are set up for the day with pencils, charged Chromebooks and on occasion uniform. In a similar vein, some pupils take advantage of quiet spaces at break and lunchtime to help manage the pressures of the day.
- We took 20 S3 pupils through a six week **mental health and resilience programme** with Bloom (Mental Health UK). Pupils retain a toolkit of strategies to use in school and life thereafter.
- We are involved in a pilot with Police Scotland and have an Education Link Officer
- We were delighted to be able to hold an **in person P7 Transition Evening event**. It was very well attended and received. The presence of some teachers in their departments added greatly to the impact and enjoyment of the evening.

Question 2

How do we know? What evidence do we have of positive impact on our learners?

- Feedback on the Mental Health UK course was overwhelmingly positive with pupils finding the sessions helpful and relevant and appreciating the external facilitator who gave a fresh voice.
- Positive destination data on Insight and further work with SDS to interrogate the data and gaps has confirmed that our processes are appropriate and having an impact.

Question 3

What could we do now? What actions would move us forward?

- Work Experience. Our newest Guidance teacher will look to refine PSE next session to give a greater focus to supporting and encouraging pupils to engage with work experience opportunities.
- Enhanced transition visits take place between December and April for our most vulnerable pupils. Feedback suggests that these earlier visits would be welcomed by all pupils and the plan is to work with primary colleagues to make this happen next session.
- We will look to build new partnerships with agencies to support wellbeing and inclusion.

Our current evaluation of this QI using the *How good is our school?* (4th edition) six-point scale – based on an incomplete analysis of our progress (because of the periods of remote learning).

good

QI 3.2

Raising attainment and achievement

Themes

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy
- Attainment over time
- Overall quality of learners' achievement
- Equity for all learners

Question 1

How are we doing? What's working well for our learners? What are the features of effective practice in our school?

- In session 21-22 we **developed a tracking and monitoring system** which allows us to effectively monitor learning and put in place timely interventions. Staff can analyse year groups or specialist groups by gender, ASL level or socio-economic factors to ensure that all pupil needs are being met. This data is leading to robust discussions with PTs and individual teachers about the in-class experience of young people.
- We continue to **increase the curriculum offer** that we have for our young people with National Progression Awards, Skills for Work courses, Leadership courses and Foundation Apprenticeship courses all running in school next session. We also liaise closely with Inverness College, UHI to make further opportunities available to our young people.
- The English and Maths department are being proactive in securing the **highest available literacy and numeracy qualifications** for all learners rather than trusting to whole course awards to achieve this. This will often allow pupils to experience success at a higher SCQF level than would otherwise have been the case.
- The Technology department introduced **the "Plus One" initiative** whereby each teacher identifies a pupil who needs short term targeted support- either because they are narrowly failing, are coasting or are seeing a deterioration in marks- and gives additional support and direction to that pupil until redress of the problem is apparent. They have clear evidence of these interventions being successful.
- Departments have amended their S3 course delivery to give pupils opportunities to **achieve some formal SQA level success in a subject** particularly if they are unlikely to be carrying on in this subject in S4. Pupils will see these additional qualifications when they get their S4 SQA certificates in August 2023.
- We believe that as a school we **managed the uncertainty and changing messages from SQA** in such a way as to keep the needs of all learners at the heart of what we did with Prelims, Easter supported study, assemblies and communication around the final exams. The return of 'traditional' exams after a two year hiatus was a real concern to pupils who had little or no experience of this but based on discussions with invigilators and Guidance, our pupils felt prepared and supported.
- Learners were assisted by our **Parent Council** who purchased access for all to the **Achieve** website which had course notes, revision materials and exam style questions for almost all courses that we offer.
- We have worked to ensure that all pupils who entered a course at the recommended level achieve some formal success for their endeavours in the form of unit passes or a course award at a different level. This allows for more competitive applications for jobs, apprenticeships and colleges.
- We believe that the Promoting Positive Relationships initiative is having a positive impact on pupil engagement and on learning taking responsibility for their learning.

Question 2

How do we know? What evidence do we have of positive impact on our learners?

- Departmental minutes and SMT communication attest to the impact of the new tracking system
- Choice of Course uptake and pupil satisfaction rates confirm the suitability of the new courses
- We anticipate a steady increase in our literacy and numeracy data on Insight in light of recent changes
- Further evidence will be available after the September Insight analysis

Question 3

What could we do now? What actions would move us forward?

- As a priority, the tracking system will evolve to better monitor progress and attainment over time
- A version of the Plus One idea will be rolled out across the school next session for pupils at risk of underachievement or disengagement
- We have a pilot ASG programme in place for next session which should improve curricular transition and should support raised attainment in future years
- Having designed a Raising Attainment strategy and set a three year programme to deliver these improvements, we will be prioritizing the impact that ethos and improved learning and teaching can have on raising attainment and achievement in session 22-23. Details can be found in the School Improvement Plan.

Our current evaluation of this QI using the *How good is our school?* (4th edition) six-point scale – based on an incomplete analysis of our progress (because of the periods of remote learning).

good

