



## Standards and Quality Report

School: Thurso High School

Head Teacher: H Flavell

Date submitted: 08/09/2022



### Context of the school:

Thurso High School, built in 1958, is the most northerly secondary school on the Scottish mainland serving the coastal town of Thurso and the west of Caithness. We educate around 750 young people in a truly comprehensive environment and are proud of the social diversity of our catchment. We have 7 associated primary schools covering a wide geographic area. More than 50% of pupils use school transport with some pupils travelling up to 20 miles. Staffing can present a challenge and there is continual work in being creative around staffing to meet pupils' curricular needs. Despite this we work hard to offer as broad a curriculum as possible, with a strong partnership with our close geographical neighbour North Highland College and use of online provision from Highland Virtual Academy and E-sGoil digital learning where required. We generally have excellent numbers of pupils moving into positive post-school destinations.

Inclusion is a strong feature of our school with all pupils welcomed and valued equally. We pride ourselves on our provision for pupils with difficulties accessing the curriculum or school life in general with a Nurture programme that includes a Softstart Base, a CSW base with excellent support for pupils and varied further opportunities for pupil support such as mentoring, Resilience groups, Friendship groups, etc. We have an Enhanced Provision base for pupils with severe and complex physical and learning difficulties and can offer pupils, where appropriate, an individualised blend of mainstream and Enhanced Provision learning. We aim to personalise what we offer wherever possible in order to best support all pupils.

We are into our third year of being a Gaelic Medium school, and are now pleased to also offer Gaelic Learners to third year pupils with the aim of extending this to National level next session. Our GME numbers are low but growing year on year.

We have very good behaviour across the school in general, with staff and pupils working together on agreed whole school and classroom procedures. Our whole school work towards 'Creating a Classroom Culture' focuses on consistency of practice across the school with pupils and teachers working in mutually respectful and calm learning environments. Where pupils have greater social, emotional or behavioural needs we work very hard with them, and parents or carers and other partners supporting them, to adapt arrangements that allow them to cope and to support them as fully as possible with this.

Visitors to the school consistently find the pupils of Thurso HS to be polite and helpful and obviously proud of their school, with a warm, friendly atmosphere in the school. We also consistently receive excellent reports of the conduct of our pupils when away from school on trips or outings. We have good parental support through Parent Council and good attendance at Parents' Information Evenings and other school events. We had very good parental support throughout lockdown, with many appreciative messages regarding what the school was doing in this time.

All our staff, teaching and non-teaching, are valued members of our community and all are highly committed to providing the best for the pupils, who in turn contribute in many ways including through our Prefect and House system which promotes our refreshed and updated core values of Teamwork, Respect, Attainment, Commitment and Kindness.

## **Thurso High School Vision, Values and Aims:**

### **Lèirsinn, Luachan is Amasan àrd-sgoil Inbhir Theòrsa:**

#### **Vision**

For every pupil to achieve their potential in a safe, happy and caring environment in which all pupils feel valued.

#### **Lèirsinn**

Airson gach sgoilear comas a choileanadh ann an àrainneachd shàbhailte, thoilichte agus choibhneil far am bi a h-uile sgoilear a' faireachdainn gu bheil luach orra.

#### **Values**

Teamwork, Respect, Achievement, Commitment and Kindness (TRACK)

#### **Luachan**

Obair-sgioba, Urram, Coileanadh, Dealas agus Coibhneil

#### **Aims**

To set high expectations for attainment, achievement, behaviour, attendance and punctuality;

To provide quality learning and teaching experiences for all;

To provide an engaging, challenging and creative curriculum for all learners;

To create an ethos of kindness and respect so all pupils feel included, supported and valued.

#### **Amasan**

Airson dùilean àrda a stèidheachadh airson coileanadh, modh, frithealachadh agus pongalachd;

Airson teagaisg is ionnsachadh càilidheachd a sholarachadh airson a h-uile duine;

Airson Curraicealam tarraingeach, dùbhlach agus cruthachail a sholarachadh airson gach luchd-ionnsachaidh;

Airson nòs de coibhnealas agus urram a chruthachadh gus am bi gach sgoilear a' faireachdainn an lùib, taic agus luach.

