



Standards and Quality Report

School: Wick High School

Head Teacher: Sebastian Sandecki

Date submitted: 9th September 2022



Context of the school:

Wick High School is a non-denominational school that serves the town of Wick and the surrounding rural communities in the East of Caithness. The school has nine associated primary schools. The school has provision for young people with severe and complex needs. Our current school role is 753 and this is projected to rise over the next 5 years.

Wick High School has a positive learning ethos, and we take pride in the strong relationships we develop between our young people and staff. We actively promote our Vision, Values and Aims.

Attendance is below the national average of 92%. In session 2021-22 attendance was 90.11% which has increased from 89.2% in session 2020-21.

In September 2021, 21.1% of pupils were registered for school meals, much higher than the Scottish average of 15.6% (2020)

In September 2020, the school reported that 39.4% of our pupils had additional support needs.

Exclusions are lower than the national average (11.9% in 2020-21)

Our rate of exclusions was 10.6 per 1000 pupils in 2020-21.

The school management team consists of the head teacher and three depute head teachers. The school has a middle management team of six Faculty heads and four Principle Teachers of Pupil Support. An additional Principal Teacher Pupil Support has being recruited to better support our learners who are affected by poverty to further increase their attainment and achieve an increased number of positive destinations.

The school currently has the equivalent of 51.2 fte teachers and 22 Pupil Support Assistances. This consists of full and part time staff, adding up to the equivalent of 17.9 fte. In addition, we employ 3 Additional Children's Service Workers and 2 support staff through the Schools Programme Funding. This is to support family link welfare. Literacy and Numeracy intervention support, seasonal youth workers and an admin assistant specific to PEF also support us.

Due to our geographical location and a national shortage in some subjects, we have experienced challenges recruiting teaching staff. We rely heavily on the Probation Induction scheme and agency staff to fill vacant posts.

The school receives additional funding from the Scottish Government to help support work to close the poverty related attainment gap. This includes the impact of COVID on the attainment gap. In 2021-22 the school received £81,721 in Pupil Equity Funding. This funding targeted at interventions to support development in literacy, numeracy and health and well-being. It also funds our family link workers (CSW team)

School Vision, Values and Aims:

Wick High School Learning Together for Success

Our Values

We have three core values, which are a clear and concise statement of what we are working to achieve in Wick High School and are at the core of all our decisions and future developments.

Learning
Ambition
Respect

Our Vision

We want Wick High school to be an excellent school in all regards. Our 'vision' is to continue to build an inclusive and successful learning community.

Our Aims

To help us achieve our vision we have the following aims:

To provide the highest quality of learning and teaching for all.

To create an environment where everyone in the school community is encouraged to participate and to achieve to his/her potential.

To provide a safe and supportive environment where everyone is valued and treated with respect.

To promote social, emotional, mental and physical health and well-being. To enable our pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens who are able to make a positive contribution to their community.

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

The process of engaging with the whole school community when we are developing our Standards and Quality Report and School Improvement Plan involves seeking the views of a wide range of people.

- Teachers and other school staff
- Parents and our Parent Council
- Pupils
- Partners that work with and support the school
- Other schools with which we link (ASG)

Q1 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?

