Standards and Quality

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

2021/22

LOCHABER HIGH SCHOOL

Lochaber High School
HIGHLAND COUNCIL | CAMAGHAEL, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 7ND

This report is provided to families and partners to identify our achievements this session. The next steps in our improvement journey are also outlined.

Throughout the year we continuously evaluate what we do and how it makes a difference to our learners. We want to know what is working well for our school community and what needs further improvement.

Our children and young people are actively consulted and involved in this process. We also give staff, parents/carers, and other partners the opportunity to participate in discussions and activities in order to shape our improvement journey.

When we develop our improvement projects we use key questions at planned review times throughout the session in order to know how well we progressing towards achieving these positive outcomes and changes.

Our School

Lochaber High School is a six-year comprehensive school which serves the town of Fort William and the greater Lochaber area. There are eight associated primary schools: Banavie, Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, Caol, Invergarry, Inverlochy, Lundavra, Spean Bridge and St Columba's.

The school stands in spectacular surroundings to the north of Fort William at the foot of Ben Nevis, and in typically light-hearted fashion, has been awarded the school with the most scenic setting in Scotland. The school has a high standing in the local community and beyond. Pupils do well in national exams. The school curriculum is continuing to develop in line with national and regional guidelines, and there is a clear focus on learning and teaching practices.

The school operates a 33 period asymmetric week in line with other Highland schools, allowing access to courses from the 'Virtual School'. Gaelic for learners, Gàidhlig (Gaelic Medium education) and Gaelic culture and heritage are important aspects of the school's ethos and help to define the school's identity in the local community. West Highland College UHI is a major partner in providing vocational courses as the DYW agenda progresses. Almost all pupils leaving the school go on to positive leaver destinations.

Our attendance is below the national average, and has dipped below 90% this year due to Covid infection rates, however, resources are in place to improve attendance in the coming year. In recent years we have markedly reduced exclusions by over 70%, however there was a spike in exclusions during our return from our second national lockdown. We are confident our reduced exclusion figures will return.

Vision, Values and Aims

Vision
Support, Challenge, Inspire!
Values
At Lochaber High School we wish to promote mutual respect, hard work and resilience. Equality, fairness and inclusion will underpin all that we do as we strive to nurture an able, confident and ambitious community.
Aims
At Lochaber High School we will:
• Strive to provide high quality learning and teaching which will challenge and inspire our young people to realise success.

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• We will celebrate the uniqueness of our young people, our community and our learning environment.

• Encourage all our young people to develop their personal qualities and abilities by engaging positively with a wide range of activities and experiences within and beyond the curriculum.

• Value and treat everyone with fairness and respect so they feel included and nurtured within a caring, disciplined and supportive school community.

•Continue to develop productive partnerships with our associated local agencies to improve the well-being of our young people and families within our community.

Pupil Voice: what is working well in our school?

Our children and young people identified the following strengths for our school this session.

Health & Well-being Leadership group identified the following as being successful:

- Diversity Month
- Health & Well-being Days
- Support through the Chrome book webpage to access services such as health, counselling etc.

Learning & Teaching Survey revealed:

- Pupils were pleased about accessing resources across the curriculum through Google Classroom and having the ability to sit assessments on-line.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly confident in using marking schemes to mark their own work.
- Pupils are using Knowledge Organisers to help prepare for assessments.

Raising Attainment Leadership Group:

- Curricular Pathways information helped to make more informed subject choice.
- Pupils felt better informed about subject choice from the work done in Tutor Support.
- Over 95% of pupils got their first choice of subjects.

Pupil Voice: what changes would you like to see made?

Our young people identified the following changes they would like to see:

- Continue to promote diversity and health and well-being events so that they feel represented, more self-aware and confident.
- Have better seating across social areas which would help pupils be more comfortable at morning interval and lunchtimes.
- Remove all plastics from the canteen. (This has already taken place)

Tutor Support Survey:

Overall, many pupils did not want to see subject matter change in Tutor Support, however in general a number of pupils wished for more learning about:

- Anti-bullying
- Mental Well-being
- Finance
- Apprenticeships and careers.

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These projects are linked to the vision and priorities for Scottish Education based on delivering excellence and equity. Parent/Carer information is available here.