## 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, for example:

- Teachers, PSAs and other school staff
- Parents
- Pupils
- Partners that work with and support the school

### 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?**

- In recent years we have revisited and revised our school vision, values and aims in partnership with all staff (teaching and non-teaching), pupils and parents and are working across the school to make this meaningful in tangible ways such as developing our Merit policy and Prefect system and continuing to add to our Nurture programme to support pupils' wellbeing and include all staff in this process through termly Caseload meetings, involving teaching and non-teaching support staff.
- Our close community means that we have a detailed knowledge of the context in which our children and their families live which allows us to tailor our support. We are developing our use of 16+ data and socio-economic reports to focus our DYW interventions. We work closely with local police, SDS, our DYW Coordinator and local Invest in Youth Group. Termly caseload meetings with all support staff to discuss any pupils causing concern allow us to ensure that we are focused on improvement for all.
- Our pupils are well aware of the behavioural framework they work within that has been created through our 'Creating a Classroom Culture' programme, that allows us to define 'this is how we do it round here', and to work consistently to create a mutually respectful learning environment across all classrooms and most staff are applying this much more consistently and with more confidence and calmness. Recent disruption to learning means that a refresh of this is required and this has been partially addressed through a whole staff revision of our Whole School and Classroom procedures and discussion with pupils and a re-visit of the 'Creating a Classroom Culture' programme will be delivered across the session by staff.
- Our 'Ethos leads', part of our leadership at all levels initiative, continue to work with SMT and school staff to embed and review the vision, values and aims of the school, the House and Prefect system. The merit system which is the tangible manifestation of pupils demonstrating our values is reviewed frequently and we aim to continually improve this. Parents are informed when their children receive merits. All staff – not just teaching staff – can award merits to pupils.
- We are continuing to develop a professional learning culture in the school with both whole school and optional/voluntary CPD around classroom culture and research based effective teaching methods, led by staff. A culture of research-informed practice and professional learning, is building among both teachers. This professional learning is built around a newly developed calendar and delivered by the Research Leads with all staff having the opportunity every term to contribute with examples of good practice. We aim to progress at a pace that allows for change to take effect in the classroom and for methodologies to be embedded.
- We continue to offer opportunities for staff to have leadership roles: Research Informed teaching and learning improvement Leads, Ethos Leads, Literacy Lead, Nurture Leads, House Leaders, Google Classroom training, Chromebook training, staff leading CPD on *Creating a Classroom Culture*, Virtual Learning responsibilities, delivering Study Skills sessions to pupils and parents. Lockdown provided further opportunities for staff to lead on delivering GSuite training and on good online delivery practice. Staff are planning and leading Numeracy improvements. PSA staff are also given opportunities to undertake training and take on lead roles in *Growing2gether*, *Softstart*, bereavement counselling, mental health support, etc.
- We create collaborative time for staff to learn with and from others through whole school staff meetings, CPD, planned Inset days, regular Faculty meetings, Professional Reading Group, regular SMT/FH meetings. We are developing a Professional Learning Calendar so that all staff are clear about planning. We hold regular meetings with non-teaching staff also: FM and school technicians, CSWs and PSAs. Any changes proposed are discussed at SMT then FH/SMT level; taken to

teachers and feedback considered before changes are agreed. All staff can contribute items to staff meetings for discussion or suggest where improvements may be made to existing policy. Staff at all levels (including non-teaching) are involved in identifying, and have responsibility for implementing, positive change. More changes are top-down led than initiated by staff and we need to work to address this.

- We have opportunities for staff to learn with and from others through Faculty meetings, whole school planned CPD followed up by Faculty discussion and further optional CPD sessions, through our Teaching and Learning Improvement Group and Professional Reading Group. The focus of the T & L Improvement group is to develop peer teaching observations and peer support across the school; this is being piloted with a small group currently.
- Our School Improvement priorities have led to identification of a clear set of training priorities for staff and appointment of Lead staff to develop and deliver this training. Staff have been involved in agreeing a shared set of standards for good teaching and behaviour leading to our recently created '*Lesson Evaluation Toolkit*', which highlights the elements that will appear in an excellent lesson. Our Teaching and Learning CPD has focused this past session on the elements '*Support*' and '*Challenge*' which together tackle differentiation within the teaching environment. The whole school approach to these has tightened the structure of lessons and has promoted reflective teaching. Lesson observations will be built around this framework with a selected whole school or individual focus from the Toolkit. CPD moving forward will continue to focus on the different elements of the *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit*.
- The school year is organised and regulated against carefully planned calendars: School calendar, Quality Assurance calendar, DYW Calendar, PTPS calendar and Learning Support calendar all contribute to the good running of the school, as will the Professional Learning calendar.
- Staff feel positive about the collective focus of the school and the organised CPD to support this.