- The school's vision is 'to build and inclusive and successful learning community a community which inspires learning and celebrates success'. Our values are learning, respect and ambition. The Head teacher works closely with his Depute Head teachers, two of whom are in *Acting* positions and all five members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) are working closely with Faculty Heads, to lead improvement in the school.
- Our Depute for Attainment (2022-23) has a specific role, supporting the school to identify and build on pupils' opportunities for success.
- Most of our young people are well served through the curriculum and personal support and go on to secure positive destinations when leaving school. Young people have some positive opportunities to exercise leadership in a range of contexts. For example, through Pupil Learning and Pupil Community Councils and the 'Step Forward Wick Youth' steering group.
- Most staff have an understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the local community and how this impacts their practice.
- Working with SMT, Principal teachers are committed to leading improvement and are increasingly using a wider range of evidence to understand the needs to their department, plan for improvements, including specific use of data and learner feedback.
- The school makes good use of data to address concerns and to identify required interventions. Insight, SNSA, Attendance data, ASN data, Positive Destination data, SIMD analysis TMI Analysis and Review of presentation levels used to identify areas for further development and intervention.
- We have engaged our pupils and supported them to participate in self-evaluation and school improvement. The framework enables pupils to contribute their views and play a part in school decision making.
- Through Teaching Sprints PRD, departments and individuals are committed to improving pupils' experiences.
- Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) funding is used to provide targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and youth work approaches to addressing the poverty related attainment gap. Young people are benefitting from safe spaces and opportunities to build self-esteem from improved wellbeing and nurture provision. The funding is enabling the school to expand the curriculum to include wider achievement awards.

Question 2

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

- A whole school attainment tracking system used by all teachers.
- Teaching Sprint research projects analysis.
- The views of staff are sought when determining the areas of strengths and improvement needs.
- Pupil and Staff surveys.

Question 3

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

- The continued re-establishment of our focus on the vision for school following the impact of COVID. A whole school focus on routines, classroom standards and lesson quality is a key priority for all.
- We will continue to develop clear and coherent improvement planning processes.
- We now have a Depute with responsibility for raising attainment. They will use data to plan strategic interventions of targeted pupils.
- Through the use of data, we will make systematic use of information to aid strategic planning for continuous improvement.
- Through the further development of Teaching Sprints, we aim to support our colleagues to draw on the features of effective professional development. Teaching Sprints is a manageable and meaningful approach to

evidence informed professional learning for teachers where they are supported through cycles to work collaboratively.

- We will ensure that support staff receive their entitlement to staff development reviews and develop greater opportunities for professional learning. This will have an impact on our learners and be a vehicle for positive change.
- We will build on the range and number of opportunities for all our pupils to take on leadership responsibilities.
- We will develop further communication opportunities that will support our pupils/parents/carers to become better informed, and to be more involved in shaping and leading change.
- To work together to evaluate the impact of improvement and to embed the process of change.
- SMT to engage in Education Scotland Agile Leadership PRD.

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).

satisfactory

Q1 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?

- A calm, welcoming and supportive ethos is evident in most aspects of school life. This is evident in both classrooms, corridors and social spaces. This helps to create supportive climate for learning.
- In most classes, young people engage well in their learning. In some classes, young people are content to be passive learners. They need to be challenged, encouraged and enabled to become more actively involved. There has been improvement in actively engaging pupils through Teaching Sprint strategies but this required further embedding in some classrooms.
- The quality of teaching across the school remains variable and this is affecting learners' experiences. The school has taken steps to further improve consistency in the learning experience of young people so that they are actively engaged with the learning activity and not passive recipients. Greater focus on pupils experiences in their learning has been at the core of Self Evaluation practices, with pupils views being sought and actions being identified.
- Providing more opportunities for collaborative learning and peer-assessment in more classes would enhance young people's learning considerably. This has been a focus of departments throughout 2021-22 and continues to be a focus for 2022-23.
- In some lessons, assessment information is used effectively to plan and enhance learning for young people.
- Most teachers organise lessons well, generally building on learning from earlier tasks, and consolidate learning through plenary discussions.
- Faculties and subjects use a range of approaches to plan delivery of their courses which includes provision for planned assessment opportunities. Staff need to continue to improve the quality of assessment evidence used for tracking progress and attainment of the Broad General Education. Arrangements for tracking young people's progress through the senior phase have been further improved with the associated data being used plan more effectively.
- Across the school most pupils have good relationships with their teachers and support staff. Pupil feedback indicates that they appreciate the efforts of staff who provide quality lessons and learning experiences.
- Pupils' views are sought regarding their learning and teaching experiences. The feedback is used to identify areas for improvement and detailed actions.
- Through classroom/corridor displays and the school newsletter, pupil's achievements are being recognised and celebrated. Pupils have commented that they like this and would like to see this across all departments. The circulation of our school newsletter has increased this session, reaching more of our wider school community.

