

STANDARDS & QUALITY REPORT ALNESS ACADEMY

2022/23



Alness Academy

HIGHLAND COUNCIL | ALNESS ACADEMY DRIVE, ALNESS IV17 0WA

Introduction: Local and National Context

Ro-ràdh: Co-theacsa Ionadail agus Nàiseanta

This Standards and Quality Report is influenced by both Highland and national priorities. These can be summarised as follows:

Highland Priorities



National Improvement Framework Priorities



Entitlement, Excellence & Equity:

We will raise attainment and achievement for all, especially for children and young people from disadvantaged circumstances, including rural deprivation. We will focus relentlessly on improving standards and the quality of learning and teaching, to ensure that entitlement, equity and excellence are delivered across the system.

Empowerment & Leadership:

We will develop leadership skills at all levels of the system, for now and the future, building a culture of empowerment and professional capital.

Relationships:

We will maximise health and wellbeing for all children and young people, to give them the best possible start in life. We will ensure every child and young person feels part of the community they live in.

Opportunity:

We will maximise opportunities for our children and young people, and for the wider Highland community and its visitors, through the provision of high-quality services.

The key priorities outlined in the National Improvement Framework are:

- Placing the **human rights and needs of every child** and young person at the centre of education
- Improvement in children and young people's **health and wellbeing**
- **Closing the attainment gap** between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
- Improvement in skills and **sustained, positive school-leaver destinations** for all young people
- **Improvement in attainment**, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Self-evaluation

To support self-evaluation, quality indicators from the national evaluative framework How Good Is Our School?4 are referenced.

Links to these sources (and others referenced) can be found here:

- [National Improvement Framework Improvement Plan](#)
- [HGIOS? 4](#) and [HGIOELC](#)
- [Health and Social Care Standards](#)
- [National Gaelic Language Plan](#)

In this report the following words are used to describe the numbers and proportions used:

All	Almost all	Most	Majority	Less than half	Few
100%	91% - 99%	76% - 90%	51% - 75%	16% - 50%	Up to 15%

We are pleased to present our Standards and Quality Report for Session 2022-23. This report forms part of our quality improvement framework and provides important information regarding our school's progress to date and our next steps in school improvement.

Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement is at the heart of our practice. We continue to develop our practice in making robust use of evidence as a basis for judgements regarding the impact of our work on our learners. All staff understand that self-evaluation is an integral aspect of our approach to continuous improvement through addressing the 3 key questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

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. We inform decision making and actions through a continuous process of looking inwards, outwards and forwards.

Looking inwards - starts with those working with our children and young people

We focus on the impact on outcomes for learners. Our self-evaluation processes triangulate information, data, people's views and observation of practice to measure impact and inform planning for improvement.

Looking outwards - learning from others

Looking to others for new ideas that challenge our practice and support continuous improvement allows us to learn from what works and what doesn't. This includes practice in other schools, learning communities and learning from educational research.

Looking forwards - creating a vision and planning for implementation

Through leadership at all levels, we anticipate challenges and explore creative solutions. This helps us to create an aspirational vision for our school which shapes our actions and provides a focus for 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 to shape our improvement journey.

When we develop our improvement plan, we use key questions at scheduled review times throughout the session to know how well we are progressing towards achieving these positive outcomes and changes.



Together we are working hard to ensure the Highlands is the best place for children and young people to grow up safely, learn, develop and achieve.

With positive experiences, our children and young people will always see the Highlands as home.

Le eòlasan deimhinneach, bidh ar cloinn is ar n-òigridh daonnan a' faicinn na Gàidhealtachd mar dhachaigh.

Craig Paterson
Head Teacher
Alness Academy

School Profile

Pròifil na Sgoile

The following information can be found on [Parentzone Scotland](https://www.parentzone.scot.nhs.uk/). It is important to remember that statistical data alone is not a measure of how well we are doing. All schools are unique. To understand how well we are doing it is important for us to look at a range of different data sources.