## Question 2

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

- Staff/pupil/parent/partner surveys
- See PEF plan review for data on Nurture improvements
- Staff review of whole school CPD
- In class practice of classroom culture CPD and of teaching and learning CPD
- Pupil awareness of merit system, House and prefect system, sanction systems
- Early use of *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit*
- Class observations
- Pupil feedback
- SQA exam results and Insight data

## Question 3

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

- Continued review and development of all professional learning around pedagogy, self-evaluation and classroom observation.
- Re-visit of the '*Creating a Classroom Culture*' programme to be delivered across the session by staff.
- Form a teacher group to discuss the roll out of support for staff in their professional development by the use of '*Personal Learning Plans*' which will be focused on personal targets for improvement of pedagogy based on self-evaluation around elements of the *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit*. The same or a further group to discuss peer teaching observations, also based on the *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit* framework, to allow for collegiate discussion and support.

Our current evaluation of this QI using the *How good is our school? (4th edition)* six-point scale

good

## 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?**

- Our focus on delivering as comprehensive a nurture programme as we are able means that the ethos and culture of our school reflects a commitment to positive relationships and the best learning environment possible. In many classrooms there are positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships and teachers motivate and engage learners through rigour and efficacy in their teaching and classroom management which leads to good learning outcomes for pupils. This is developed through continued professional learning around classroom culture and the consistency of practice across the school with clear measures in place, fully supported by SMT, works to allow our classrooms to be good learning environments. These measures have been discussed and agreed with staff and pupils and shared with parents. Professional learning around evidence-based approaches to further improve teaching and learning includes an agreed framework for shared understanding of the elements that make an excellent lesson and CPD on developing each aspect of this framework; use of the framework in class observations and subsequent collegiate discussion; use of the framework in individual teacher professional development and self/faculty/school evaluation; access for teachers to literature through shared articles in termly Newsletters, a Professional Reading library and a Professional Reading group.
- Many of our learners are engaged and motivated by their success and as we are working on teacher delivery being more focused on what makes for the most effective learning this includes increased low stakes, frequent assessment in class aiming for a high success rate. We also have a planned programme for pupils learning study techniques from S1-S6 with more formal assessment periods in S2 and S3 now also being introduced in S1 to allow pupils to learn the skills needed to be successful at an earlier stage. These skills are shared with parents through information sessions to allow them to also support their children.
- *Support and challenge* within our lessons is our most recent focus and teachers are working on learners' experiences in class being tailored accordingly. Examples of good practice in this area were shared at a recent staff CPD.
- The school has supported all teachers and PSAs to develop their skill in the use of digital technologies which has maximised the potential of the pupil use of their Chromebooks and of the online delivery when required. Google Classroom is used in all lessons as a matter of course and many teachers have excellent skills in the use of GSuite following intensive in school peer CPD in previous sessions; digitalisation of resources has made learning more accessible to pupils. The use of Google Apps and others has facilitated this greatly and these are becoming embedded in long term planning/ resource development.
- Our work on developing pupils' Study Techniques, shared with all staff and parents, is helping pupils to become independent learners. Pupils are given Revision Timetables and Guides to Study for all subjects to support their revision. Recent introduction of planned homework throughout the BGE is also part of this. Focus on support and challenge in classrooms also ensures pupils are developing knowledge and skills with the support they need to eventually work independently.
- We are working hard on developing pedagogy across the school with an ongoing planned programme of whole school professional learning on becoming more research informed teachers. This is based around our 'Lesson Evaluation Toolkit' which forms the framework for excellent lessons. The elements of this include daily review, explanation, practice, support, challenge, making pupils think, feedback and checking for understanding as well as appropriate classroom culture. Our CPD is led by staff and professional learning opportunities include a professional reading group, access to relevant books in a staff library, Teaching and Learning Newsletters, Faculty discussions and whole school sharing of good practice.
- Our teaching improvements are making for better teacher and pupil feedback; more focus on recall/retrieval and questioning to emphasise links to prior learning and check for understanding in many classes; movement towards more direct instruction, with emphasis on subject knowledge as well as skills, clarity of explanation and clear modelling.
- Our assessment programme starts in the classroom with daily retrieval and low stakes, frequent assessment. We have introduced 'assessment periods' for S2 and S3 to support them with increasing their study skills in preparing for SQA assessment and therefore improving their confidence and skills as independent learners and decreasing anxiety. These assessment periods feed into tracking dates. Formal assessments last session in the Senior school were very carefully planned and moderation processes were excellent following SG/HC guidance; teachers are more skilled in this area as a result.
- We have very good, manageable, recently reviewed, processes for recording progress in SP and in BGE on a whole school level and within faculties. These are analysed at a teacher, faculty and whole school level to ensure progress for learners. Interventions by Guidance and Year Heads following tracking are carried out where needed. Merits are awarded following Tracking where earned. Tracking has become more effective with the additional use of 'Pupil Attainment Summaries' with