Question 2

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

- Lesson observations
- Pupils focus groups
- Whole School Pupil Surveys
- A whole school attainment tracking system used by all teachers
- The views of staff/Parents including our Parent Council
- OTB referrals
- Subject uptake information

Question 3

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

- We continue to engage with and build upon the positive, nurturing and challenging learning experiences we provide for our pupils. Through re-established and agreed learning standards and classroom routines, pupils will have a shared, consistent experience across the school.
- We will develop the opportunity to recognise our pupils' achievements in and out of school, helping them to understand how these achievements help them develop the skills for life, learning and work.
- Pupils in S3 will engage in National course work to support a deeper understanding of the knowledge and understanding and skills elements of the SQA awards. Pupils will be supported with a planned curriculum is focused on pupils ability to achieve high quality passes at the end of S4.
- Following discussions and communications with Wick Community Council we will ensure our learners have the opportunity to play an active role in the school and wider community taking on leadership roles and leading their learning experiences.
- Teaching Sprints has proved to be an effective tool in improving classroom practice. We will continue with our Teaching Sprints cycles to embed the successful practices and so improve the quality of pupils' experiences.
- Feedback from pupil focus groups shows that pupils value feedback on their work so that they have an accurate understanding of their progress in learning and what they need to do to improve. This will be a focus on departmental/faculty improvement planning.
- Participation in the Teaching Sprint cycles has enabled staff to access and apply relevant findings from educational research and to engage in dialogue to further improve learning and teaching. We will build on the successes of this model and support staff to re-engage.
- We will focus on embedding assessment approaches especially in Literacy and Numeracy. This will aid all teaching staff to make more accurate assessment judgements based on valid and reliable assessment strategies.
- In consultation with pupils, staff and parents via our Parent Council, the school is developing a formal Homework Policy that supports pupils learning across all year groups. Preparing pupils for the demands of the senior phase and how Parents/Carers can best support young people will be a key focus.

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).

satisfactory

Q1 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?

- Pupil Support & Guidance staff have an excellent understanding of the GIRFEC approach and the Wellbeing indicators as well as the Highland Practice Model.
- Pupils' voices on wellbeing are communicated to SMT through the established Pupil Council Community and Curriculum Leaders.
- The PSE curriculum, by its ever-changing nature, is under constant review while also being based around the fundamentals of government guidelines: RSHP, substance misuse, careers education etc.
- The school has developed a range of bespoke PSE resources after its involvement with the Caithness Cares project. These have been developed in conjunction with one of our local primary schools.
- The school has created a positive relationships policy with the input of staff and pupils and this will form part of a suite of school policies also including those on Anti-Bullying and Equalities. This is under the banner of the Respect for All initiative.
- The Pupil Council has representatives from SIMD 1 & 2 homes; those who identify as transgender; those who have ASN and those who are Care Experienced.
- Non-promoted staff members have been leading the students in setting up groups, catering for aspects of the school's population: those wishing to learn more about managing their own mental health, an LGBTQI+ group and a Human Rights Group.
- The school is dealing with pupils with social, emotional & behavioral difficulties in creative and proactive ways, using the resources of Children Service Workers and Youth Workers to supplement the input of Guidance and Pupil Support staff. These pupils are consequently at less risk of exclusion.
- There are strong links with colleagues in our off-site provision, Airport House, to provide our youngsters with challenging and complex needs access to a more suitable learning environment.
- Caithness Counselling, continues to work with pupils in need of specialist psychotherapy.
- The school continues to work with Aspire North to improve the low progression rates of senior pupils and working with young people who have limited experience of further education.
- The Guidance team have close liaison with members of Skills Development Scotland in making sure that young people have increased chances of positive destinations.
- Members of the Pupil Support Department are skilled at providing options outwith the mainstream curriculum; to tailor timetables to individual needs.
- The school has strong links with third sector agencies: CASWA, Who Cares?, Caithness KLIICS...
- Multi agency meetings (with CAMHS and Ed Psychology) are regularly scheduled to support our young people who are suffering mental health issues.
- There are strong links with Family Disability Team and Skills Development Scotland to ensure better transitions for pupils in Enhanced Provision settings.
- We continue to work in close partnership with colleagues in Social Work Services.
- We have a newly appointed DYW co-ordinator as well as a Pathways co-ordinator from MCR Pathways Mentoring Programme.
- Saltire Awards for pupils working with others in school.
- Celebration of success via subject prizes for SQA qualifications and school awards. These are for excellence and application.
- Students receive their statutory requirements for PSE and PE.