Pupil Numbers	Attendance	Teacher Numbers	Pupil Teacher Ratio	Meeting PE Target
488	85.8%	39%	12.6%	Target Not Met

S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
18.9%	22.7%	20.1%	19.7%	12.3%	6.4%

SIMD Q1	SIMD Q2	SIMD Q2	SIMD Q3	SIMD Q4	SIMD Q5
40-50%	20-30%	20-30%	20-30%	0-10%	0-10%

ASN	No ASN	FSM	No FSM	EAL	No EAL
50-60%	40-50%	10-20%	80-90%	0 - 10%	90-100%

Attainment in literacy and numeracy:

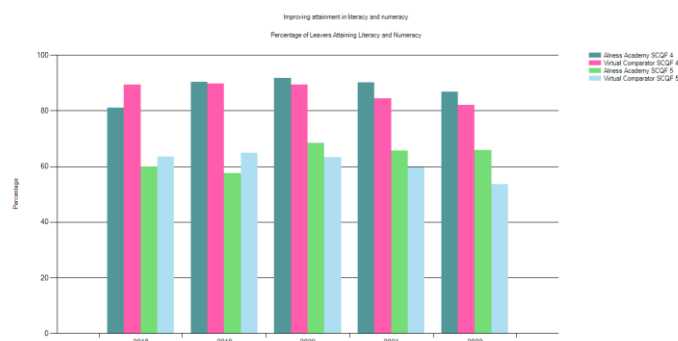
Broad General Education

2022/23 Proportions of pupils achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence Levels at S3

Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Numeracy
Majority	Majority	Majority	Less than half

Literacy & Numeracy

Literacy and Numeracy at the point at which students leave is an area of strength at Alness Academy. For the third year in a row Alness Academy is above virtual comparator for literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 4 & Level 5. Most students leaving Alness Academy in 2022 achieved level 4 literacy and numeracy and the majority achieved level 5.