clearer overviews developed to show a pupil's academic journey through THS. These are used to inform Guidance teachers' advice to pupils at option choice times. Our ASN pupils have AAR where needed in a carefully planned way. We use SNSA data, Insight analyses and Highland Council data sets to analyse performance and plan for improvement.

- We involve learners and parents in planning our Senior Phase curriculum through option surveys and Parent Information Evenings. Parents are informed through regular tracking reports, attendance reports, homework reports in BGE, Google Guardian emails, regular school information emails, Facebook page and website; they have been involved in policy development such as the Vision, Values and Aims refresh and the school Anti-Bullying policy development. We would like to hold some parental focus groups at appropriate opportunities also and improve the website further.
- Although we feature these on our school Facebook page when we know of them, Learners' wider achievements are not recognised in a systematic way; more work is needed in this area.
- We use outdoor spaces where relevant, such as for field trips, Duke of Edinburgh, ski trips, sports/clubs, outings for certain groups. We would like to have better outdoor facilities and also to develop other outdoor activities such as mountain biking.

#### Gaelic Medium

- Our Gaelic medium pupils feel confident using Gaelic while in Gaelic Medium classes but do find it challenging to maintain fluency in the language as they are not exposed to it every day or given the opportunity to use the language every day.
- Gaelic medium pupils have access to two additional subjects through the Medium of Gaelic – Modern Studies and Computing – therefore expanding their Gaelic vocabulary. They have the opportunity to participate in Gaelic activities such as FilmG and the Mòd; however due to recent COVID restrictions opportunities have been limited.

#### Question 2

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

- Teaching observations.
- Classroom behaviour and adherence to school procedures.
- Use of technology in teaching.
- Engagement and attendance data.
- In school teaching observations; pupil conduct.
- Teacher feedback on CPD.
- Pupil use of study techniques.
- FH feedback on Pupil Attainment Summaries.
- Feedback from Gaelic medium pupils.

#### Question 3

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

- Continue to improve pedagogy across the school with a 'Professional Learning Calendar' of planned events with a clear focus around the *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit* for next session.
- Refresh and revisit our Classroom Culture.
- Introduce S1 Assessment period into School calendar.
- Hold parent focus groups.
- Develop our Gaelic medium programme as this rolls out with added year groups each year.
- Look at how to recognise pupil wider achievement.
- Develop more opportunities for younger pupils to take on leadership roles.
- Develop clearer focuses on improvements for groups that may be at risk, such as CEYP, pupils with FSM, etc; ensure that all staff are aware of the pupils in these groups.
- Improve pupils' awareness at a younger age of what their future targets may be.
- Familiarise with the new SNSA reports; have a more systematic approach to data tracking in the BGE, using SNSA, ACEL and Faculty tracking.