Question 2

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

- Pupils focus groups
- A whole school attainment tracking system
- Number of behaviour referrals
- Number of SHANARRI referrals
- Number of exclusions

- Attendance data
- Feedback from partners.
- Stakeholder voice: parent/carer and pupil through surveys.
- Positive destination data.
- Number of referrals to counselling service as well as written case notes and assessments from E Cameron.

Question 3

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

- Continued work with MCR Pathways to provide young people at risk of exclusion or on the fringes of care to gain mentorship.
- Continued work with the My Future, My Success programme catering for interrupted learners.
- Wellbeing referrals to be further promoted with teaching staff and PSAs.
- LGBTQI+ events are continuing; the school is pursuing the Scottish LGBT Youth Charter.
- The UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Bronze Award is being pursued by the school.
- Attendance analysis and improvement strategies in this aspect of the school.
- Appointment of SAC/PEF Guidance teacher.
- Pupil profiling – on a more regular basis.
- Focus on the attainment of pupils at levels less than N4.
- Health & Wellbeing as a greater focus across the school, in all subject areas.
- Delivery and certification of the SQA Health and Well-being award for senior classes.
- Nurture approaches to our whole school ethos.
- Equalities Group – representation from Faculties.
- Extra-curricular sports programme.
- Developing the Young Workforce links to continue to be developed.

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?

- Usually in this section of the Standards and Quality Report we would be writing about what parts of our Improvement Plan have led to better outcomes for our learners. Because of the periods of remote learning it is difficult for us to do that. Here are some key features of our work that describe what we do well in "Raising attainment and achievement".

Broad general education (BGE)

- In 2022, 83% of S3 students achieved Level 3 or better in literacy, this is in line with the previous years. Also 60% of S3 pupils achieved level 4 or better in literacy. This is significant improvement to previous years where we had 30% of pupils achieving this level.
- 90% of S3 students achieved level 3 or better in numeracy, this is an improvement to previous year where we had 82% of pupils achieving this level. 59% of pupils achieved Level 4 in numeracy; this is also an improvement from 51% of pupils in previous years.

Senior phase: Leavers Literacy

- By the time of leaving school, in 2022, 84% of our S4 leavers' attained literacy at SCQF level 4 or better, which is an increase from the previous year of 83%, however, it is still below Virtual Comparator (VC) 88%.
- At SCQF level 5, 66% attained literacy at level 5 or better which is a small decrease from the previous year of 68% and slightly below VC 68%. Although it is slightly above the average for the past 5 year.

Senior phase: Leavers Numeracy

- By the time of leaving school, in 2022, 80% of our S4 leavers' attained literacy at SCQF level 4 or better, which is an increase from the previous year of 79%, however, it is still below Virtual Comparator (VC) 84%.
- At SCQF level 5, 62% attained literacy at level 5 or better which is a large increase from the previous year of 40% and also significantly above VC 56%. This is also the best result for the past 5 year.