Senior Phase

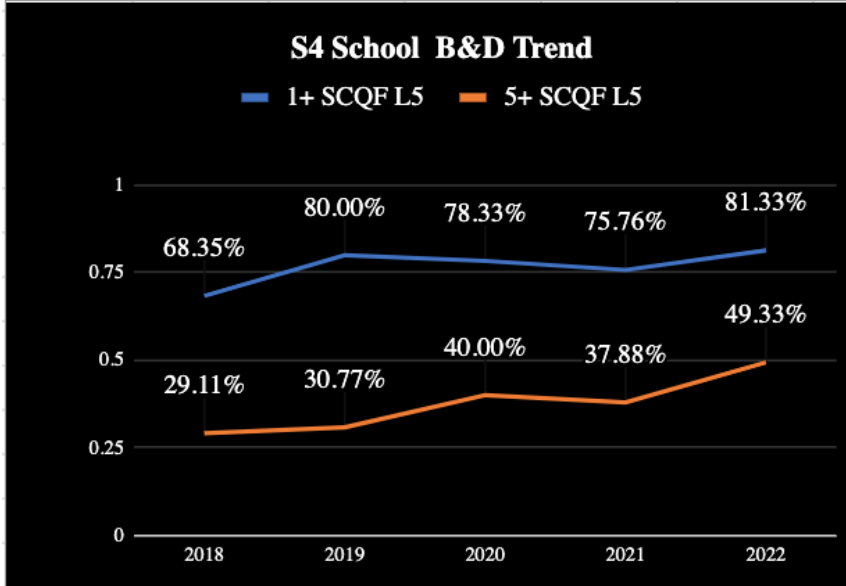
S4 have performed well in 2022

S4 1@5 = 81.3%

S4 5@5 = 49.3%

1@5 best in 5 years

5@5 best in 5 years



S5 have performed less well in 2022

S5 1@6 = 59.62%

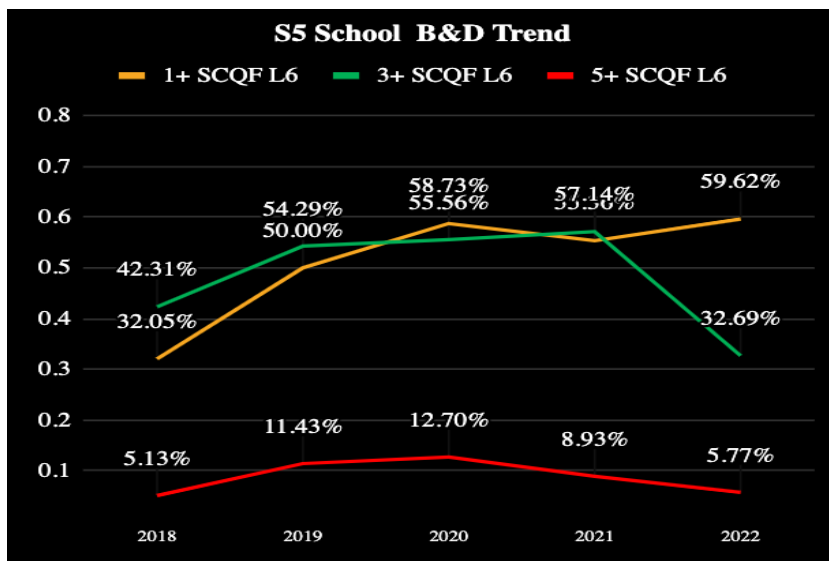
S5 3@6 = 32.6%

S5 5@6 = 5.7%

1@6 best in 5 years

3@6 lowest in 5 years

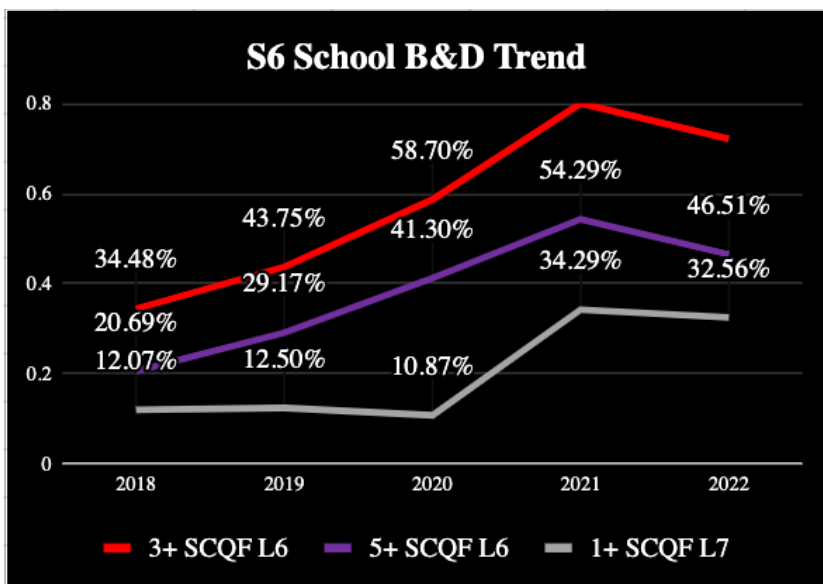
5@6 second lowest in 5 years



S6 have performed less well than 2021 but show a considerable improvement on preceding years

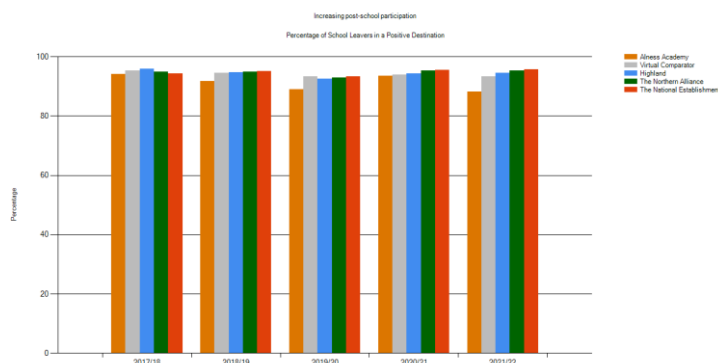
S6 1@6 = 72%
 S6 3@6 = 46.5%
 S6 5@6 = 32.5%

3@6 second best in 5 years
 5@6 second best in 5 years
 1@7 second best in 5 years



School Leavers

Positive destinations at Alness Academy sit at 88%. This represents 9 leavers not in a positive destination at the time of leaving school. 3 of these leavers are now in a positive destination and 2 now have training in place or a destination arranged. In 2022 Most students who left Alness Academy moved on to a positive destination.



The small number of exclusions that occur in schools may lead to individual pupils being identified, therefore this data is not contained in this report. If you have any questions about exclusions, you should contact us directly.

School vision, values and aims

Lèirsinn, luachan agus amasan na sgoile

Our Vision is that Alness Academy will be a school where positive relationships are key to everything we do and where everyone's pathway is held in equal esteem.

Our core values are Leadership, Aspiration & Compassion.

