

2022/23



HONESTY

RESPECT

RESPONSIBILITY

BEHAVIOUR

UNIFORM

PHONES

DETERMINATION

RESPONSIBILITY

#THE DINGWALL STANDARD

RESPECT

How do we treat each other?
Is it true? Is it kind?
Is it necessary?

Don't be a bystander.
Help make our school a safe,
happy and healthy place. Report
any inappropriate behaviour,
bullying or vandalism.

Think about how you behave
when people are watching and
when no one is watching.

Present ourselves in the best way
possible.

Phones out of sight in the
corridors.

"With high standards everything matters, nothing is small stuff."

"Be the best version of yourself possible."

"Never apologise for having high standards. People who really want to be in your life will rise up to meet them."

"You can become even more excellent by consistently setting higher and higher standards for yourself and then doing everything possible to live up to those standards."

DINGWALL ACADEMY
SALVE CORONA

Dingwall Academy
HIGHLAND COUNCIL

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 seek feedback from pupils, parents, and staff to shape our improvement journey.

We set termly targets and review progress towards our improvement targets throughout the session.

DINGWALL ACADEMY

Dingwall Academy is situated in the market town of Dingwall but covers a large catchment area including several rural communities. Current school roll is 1065, of which 50 are placing requests. More than 50% of pupils use school transport, with some travelling over 20 miles. Sense of community is important to our school, both a sense of community within the building and through links with our wider community.

A high percentage of pupils stay on for S6. Last session 99% of pupils moved onto positive post school with over 50% moving onto Higher or Further Education. 47% of pupils have additional support needs, and this session more than 50% of our S1 and S2 pupils have a recognised support need. The school prides itself on its inclusive ethos and within the school we have a Nurture Base and space to support pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural issues. The mid-area Autism specialist provision is based within the school in An Caladh. The school also contains the Highland specialist provision for pupils with a hearing impairment. 12% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Staffing continues to present challenges, however as one of the largest schools in Highland we have been able to maintain a broad curriculum. A number of pupils travel to college courses at both Inverness and North Highland Campus. A small number of pupils follow distance learning courses delivered online. Pupils make seven option choices at the end of S2. In 2022, S4 pupils were presented for National 4 and National 5 after following two year courses for the first time; 43% of pupils in S4 achieved 5 or more qualifications @ Level 5.

The school currently has 32 pupils following Gaidhlig medium. We also offer Gaelic in the BGE, at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

Visitors to the school comment on the friendliness of pupils and the strong and positive relationships between staff and pupils.

At the end of last session there was significant change to the Senior Management Team, with 3 new Deputes appointed.

Our School Vision, Values and Aims

“A school with a sense of community – a school where, by taking a collective responsibility, pupils and staff have the opportunity to achieve extraordinary things.”

“Sgoil a tha na coimhearsnachd. Sgoil far am faigh sgoilearan agus luchd-obrach an cothrom co-uallach a ghabhail gus nithean iongantach a choileanadh.”



Pupil Voice: what is working well in our school?

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

- **The Teachers.**
- **The range of opportunities, including extra-curricular.**
- **The quality of the building and learning spaces.**
- **That there are people to talk to, particularly PSE teachers.**

“We have lots of space to learn indoors and outdoors, we have teachers like our PSE teacher who we can speak to, we are able to overcome obstacles without too much issue.”

“Of all the things I will miss, it will be this atmosphere, this positive place where we are treated with respect.” School Captain

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

Our children and young people identified the following changes they would like to see and the difference these changes could make.

- **Lack of respect from some; sexist and homophobic comments.**
- **More opportunity for pupils to be involved.**
- **The behaviour from some of the younger year groups is not good enough.**
- **Stop locking the pupil toilets.**

"Don't like always hearing about the Dingwall Standard, think there are other things that should be emphasised such as inclusivity and behaviour."

"More opportunity to get involved in fund raising events."

"More help with study and revision, it is not the same in all subjects."

Our Improvement Journey Headlines Session 2021/22

These projects are linked to the vision and priorities for Scottish Education based on delivering excellence and equity.

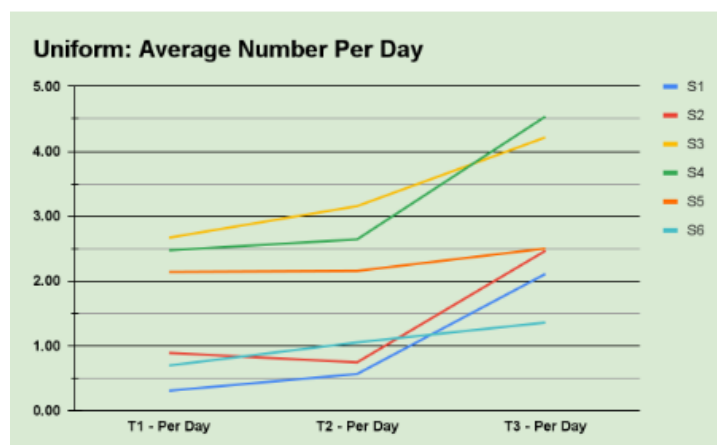
Improvement Project 1: Promoting Positive Relationships and the Dingwall Standard