Attainment over time

Senior Phase – S4 All Pupils

- For all S4 learners, the average complementary tariff scores for the highest attaining 20% is slightly below VC over a five-year period, although the "grade neutral" indicator is above VC and the National Establishment for the first time in 5 years.
- For the middle 60% attainment was significantly lower than the VC in 2022. However, it is higher in comparison to previous years and the average for 5 years.
- For the lowest 20% attainment was significantly lower than the VC in 2022 and the lowest in comparison to 5-year trend.

Senior Phase – S5 All Pupils

- For all S5 learners, the average complementary tariff scores for the highest attaining 20% is below VC in comparison to previous year and over a five-year period.
- For the middle 60% attainment was significantly lower than the VC in 2022. However, it is in line with 2021 result but below the average for 5 years.
- For the lowest 20% attainment was significantly lower than the VC in 2022 and the lowest in comparison to 5-year trend.

Senior Phase – S6 All Pupils

- For all S6 learners, the average complementary tariff scores for the highest attaining 20% is below VC in comparison to previous, however it is an improvement in comparison to pre Covid years 2018 and 2019.
- For the middle 60% attainment was significantly lower than the VC in 2022.

- For the lowest 20% attainment was significantly lower than the VC in 2022 and the lowest in comparison to 5-year trend.

The SCQF measure

- By the end of S4 , in 2022, 42% of cohort achieved 5+ awards at Level 5 or better. This is a significant increase from previous year 30.4%. It is slightly below VC 47% for this measure.
- By the end of S4 , in 2022, 33% of cohort achieved 6+ awards at Level 5 or better. This is a significant increase from previous year 21%. It is slightly below VC 38% for this measure.
- By the end of S4 , in 2022, 25% of cohort achieved 7+ awards at Level 5 or better. This is a significant increase from previous year 1%. It is also above VC 24% for this measure
- By the end of S5 , in 2022, 60% of cohort achieved 1+ awards at Level 6 or better. This is a significant increase from previous year 43% . It is below VC 72% for this measure.
- By the end of S5 , in 2022, 36% of cohort achieved 3+ awards at Level 6 or better. This is a significant increase from previous year 26% . It is below VC 47% for this measure.
- By the end of S5 , in 2022, 12.% of cohort achieved 5+ awards at Level 6 or better. This is in line with the 2021 result; however, it is below the VC 23%, for this measure.
- By the end of S6 , in 2022, 57% of cohort achieved 3+ awards at Level 6 or better. This is a significant increase from previous year 44.4%. It is below VC 70% for this measure.
- By the end of S6 , in 2022, 14% of cohort achieved 1+ awards at Level 7 or better. This is in line with the 2021 result; however, it is below the VC 38%, for this measure.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- In the Broad General Education learning is planned around appropriate experiences and outcomes and Benchmarks. Most teachers organise lessons well, generally building on learning from earlier tasks, and consolidate learning through plenary discussions. However, teachers are not yet planning learning which meets the needs of all learners in each class.

Equity for all learners

Destinations

- Over the past five years, almost all young people have entered a positive destination on leaving Wick High School. The percentage leaving school and entering either higher or further education has remained relatively constant over the past three years.

Question 2

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

- A whole school attainment tracking system
- Insight Data
- Positive Destinations data

Question 3

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

- Further review of presentation policy (Key focus on raising aspirations and ambitions reflected in prognosis reports) (increase number of pupils being presented for N5 courses instead of N4)
- Further review of tracking system (support staff in rigorous tracking system that from the start of the session is accurate and reflects pupils potential and abilities) (analysis of tracking data by Year Heads) (regular meetings (after each tracking point) with Faculty Heads discussing tracking patterns, results and actions) (Early interventions for pupils identified as off track)
- Increased analysis of tracking and monitoring data to review the progress of curriculum change which sees S3 engaging in National qualifications.