Our aim is that our curriculum at Alness Academy serves students as individuals, develops their resilience and enhances opportunities for learning which opens up the pathway to their chosen destination

Review of progress for session

Ath-sgrùdadh air adhartas airson an t-seisein

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

School Priority:

Embed Pivotal Practice

Purpose:

A key part of the culture of Alness Academy is to create a school built on relationships, student wellbeing and restorative practice. We have taken steps toward beginning this journey during school session 22/23. We have engaged with restorative practice specialists CPI who have carried out a behaviour and culture health check of the school. We have trained three members of staff as pivotal practice trainers and restorative practice champions. Our aim was to begin embedding the five pillars of pivotal practice at Alness Academy.

Actions

- ✓ Share the CPI behaviour and culture health check report and feedback
- ✓ Engage with CPI through behaviour and culture workshops
- ✓ Embed pivotal practice recommendations through staff training, practice sharing and reflection inserts throughout the year
- ✓ Reimagine and streamline our relationships policy
- ✓ Restorative practice champions to train staff in pivotal practice

Progress:

- ✓ **This project links to key drivers within the National Improvement Framework:**
- ✓ School improvement
- ✓ School leadership
- ✓ Teacher professionalism
- ✓ **This project links to Highland Council Education Priorities:**
- ✓ We will develop leadership skills at all levels of the system for now and the future, building a culture of empowerment and professional capital.

- ✓ Through the implementation of this project good progress has been towards national and local priorities

Impact:

- ✓ Intended impact of this project was better behaviour and improved relationships at Alness Academy. Impact is demonstrated through:

Staff Self Reflection

- ✓ During self-reflection activities staff were asked:
- ✓ *'Do you feel that beginning to embed Pivotal Practice has improved the culture of the school?'*

- ✓ *Responses were:*

- ✓ Yes -73.3%
- ✓ No -26.7%
- ✓ This shows that the majority of staff feel that Pivotal Practice is leading to an improvement in the culture of the school

Student Voice

- ✓ During student surveys based on HGIOURS young people were asked whether they agreed with the statement below:
- ✓ *'Good relationships with staff help us to learn'*
- ✓ 34.4% Strongly agreed
- ✓ 29.5% Agreed
- ✓ This shows that the majority of students strongly value positive relationships with staff and see this as important for learning. Therefore, a strategy of embedding relational practice in the school is seen as important, valuable and effective by our students.

Improvement in behaviour tracking data

- ✓ When compared to term 1 the average weekly behaviour demerits at Alness Academy in term 3 had reduced by 57.28%. This trend has continued into term 4 where average weekly behaviour demerits remain the same as term 3.
- ✓ This shows that behaviour and relationships at Alness Academy have dramatically improved across school year 22/23
- ✓ Due to a strategy of developing a school culture based on relational practice at Alness Academy behaviour has improved at Alness Academy over school year 22/23. Good progress was made in this area

Next steps:

- ✓ **Pivotal Practice will remain a key focus for staff professional learning in 23/24 which will be facilitated through additional mid term professional learning meetings agreed through the working time agreement.**

School Priority:

Embed Merit & Demerit tracking system

Purpose:

Over the course of school year 21/22 Alness Academy used the Seemis referral system to support our relationship policy. During 22/23 we moved to embed the Seemis Merit & Demerit system. Our aim is to create a more streamlined, effective and less work heavy system contributing to a school culture where there is more talking and less typing.

Actions:

- ✓ Use Seemis Merit system to track positive behaviour
- ✓ Use Merit data to allocate positive reinforcement to students.
- ✓ Use Seemis Demerit system to track behaviour referrals
- ✓ Data fed back to parents on a daily/weekly basis
- ✓ Data used to inform conversations and allocate actions at daily morning meeting
- ✓ SLT/Student Support Team to use data to inform reflections and interventions at weekly intervention meeting

Progress:

- ✓ **This project links to key drivers within the National Improvement Framework:**
- ✓ Parental engagement
- ✓ Assessment of children's progress
- ✓ Performance Information
- ✓ Through the implementation of this project good progress has been towards national priorities

Impact:

- ✓ Intended impact of this project was a streamlined system for behaviour tracking which will reduce staff workload and improve tracking of behaviour and achievement at Alness Academy. Impact is demonstrated through:

LEADERSHIP ASPIRATION COMPASSION

Staff focus groups

- ✓ Staff focus groups have identified a reduction in workload associated with the move away from SEEMIS referrals and the implementation of the merit/demerit system with associated benefits for planning and preparation time for learning and teaching.