**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**

## 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?**

- We are in the process of completely reviewing and revising our PSE programme, in consultation with pupils. This programme has a specifically designed curriculum with a clear narrative and links to delivery by other subjects in some areas and to issues across the school. It covers all aspects of wellbeing identified by pupils including much more specific work on good mental health. It has the opportunity for pupils to achieve the following Awards and Units in the course of S1 – 5: Wellbeing, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Personal Development, Employability, Internet Safety and Developing Essential Skills for Work. Also included is the 'Bloom' programme to develop Senior pupil resilience. This adds to the support already offered to BGE pupils in this area so pupils are taught resilience strategies from S1.
- S1/2 Health and Wellbeing courses link closely to the PSE curriculum and have strong themes of self-help and resilience. Parts of the PSE course are delivered by Health and Wellbeing staff.
- Last session we reviewed and developed our policy on Anti-bullying in consultation with pupils, parents and staff. The new policy includes both pupil and parent guides for preventing and dealing with bullying. All BGE pupils underwent a term of work in PSE to address bullying issues, including cyber bullying.
- Our ASL information is carefully collected at P7/S1 transition time and records kept that all staff access and our AAR processes have been reviewed and improved, ensuring all pupils have access to the support they should have. We have very good knowledge of all our pupils and this is shared through termly 'caseload' meetings for all pupils with SMT, Guidance, LS, Nurture Leads and CSWs allowing for tailored support to be put in place for individuals. Where required, carefully adapted timetables are created and utilised to allow pupils the best opportunity to engage and to achieve.
- The Nurture programme we deliver through our PEF plan offers comprehensive and varied support to individual pupils and to groups in S1-3. This includes a Softstart, a Mentoring programme, an Attendance and Family Support lead including support for pupils who are habitually late to school, termly caseload meetings, Social groups, lunchtime 'Safespace', Dance groups, Fireskills, Growing2gether, Resilience, Healthy Eating Cooking Club, Craft club, Study Techniques delivery, whole year group (S1/2) Literacy and Numeracy development programmes, as well as individual support to attain Literacy and Numeracy levels where required.  
Many of these are the responsibility of unpromoted staff allowing for leadership at all levels.  
All of these allow pupils to engage with learning in a more effective way that they may have done without – see *Thurso High School Pef Plans 2021-22 and 2022-23*.
- Opportunities to lead learning are many in S6: the House system (Head boy/girl, House Captains, Prefects) and the S6 Opportunities programme including Paired Readers, BGE Homework Club, Subject Ambassadors, groups such as Fund Raising and Sustainability, S6/S1 transferrable skills development, Befrienders, Rotary Interact, etc. All of these allow pupils to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community.  
In S3 pupils take part in the very successful YPI programme as well as Growing Together and FireStarters. More opportunities are needed for younger pupils to take on leadership roles other than House Council reps.  
Pupils' contributions and work are recognised as valued through the merit system based upon our values, TRACK. Their views are sought through House Councils. We need to do more work with embedding the House Councils.
- Staff CPD on creating nurturing classrooms and a classroom culture that allows for learning for everyone to take place will be re-visited in the coming session. The stresses that are showing in some pupils require us with ever more consistency to be 'kind but firm' and to run classrooms that are safe places for all and to have a school environment in which all pupils feel supported, safe and cared for. Teachers actively promote positive relationships in the classroom but there is a need following lockdown to re-visit our school community shared understanding of wellbeing and the importance of the individual and the need for a strong, supportive environment for staff and pupils.
- We have very good relationships with partners: CSWs, FM staff, DYW Co-ordinator and Invert in Youth Group, Airport House, HVA, SDS, School nurses, ASG, HVA, Scottish Counselling, YPI, CASWA, Rotary Interact, Caithness Klics, SALT, e-Sgoil, etc and we have made good progress this session with building relationships with further partners; following a multi-agency meeting with many school partners we have contact with, or increased contact with: Children's Reporter, YAT, Primary mental health support, Development Officer for CEYP, Northern Constabulary, Barnardos, Planet Youth, CSWs, YDO, Primary Mental Health Worker, MAMs, Mikeysline, Bloom, MFMS, Care for Caithness, CAMHS.
- Pupils are treated as individuals at all times. We hold termly 'caseload' meetings with SMT/FHASN/PTPSs/CSWs/Nurture leads to discuss and evaluate all pupils across the school and to plan interventions where necessary using a school based referral form to keep track of these; as a result we have a widespread and shared knowledge of all pupils and as far as possible do not miss out children in need of help.