Improvement Project 1: Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Primary focus: Teacher and practitioner professionalism

Year of Project: 3

Purpose: *This initiative is about standardising significant aspects of teaching practice based on cogntive science research, so that we establish a Lochaber High School approach to learning and teaching.*

Progress and impact:

Continue to develop suitable resources for G-Suite including effective ways to give regular formative pupil feedback
Every subject and every department has digitised the majority (73.7%) of their curriculum over the last two years. 72% of our pupils stated they used G-Suite for all their classes, and where pupils did not use G-Suite it was predominantly within practical subjects. 57.5% of pupils stated they received feedback through G-suite and 77.5% stated they receive homework through G-suite. 82.1% of staff stated they provide feedback to learners through G-Suite.

All teachers will continue to deepen their skills in providing formative feedback based on Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.
Almost all teachers use learning intentions and success criteria to ensure clarity and focus of the lesson, and how progress in learning is measured. This is evidenced in the piloting of the Lesson Observation toolkit, as well as through "Learning Walk" observations. However, it must be recognised classroom observations dropped significantly due to Covid restrictions.

All teachers will continue to develop activities which will improve pupil recall such as daily, weekly, monthly review.
Almost all teachers use a "starter" at the beginning of each lesson to give pupils practice at tapping into prior learning; to introduce the subject or task of the lesson; or to create critical thinking opportunities. The majority of teachers are beginning to explore further the power of promoting recall by creating starter tasks which ask pupils to recall information from prior learning taking place one day past; one week past and across previous terms.

As a strategy to promote critical thinking skills as well as provide sound feedback to learners, teachers will continue to develop their questioning skills such as "pose, pause, pounce, bounce."
79.2% of staff believe they promote critical thinking by effective questioning. This appears to be contradicted by 36.8% of pupils believing their teacher helps them think about their learning through questioning. However, if we consider 38% of pupils believe they think

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about their learning by having discussions with their teacher or fellow pupils, and 5.1% of pupils believe they think about their learning through activities like think, pair, share, then there may not be a great disparity between the points of view between teachers and pupils. Another related statistic is that 60% of pupils believe they understand what they are learning by answering questions, and 27.3% by discussing topics with friends or fellow pupils.

Teachers will continue to provide increased opportunities within lessons and in homework for pupils to practise what is being taught.
94.7% of staff felt they gave enough practice opportunities for pupils in class or as part of homework exercises. 92.6% of pupils feel they get enough practice opportunities either in class or for homework. However, when asked about practising at home only 35.3% of pupils stated they practised weekly, 5.8% daily and 47.4% stated they practised at home sometimes.

In total, there was an investment of eight formal CPD sessions coverings the above named aspects of pedagogy as well as further enquiry sessions led by our Principal Teacher of Learning and Teaching. One whole school professional learning activity was led by the author of the Teaching Delusion, Bruce Robertson. Furthermore, we established a Professional Reading Group as well as a Learning and Teaching Leadership Group. This led to a staff library being established to promote professional reading as well as the creation of an observation toolkit which sets out important features of teaching practice.

Sound progress has been made in the past year despite the level of staff and pupil absence due to Covid.

Next steps:

- We will focus on the quality of formative feedback both through digital platforms as well as within classroom learning.
- Reintroduce our observation programme to promote professional dialogue about various features of teaching practice.
- Continue to experiment with lesson starters and teaching practices to promote recall.
- Continue to promote critical thinking through skilled questioning techniques.
- Continue to create practice opportunities and ensure pupils are aware of the purpose of such opportunities.

Improvement Project 2: Curriculum
Primary focus: Curriculum and assessment
Year of Project: 3
Purpose: *This iniative is about creating an awareness of the curriculum in its entirety, reshaping it where appropriate to create opportunities to deepen learning, as well as empahsising the importance of knowledge as a foundation for skills.*

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Progress and impact:

Map out topics and assessments for each year group S1-S3.
We mapped out all topics and assessments not only across all subjects in S1-S3, we successfully undertook the same exercise across all National Courses up to Advanced Higher level.

Subject topics and accompanying assessments will be aligned or arranged as appropriate across the curriculum to promote depth of learning.
Where appropriate some topics were aligned to help promote such themes as climate change.