Quantitative Data

- ✓ Quantitative data demonstrates that staff have engaged well with and made good use of the Merit and Demerit system.
- ✓ There have been 2,131 engagements with the demerit system and 18,061 engagements with the merit system. This gives 20,192 total engagements with new system during school year 22/23
- ✓ This shows that staff value the system and engage well with it. It also evidences the impact of pivotal pillar 3 'first attention for best conduct' and a growing school culture of positivity and praise first.

Parental Engagement

- ✓ There have been 126 positive parental engagements with the school regarding merits where parents have contacted the 'AAMerit' inbox to enquire about further details about a merit text.
- ✓ This shows that parents value and engage well with the system

Celebration of Achievement

- ✓ Three prizes at prize giving are now directly linked to the merit system.
- ✓ As a result of the merit system being implemented 78 students were identified during school year 22/23 as having gone over and above and were invited our monthly 'Fine Piece Friday' celebration of positive achievement. This allows us to track, record and praise achievement and demonstrates that the system results in positive interventions and creates opportunities to praise and celebrate students. Achievements were then highlighted through school social media.
- ✓ Due to the implementation of the Merit & Demerit tracking system Alness Academy now has an easy to use system for tracking, monitoring and putting interventions in place for behaviour and achievement.

Next steps:

Further development of praise and reward system at Alness Academy to capitalise on achievement data being gathered.

School Priority:

Differentiation – Develop and embed the 'Alness Way'

Purpose:

Over the course of school year 21/22 we reflected as professionals and identified differentiation as a key priority in strengthening learning and teaching at Alness Academy. In order to provide a consistent whole school approach, the development of a system of universal differentiation will be a key priority for school improvement at Alness Academy in 22/23. However, this project will begin in school year 22/23 but will continue into school year 23/24 and beyond.

Actions:

- ✓ A differentiation working group will form in Alness Academy to drive the project forward
- ✓ Staff will work together to develop a system of supportive scaffolding for learning and teaching in their subject areas
- ✓ Staff will work together to develop a system to support and stretch fast finishers through fast finishing projects
- ✓ Targets will be co-created termly and good practice shared through termly SIP meetings

Progress:

- ✓ **This project links to key drivers within the National Improvement Framework:**
- ✓ School improvement
- ✓ School leadership
- ✓ Teacher professionalism
- ✓ **This project links to Highland Council Education Priorities:**
- ✓ We will develop leadership skills at all levels of the system for now and the future, building a culture of empowerment and professional capital.

- ✓ Through the implementation of this project satisfactory progress has been towards national and local priorities

Impact:

- ✓ Intended impact of this project was more accessible learning and teaching at Alness Academy. Impact is demonstrated through:

Differentiation Audit

- ✓ Faculty audit of levels and courses with universal differentiation now show that when compared with 21/22:
- ✓ 46 Supportive scaffolding resourced have been developed
- ✓ 90 Fast finisher resources have been developed

Student Voice

- ✓ During student surveys based on HGIOURS young people were asked whether they agreed with the statement below:
- ✓ *'Our learning is differentiated. It isn't always the same task for everyone in the class.'*
- ✓ 9.7% Strongly agreed
- ✓ 21% Agreed
- ✓ 35.5% Neutral
- ✓ 22.6% Disagreed
- ✓ 11.3% Strongly Disagreed

- ✓ Less than half were positive, less than half were neutral and less than half were negative. This shows that implementing a consistent system of differentiation across Alness Academy has had some impact but there is a clear requirement for further development of universal differentiation

across the curriculum. Therefore, as envisioned, this project will continue as a priority on SIP 23/24

Next steps:

Developing and embedding a system of supportive scaffolding and fast finished projects will continue as a priority on SIP 23/24

Progress and impact of Pupil Equity Fund Adhartas agus buaidh Maoin Cothromas Sgoilearan

In 22/23 our pupil equity fund project was to create and staff a nurture base at Alness Academy. Alness Academy is an inclusive school committed to equity. Our aim in creating a nurture base is to provide a space where students in need of intensive nurturing support. The nurture room will host small group classes and specialise in alternative provision which focuses on wellbeing and nurture.