- We deliver a wide range of planned nurture support involving Guidance, CSW staff, PSAs, teachers, non-teaching staff; all school staff are invested in support of our pupils; we are continually looking at other innovative ways in which we can support pupils using local partners such as dance classes, baking, individual literacy/numeracy support, etc. We adapt timetables creatively where required to cater for individual needs and review these on a very regular basis. We make full use of HVA to support learning from home where required by individual circumstances; effective use of Google classrooms, following the improved skills of pupils and staff in use of GSuite, enables pupils absent or unable to attend to keep up with in-class work to do so.
- We make full use the support offered by our off site provision at Airport House and have recently developed a shared policy with Wick High School and APH Manager to ensure shared priorities for pupils, good communication, etc.
- The re-designed PSE programme has a much increased focus on resilience and mental health and includes the Bloom programme for developing resilience in older pupils; the S1/2 H&WB lessons also contribute in these areas. The school has been working with the Planet Youth project with a view to supporting wellbeing in the community this session. This is an area that all staff and pupils are more aware of post Covid.
- Our CSW base provides safe places for pupils at break and lunchtimes; our LS base provides similarly for autistic pupils. We will offer a further Safespace for pupils at lunchtime run by the YDO.
- School values were agreed a few years ago and are now widely understood by staff and pupils. We continually look for opportunities to reinforce these and to award merits based on our values.
- S6 Opportunities programme allows senior pupils to support other pupils through for example the Buddy system, Paired Reading, Homework Club or as Prefects and encourages pupil investment in specific subjects and to contribute proactively to the good running of the school.
- Much improved transition processes ensure better information gathering and more targeted support to ensure all pupil receive an appropriate transition from P7 into S1. We review these processes each year and have developed a calendar to support this.
- Targeted learners have been clearly identified for additional curricular support in Maths and English, whether this is delivered in-class, by limited extraction, or within the enhanced provision.
- A whole school 'Activity Week' at the end of session allowed all pupils to enjoy teamwork and wider achievement activities. It allowed opportunities for Prefects and S6 pupils to help younger classes.

## Question 2

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

- Referrals from Caseload meetings and Welfare Group meetings leading to improved circumstances for pupils and increased awareness of individual circumstances.
- Data from individual Nurture provisions, eg the Mentoring programme (*see PEF review*).
- Records of vulnerable pupil individual support throughout lockdown; records of pupil engagement throughout lockdown.
- Classroom observations.
- Feedback from S1 pupils following transition.
- Data from Literacy/English and Numeracy/Maths support classes.
- Feedback from pupils.
- Pupil Mental Health survey
- Our Shanarri School survey

## Question 3

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

- Following our work on our Anti Bullying policy, developing our policy on Equality and Inclusion in the same way – including parents and other partners in this process.
- Develop opportunities for pupil leadership further down the school.
- Embed and review new PSE programme; get pupil feedback on this.
- Improve the sharing of pupil info with staff and communication with staff following any incident reported.



- Develop our autism and dyslexia support.
- Develop an LGBT group within the school.
- Offer a further Safespace for pupils at lunchtime run by the YDO.
- Continue to improve the ways in which we support pupils with their mental health.
- More work on embedding the House Councils and acting on feedback.