Progress and impact:

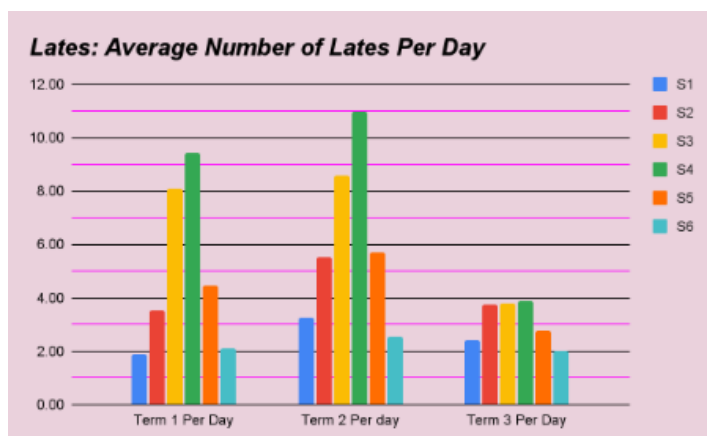
- Promoting Positive Relationships (PPR) policy launched at start of session, used by all staff.
- 95.3% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that they were very familiar with the PPR policy, 4.3% were neutral. (**Slide 1:** Evidence Link)
- When comparing the staff questionnaire from 2019 to 2023, the results show that staff feel the current PPR Policy is now more effective at creating a *balance between high expectations and structure on one hand, and warmth and support on the other.* (**Slide 2:** Evidence Link)
- *The evidence also suggests that staff evaluate their practice as significantly shifting to a climate of high expectations on one hand, and warmth and support on the other compared to 2019.* (**Slide 3** – Evidence Link)
- Positive merits were introduced to recognise pupils who go **'above and beyond'** for a range of behaviours, values and achievements (**Slide 4** – Evidence Link). Over 50% of teaching staff issued a positive merit this year.
- New procedures were introduced to address concerns from staff about the number of pupil out of class. There is still an area for improvement.

Evidence Link: [Standards and Equality - PPR Data 2023](#)

- Summary document shared as Dingwall Standard, very visible around the school. Almost all pupils are able to describe and talk about the Dingwall Standard. The standard of dress throughout the school has improved although there was an increase in the number of uniform slips issued in term 3 with an average of 17 pupils spoken to each day. These pupils have been identified and an improvement priority for next session is how we work with these pupils and their families.



- SMT now staff a late desk and meet pupils during period 1 each morning. Late coming figures are as follows:



This data includes pupils who are late first thing, and pupils who are late between classes. There has been a significant reduction during term 3, however we are not able to identify the reasons for the rise during term 2.

- In pupil feedback, some pupils commented that they did not like the late desk, however there was a direct link between pupils who commented on this, and pupils who had been late.
- We have robust procedures in place to monitor attendance and follow up where there are concerns. While our safeguarding procedures are good, this is not impacting on actual attendance figures. This will be an improvement priority for next session.
- SMT and Guidance reviewed procedures for Alternatives to Exclusions. This has made the process more robust and effective, however it can be difficult to gather appropriate work at short notice and we are therefore gathering a central bank of appropriate work. There were 8 Alternative to Exclusions issued during the session.
- The school captains asked for feedback from the whole school to decide 3 pupil voice targets for the year should be. The school captains delivered four whole school pupil voice assemblies; pupils said that they enjoyed listening from pupils rather than teachers, and that the seniors were good role models.
- Too many pupils have identified problems with disrespectful behaviour, including homophobic comments. A small number of parents said that their child did not always feel safe at school.
- 32 S6 pupils trained as MVP leaders; time constraints meant that they were unable to deliver the full programme. This will remain as an improvement priority for next session as the programme has the potential to bring about significant change in attitudes and behaviour.
- MCR co-ordinator has 26 pupils matched with a mentor and meeting, 8 pupils are waiting to be matched soon.
"During my end of year survey with pupil x yesterday he said having a mentor is like having a best friend."
- 17 registered for MCR S1 groupwork, 15 attending and 2 now disengaged
 17 registered for MCR S2 groupwork, 16 attending and 1 disengaged.
 Feedback from pupils indicates that involvement in the MCR programme has improved their engagement with school.

[MCR Case Study](#)

Next steps:

- We need to ensure that our standards data is robust and reliable. SMT will have set time each fortnight to review and act on data.
- Pupil voice will have the opportunity to comment on our current Promoting Positive Relationships Policy.
- We will set targets to improve attendance figures in each year group.
- We will extend our Promoting Positive Relationships programme through involvement with the Rights Respecting Schools and Equally Safe in School initiatives. We will involve the pupil voice to consider how we make all pupils feel safe and respected in school.
- The MVP programme will be delivered earlier in the session to all S6.
- Alternative to Exclusion – we will gather new resources that will be available to use at short notice.
- We will introduce achievement buddies to help with the merit scheme and include key dates on our whole school calendar.
- We will work on making our school fair and equitable, including introducing a school equipment bank.