Progress

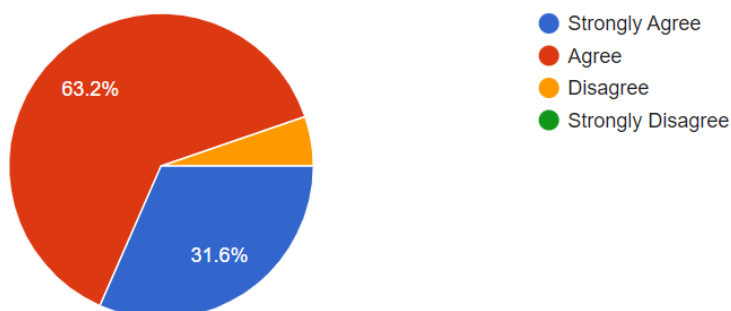
Progress has been difficult due to issues with recruitment. However, our nurture base has been operational since January 2023 and is staffed by three nurture practitioners. Targeted groups in S1 & S2 have been identified through Boxall profiling and access the base on a timetabled basis. This project will continue into school year 23/24. Impact will be fully assessed at the end of school year 23/24.

Impact

Student surveys clearly show that students have engaged well with nurture provision.

I feel my confidence has increased

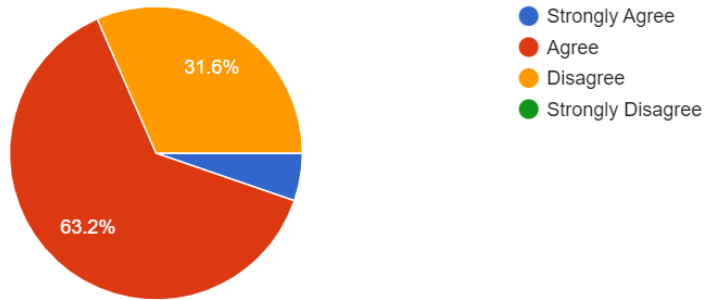
19 responses



Almost all students felt that their confidence had increased following engagement with the nurture base.

I get on better with others

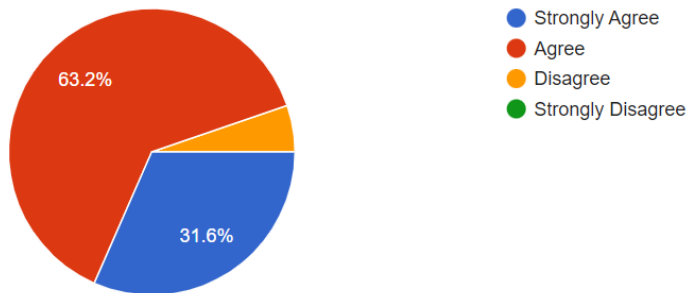
19 responses



The majority of students felt that relationship with other students had improved.

I feel safe, valued and heard

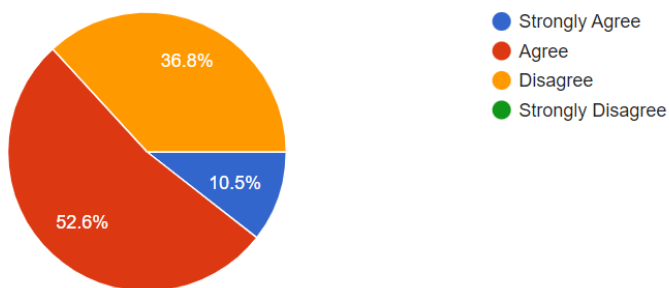
19 responses



Almost all students felt safe valued and heard

I feel more able to attend classes

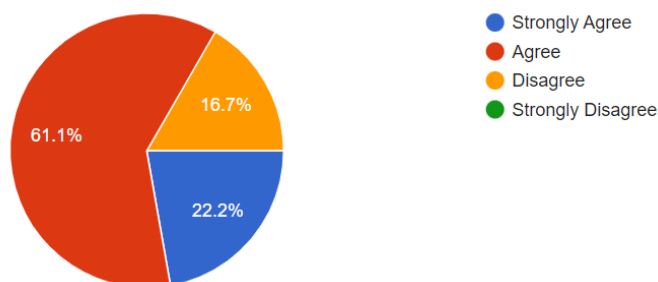
19 responses



The majority of students felt more able to attend other classes after engagement with the nurture base.

I feel more able to deal with everyday challenges

18 responses



Most students felt that they were better able to deal with challenges they encountered in school due to engagement with the nurture base.