**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?**

- Targeted support on a 1-1 or very small group basis was delivered to pupils in S3-6 to ensure as far as possible that all pupils had a qualification in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Our *S1/2 Literacy Development* programme delivered by English Faculty to all S1/2 pupils one period per week in set classes has been further developed and embedded; this ability tiered programme has been developed by the department and Literacy lead based around the book *'The Writing Revolution: A Guide to Advancing Thinking Through Writing in all Subjects and Grades'* by Judith C Hochman and Natalie Wexler.
- Block testing of all S1 (and P7 if possible in coming session) pupils each year to provide a baseline using BPVS and Vernon spelling tests by PSAs trained in this testing took place. The data was analysed along with other data (transition information, CfE levels and SNSA data) and pupils were identified as:
  - requiring very specific and high frequency intervention using the 'Fresh Start' programme that ASN staff are trained in; pupils extracted in a very small group;
  - requiring more support than their peers and therefore being included in a smaller 'sixth set' in S1 and S2 English classes for 5 periods across the week or in S3 being recommended to take the elective *Literacy* course (3 periods /week); S1/2 pupils recommended for Paired Reading with S6 partner;
  - not needing specific extra support but being ranked for information to staff on their literacy ability to support teachers in gauging expectation of performance in other subjects.
- Literacy Lead who
  - Organised training for the S6/S1 paired readers.
  - Worked with the English Department on the development of the S1/2 Literacy Development programme.
  - Organised literacy 'walk throughs' to gather information on opportunities in different subject areas for improving literacy skills without adding to teacher load.
  - Determined a literary focus for the wider school each term linked to the programme above and has led CPD sessions on vocabulary and etymology.
- Production by Maths staff of a comprehensive Numeracy Development programme for S1/2 with plans for S3 onwards and for working with Primaries also, that involves testing at different stages and addressing the gaps identified with materials that are appropriate for different levels, etc. This includes an extra set in S1/2/3 being offered in Maths with a small number of pupils to support those with the greatest need; ASNTs to work with this group. Also, the creation of lessons for different levels and topics; diagnostic assessments have been created and delivered for each element of the numeracy programme to gather quantitative data on how pupils are doing in each part. This is a programme planned over the next few years.
- Tracking and Learner journey records (Pupil Attainment Summaries) have supported PTPSs to give effective advice to pupils at key points; they also enable teachers to measure a pupil's progress from S1- S6 and to identify any not progressing or progressing differently in different subjects and to allow for these pupils to be supported; interventions by PTPSs are carried out following each tracking period. Pupils in SP at risk of not achieving an award are supported to achieve Units wherever possible.

- A planned programme of assessment in S2/3, to be extended to S1, allows pupils to learn how to prepare effectively for assessment and to therefore be confident over the assessment process and to feel motivation through success. This has led to pupils in S4 being more prepared for this year's SQA assessments and more confident.
- Improved delivery of a planned programme of study techniques by a teacher Lead to S2 pupils upwards aims to support pupils to take increased responsibility for their own learning and achievement and to study effectively; this information is shared with parents also through evening sessions. This is coupled with a greatly increased focus in subjects on clarity of *what* must be learned and *how* this knowledge should be applied. This to be extended to S1.
- Across some subject areas through our improvements to our teaching practices we have maintained high standards of attainment; for others we have raised attainment. In some subjects we have some of the highest uptakes in the region, in some subjects we have some of the best attainment in the region.
- We have worked hard to increase our curricular offering in the Senior Phase for both forward and sideways progression. We have added opportunities for pupils to achieve at the level above wherever possible. We also deliver carefully planned individual timetables for pupils who require these, that make best use of partners such as North Highland College, Airport House and Highland Virtual Academy. This allows as many pupils as possible to achieve their potential by following appropriate pathways. Most of our learners move into positive destinations.
- Research Leads deliver a planned programme of CPD to staff involving teacher input and sharing of good practice. This is improving the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms which supports equity of opportunity for all. Literacy is a focus across the school with CPD reference to many strategies to support literacy becoming more embedded in classroom teaching. Where possible awards are banked to ensure as many pupils as possible have achieved a portfolio of awards on leaving school.
- Our S6 Opportunities programme allows senior pupils to exercise responsibility and to contribute to the life of the school and we have been adding to and developing this.
- Our new PSE programme will allow all pupils S1-5 to achieve further SQA awards – see above.
- Pupil House Councils held termly and run by the House Captains and teacher House Leaders allow all pupils to contribute their ideas and suggestions for the running of the school. The feedback from these are taken to SMT and actions fed back to the pupils.
- Our Attendance and Family support lead helps those pupils and their families struggling to engage with school.
- Detailed analysis of SQA and Insight data informs decisions.
- We have recently reviewed and amended our Target Setting policy in the Senior school and tracking of progress to allow for better parental understanding.
- Many THS staff have used the recent pandemic to increase communication and sharing of materials and resources with other schools within the region as well as working collaboratively on moderation procedures.
- Our delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh award has continued throughout the pandemic allowing pupil access to a very valuable wider achievement opportunity. We have pupils due to complete their Silver Award this session.