- Increase number of awards available for pupils (Application of maths, Scottish studies, Wider Achievement, Mental Health and Well-being, Bakery, Personal Finance, Employment and Enterprise and Digital Literacy)
- Engage with the SCQF partnership to identify opportunities for complementary awards; to gain bronze award in 2022-23

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).

satisfactory

KEY THEME

from QI 2.2

Curriculum

Theme 3

- Learning pathways
- Development of the curriculum
- Rationale and design
- Skills for learning, life and work

Question 1

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

- The school reviewed its curriculum last session and made changes to the S3 curriculum so that learners had more opportunities to better prepare for senior phase courses. S3 pupils engage with National course materials in S3 to deepen their understanding. We aim to increase the number of high quality passes gained by our pupils in the 2024 SQA exam diet.
- Our wider achievement opportunities in the senior phase have been enhanced to include SQA wider achievement awards as well as Health and Wellbeing awards for a larger number of senior pupils. Pupils also have the opportunity to work towards Religion, Values and Belief awards in core RME and Scottish Studies awards administered by our Social Subjects department. These awards are available at various levels to support a wide range of pupils.
- Targeted pupils in S5 will have an increased opportunity to achieve further awards/qualifications. Following discussions with pupils and guidance teachers, we have identified the need to introduce Personal Finance, Bakery, Employability and Enterprise and Digital Literacy. Pupils have been given the opportunity to engage with a course that best suits their needs, widening their skills and knowledge. Staff have been working to have these courses ready for delivery in the 2022-23 session.
- Pupils who engage in volunteering within the school and wider community are supported through the Saltire Awards Programme. Opportunities for pupils to volunteer and increase their leadership skills is ongoing.
- Changes have been made to the Senior Phase curriculum to increase the number of courses available to learners in S5 & S6. Technical department staff have worked to ensure they have the skills, resources and support to offer N5 Metal Work. This is in response to pupil requests and the needs of our local community. This change will give further opportunity for pupils to achieve within the well-respected Technical department.
- We offer a wide variety of National 3/4/5, Higher and some Advanced Higher courses within the school. We work with the Highland Virtual Academy, North Highland College and West Highland College to increase our offering at AH level and with specialist courses such as Psychology. This year we are embedding a National Progression Award in Sports and Fitness following an evaluation of our learners needs in this curriculum area in session 2021-22.
- Vocational courses are available to learners through partnership with North Highland College.
- Our outdoor learning opportunities include a school poly tunnel in which vegetables are grown for use within the life skills classes of our learning support department.
- The school has continues its work in creating a more detailed, strategic progression framework to promote a consistent approach to both literacy and numeracy development across the curriculum with the aim of raising attainment for all.
- All young people in S1-S4 experience two periods of high-quality PE and, in S1-S6, all young people receive one period of personal & social education (PSE). Young people in S5 and S6 do not have a continuing element of religious and moral education (RME).
- Pupils in core RME work towards Religion, Belief and Values awards at a variety of levels.

Question 2

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

- Curriculum plans and structure
- Choice forms
- Timetable
- Pupil feedback/surveys
- Parent feedback/surveys

Question 3

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

- Review and development of S1/2 curriculum to linked to benchmarks, skills and show progression to the senior phase.
- This session we are engagin with Dyslexia Scotland to become a Dyslexia Friendly school. This is a long term goal that starts with an Audit of existing practice before creating a 2 year improvement plan based on the findings.
- Finalise and implemtation of the WHS Homework Policy.
- Regular review of new courses, what is working well and where can we add further value for our pupils.

- We will work with our newly appointed DYW coordinator to Planning and co-creating employability, enterprise and wider curriculum learning opportunities with employers, educators and partners. Identifying employer activities and events to support young people in school to prepare for the world of work

- The school continues to work with the SQCF Ambassador programme with the aim of identifying and confirming SCQF Ambassadors in schools to raise awareness and understanding of the SCQF as well as promoting its use among learners, school staff and parents. We aim to achieve a Bronze Award in session 2022-23