Wider achievements Coileanaidhean nas fharsainghe

Some Highlights of wider achievement at Alness Academy include

18,061 Merits were awarded at Alness Academy in school year 22/23

78 Students joined the Head Teacher for Fine Piece Friday

One of our students made their debut as a professional footballer in the Scottish Premier League.

'Whole World Scents' of Alness Academy won Scottish Team of the year for Young Enterprise, Highland and Moray section

Two students were selected for the Scottish Rugby player development hub

A team from Alness Academy won the Six Series rugby tournament

Alness Academy fielded a competitive basketball team for the first time

Our construction class completed an outdoor renovation project for the Commercial Hotel

Alongside our partners at 'The Place' our students delivered our monthly 'Wee Blethers' high tea and bingo events to support members of our community

Teams competed in our very first 'Tenner Challenge' enterprise activity with every team making a profit

Comments from learners, families, stakeholders and staff

Beachdan bho luchd-ionnsachaidh, teaghlachan, luchd-ùidhe is luchd-obrach

“I feel that the school has made some commendable progress in terms of behaviour management. The implementation of a new, more active, duty system seems to have a tangible effect on low level disruption around the school building. There are still some issues but I believe that they are being dealt with in a better manner now than they have been in previous years.’

‘I feel Alness academy is finally on a much steadier path than it was during my older child's time and that the management team genuinely have the best interests of the school and the young people at the forefront. The school has some amazing teachers that continue to go above and beyond what they have to do for the pupils. Overall I am happy with the school experience my children are having’

‘The duty system is highly effective in supporting mainstream staff to deliver the curriculum, allowing the learning and teaching to take place. It supports developing positive relationships between pupils and staff. It provides a visible presence in the corridors so that young people are accountable. This system is allowing young people to regulate and reset to complete the school day and therefore will lead to positive attainment. It also acts a vehicle for a distributed leadership model amongst the middle leadership team allowing them to develop their relationship management skills.’

‘Alness Academy has made great progress in many respects. Firstly anti-social behaviour in and around the school has greatly reduced. Our Head is definitely making changes for the good. The kids and staff alike are much more community minded, which always helps.’

Alness Academy has worked hard this year to make progress. The school has been through some very difficult times due to a tough staffing situation. Despite this the leadership team have put some innovative strategies in place which had led to a considerable improvement in behaviour and attitude among the students. It will be vital that this is maintained going forward so the school can continue to develop and improve in the coming years.

When Mr Paterson was appointed it was recognised that he faced many challenges ahead. One of the first things that became evident is that he is open to working with partners I have witnessed first hand the difference being made. It feels an exciting time. There have been many changes not least within our community which impact children's behavior. I can see firsthand that Mr Paterson has developed relationships with “hard to reach” youngsters and has made a huge effort to get to know them all well. Steps are in place to support them and help them to change their attitude and behaviour. The school recognises and welcomes alternative learning programmes, wider achievement, meeting the needs of each individual young person. Things are not going to change overnight but the Headteacher is putting the building blocks in place to implement real change and has the vision to see what that will look like. He has the strength to hold strong and stick to his beliefs and the emerging stats are evidencing that his changes are having an impact. As an outside agency looking in, I can see evidence of real vision and real change.

Capacity for continuous improvement

Comas airson leasachadh leantainneach

Using indicators from 'How Good is our School 4' together with learner, parent, carer, partner and community feedback we believe we have made the following progress this session:

	ELC	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
QI 1.3 Leadership of change	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Good
QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Satisfactory
QI 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Satisfactory
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement/Securing children's progress	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Satisfactory

Our overall evaluation of our capacity for continuous improvement is:

We are confident in our capacity for continuous improvement.

Key priorities for improvement planning

Prìomhachasan airson planadh airson leasachadh

Our key priorities for school improvement in 23/24 are:

Implement a Universal Breakfast at Alness Academy

Continuing development of differentiation across learning

Support Improved Attendance

Further develop and embed tracking, monitoring, intervention and reporting

Develop a school leaver profile for Alness Academy

Further develop and embed our Academic Mentoring programme with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Implement a staff professional learning working group

Plan the implementation of 'Crew' for school year 24/25

Plan the implementation of Project Based Learning for school year 24/25

Planning ahead

A' planadh air adhart

Full details of the school's 2023/24 improvement priorities and actions are detailed on the school improvement plan, which can be accessed on our website www.alnessacademy.co.uk or by contacting the school office.