## Question 2

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

- Literacy and Numeracy – see PEF review.
- SQA results
- Pupil and staff feedback

## Question 3

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

- Continue to develop and embed our *S1/2 Literacy Development* programme.
- Continue to develop and embed our Numeracy Development programme.
- Extend our planned programme of assessment to S1 pupils.
- Extend our planned programme of study techniques to S1.
- Focus on the subjects and levels that are attaining less strongly than others to provide more targeted support.
- Develop and embed our PSE programme.

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

## KEY THEME from QI 2.2 Curriculum

### Theme 3

- Learning pathways

#### 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 “Learning pathways”.

- Learner journey records (*Pupil Attainment Summaries*) to help track and support each learner’s pathway give clearer overviews to show a pupil’s academic journey through THS and to support staff in directing this journey.
- Where possible alternative curricula are designed to suit the needs of individual pupils. We make excellent use of what North Highland College has to offer as well as HVA and other online providers. We make good use of what partners can offer to meet the needs of pupils in these cases.
- Where possible we have added courses to S3 and the Senior Phase which allow for further pathway options and breadth for pupils.
- Our DYW programme supports pupils with experiences, career information and advice. The recent appointment of a DYW Coordinator will greatly help with the delivery of this programme.
- Pupils’ destinations are carefully monitored through 16+ and we work with SDS and the DYW Coordinator to support those that need help.
- Some Faculties have done work on their curriculum design to ensure relevance of all areas and clear progression and opportunity for pupils to build on previous knowledge as they progress. This needs to become a whole school focus.
- Some subjects have done work to add greater challenge to courses - this also needs to become a whole school focus.
- Our literacy development plans will involve all teachers in supporting pupils to improve their literacy skills; all teachers make excellent use of digital technologies and support pupils to develop digital literacy.
- Clear progression routes in subjects are identified in options materials and in tracking/ reporting information.

#### Question 2

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

- 16+ data
- Subject curriculum design
- Staff use of *Pupil Attainment Summaries*
- Availability of appropriate pathways for pupils at subject choice times
- Option forms and tracking

### Question 3

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

- Work with the new My Future My Success initiative to address those pupils at risk of no positive destination.
- Work with all Faculties to review curricula across the school; look at how these curricula link to each other and include this in the planning.
- Share information on pathway possibilities and subjects more effectively with pupils and parents.

## KEY THEME from Q1 2.7 Partnerships

### Theme 3

- Impact on learners (focus on parental engagement)

### Question 1

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

- A DYW Coordinator was appointed to further develop employability skills and help more students to secure positive destinations beyond school further strengthened by partnership with SDS.
- Strong College links and use of HVA help to ensure effective attainment pathways for pupils with the school having a proactive approach to guiding pupils to positive destinations through the recently developed S1-S5 DYW programme in PSE.
- Parents have increased information via regular email, group call texts, website and through Google Guardian which gives greater knowledge of events and running of the school and individual pupil issues; we use Facebook to share positive events and success with the wider community; we have increased the frequency and relevance of Tracking information to allow parents to be better informed over pupil progress.
- We are working collaboratively with Wick High School and the manager of Airport House to improve the ways in which this off-site provision for our pupils operates.
- We make excellent use of the CSW support and base within the school and also the outreach CSW support from the off-site provision.
- Our Attendance and Family support lead works with pupils and their families where required to help them engage with school and improve their attendance.
- We have shared information on how parents can support their children with study skills and with school life in general.
- We have good partnerships with SDS, school nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, Rotary Interact, Fire Brigade, Northern Constabulary, Befriending Caithness, Youth Action Team, Invest in Youth Group, YPI, Social work partners, the Children's Reporter, etc.

### Question 2

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

- Support in place from different sources for pupils.
- Attendance and Family support data – see PEF data.
- Partner feedback.
- College subject take-up figures.

**Question 3**

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

Develop our partnership with the newly appointed assistant YDOs.