Teachers will develop knowledge organisers (revision notes) to support key topics S1-S3.
Knowledge Organisers were developed across the curriculum, the majority being developed for National 5 and Higher courses, 72% and 48% respectively. This change of focus was due to the urgency brought about by SQA exams. The most common use of Knowledge Organisers are for assessment preparation, summarising key sections of course work, revising key terms and preparing for a new topic. Over a quarter of teachers use them on a weekly basis (26.4%). The majority of pupils (68.4%) stated they only use Knowledge Organisers when preparing for assessments. 23% stated they use them weekly and 8.6% said they use them monthly. 64.8% of pupils found them helpful and 27.1% were undecided.

All departments will map out curricular pathways across all of their courses from the BGE through to the Senior Phase.
The Raising Attainment Leadership group led this initiative and visually mapped out possible curricular pathways within each subject area. This information was used in Tutor Support lessons helping pupils prepare for subject choice, and it was also put onto the school website and the link was sent home to parents to promote informed discussion within the family home. As a result of this work, subject choices were more focussed on career choice, and over 95% of pupils got their first choice of subject.

Next steps:

- Implement inter-disciplinary learning based on key themes.
- Continue to embed hyperlinks to the curriculum map and share this with pupils and parents.
- Continue to develop knowledge organisers as a tool to promote recall.
- Continue to promote and use curricular pathways information to support subject choice and career pathways.

Improvement Project 3: Well-being, Equality and Inclusion
Primary focus: Teacher and practitioner professionalism
Year of Project: 3
Purpose: *This initiative is about promoting social, emotional and mental well-being.*

Progress and impact:

All staff will ensure all learners are familiar with SHANARRI indicators: (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) by referring learners to the LHS HWB logo on their chromebooks and accompanying information displayed in all classroom and department noticeboards.

HWB display boards are across the school. All staff are aware of the SHANARRI indicators and use them to measure pupil need. All staff feed into our referral system, and by using our Dashboard data we have a firm grasp of pupil performance, effort; behaviour, and with our Guidance Team and Senior Management Team we are fully aware of pupil needs in terms of safety, health issues etc. All staff use the GIRFEC framework to ensure pupils are supported at all stages of their learning, and all staff refer pupils, when appropriate, to the HWB page on their chromebooks. The access and usage figures for this webpage on a typical week are as follows: 8, 370 page views; 2, 789 unique visits and on average people read 2.36 pages per visit.

All teaching and support staff will promote and engage with termly whole school health and well-being events within the BGE.

We have embedded Health and Well-being days for S1-S3 across each term where the curriculum is suspended for the day and a range of workshops and experiences are organised for our pupils. The themes of the workshops come from the information we gather from the community as well as the pupil and staff Health and Well-being Committee. External partners, as well as some senior students, deliver the workshops. This has broadened in the last year with our LGBTQ+ month, which has broadened further into our Diversity month. The Diversity Month is being delivered in partnership working between staff and pupils.

All staff will share and promote the school's updated vision, values and aims when finally agreed.

At each pupil assembly and staff meeting some or all aspects of our Vision, Values and Aims are shared. It is evidenced in staff behaviour that our vision, values and aims are embraced.

Next steps:
- Continue to promote and use the SHANARRI indicators to help inform proportionate support for pupils as and when required.
- Continue with our Health and Well-being Days, our Diversity Month and seek out and promote other global issues.
- Promote our Vision, Values and Aims within each classroom.

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Evaluation of Progress

We believe we have made the following progress this session:

Quality Indicator	School self-evaluation
1.3 **Leadership of Change**	Good
2.3 **Learning, teaching and assessment**	Good
3.1 **Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**	Good
3.2 **Raising attainment and achievement**	Satisfactory

Our young people believe we have made the following progress this session:

Theme 1 **Our relationships**	Good
Theme 2 **Our learning and teaching**	Good
Theme 3 **Our school and community**	Good
Theme 4 **Our health and wellbeing**	Good
Theme 5 **Our successes and achievements**	Satisfactory

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

We are confident in our capacity for continous improvement.

Planning Ahead

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Full details of the school's 2022/23 improvement priorities and actions are detailed on the school improvement plan, which can be accessed on our website or by contacting the school office.

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