Improvement Project 2:

Learning and Teaching – Teaching Sprints

This was an Authority led project where teaching staff made changes to classroom practice based on educational research. Teachers in Dingwall Academy were asked to make 2 focused changes throughout the year.

<https://teachingsprints.com/>

Progress and impact:

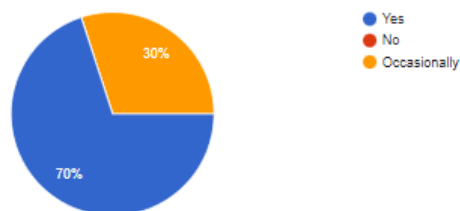
67 teachers took part in the Teaching Sprints initiative. Teachers were asked to complete two teaching sprints during the session. 61 completed sprint 1 and 58 sprint 2.

58 were able to complete the required reading before implementing a change to their classroom practice, with the majority saying that the pre-reading impacted on their practice.

All staff who took part in the first sprint are still using the strategy in their teaching. 70% regularly and 30% occasionally.

5. Have you continued to use the Sprint 1 strategy in your teaching?

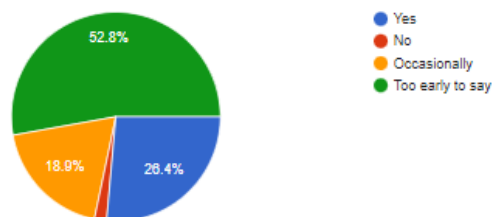
60 responses



While 52% of staff say that it is too early to say if they will continue to use the focus for Sprint 2 in their teaching, 48% are continuing to use the strategy, either regularly or occasionally.

10. Have you continued to use the Sprint 2 strategy in your teaching?

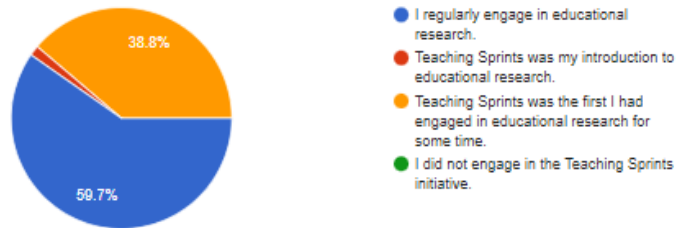
53 responses



39% of the staff who took part said that Teaching Sprints had been the first time they had engaged with educational research for some time. 1 person said that the initiative had been their introduction to educational research.

What statement best applies to you?

67 responses



Feedback from staff on the Teaching Sprints initiative included:

"I really like the idea of focusing on one small change at a time. The reading was easy to digest and provided practical advice on delivery."

"Most of it felt like common sense and was already part of my standard teaching practice. I also felt that 2 sprints in a year was too much in addition to everything else that needs to be done."

"Teaching sprints will work well with time, effort and practice which is not always possible when time is tight and people have busy lives."

Next steps:

- Professional learning will be an improvement priority for next session, with a focus on learning and teaching.
- We will continue to use the Teaching Sprints format, but staff will be able to draw on other sources when deciding on their focus for improvement. We will use pupil feedback to inform the areas for focus.
- We will re-introduce classroom observations; linked to the focus for improvement. We will have a shared understanding of what quality learning and teaching looks like.
- We will have a learning teaching focus visit involving other schools. When asked what would help support their professional learning, 44% of staff said visits to other schools.
- We will review and update our staff professional learning library.
- We will provide leadership opportunities for staff to share practice.

Improvement Project 3: Raising Attainment

During this session we had an additional Attainment Depute who also worked with all our associated primaries. Part of the remit was to revise our monitoring and tracking system, and to collate our standards data in one place.

Progress and impact:

- All S4 pupils have the opportunity to be presented for L4 or L5 Mental Health & Wellbeing, with targeted support for identified pupils.
- 40 S6 pupils were given the opportunity to complete Leadership at Level 6. This opportunity allowed pupils to work with partner ASG primaries to develop important skills for life beyond school whilst gaining a Higher-level qualification.
- New tracking system: *Attendance/Lates/Uniform/Demerits/Referrals*. This system was developed to provide SMT with a single point to access up to date data. SMT were equipped to be more pro-active and initiate interventions in these areas earlier.
- New tracking system: *Interventions*. The above data, including further data extracted from the Risk Matrix, was made available to Guidance staff, resulting in a more evidence-based approach to identifying pupils for available interventions.
- New tracking system: *S1 and S2 MTR*. The S1 and S2 monitoring, tracking and reporting system moved onto Google. This allowed staff to have easier access to key data in one place. Some departments are piloting combining departmental tracking within the whole school trackers. Feedback from staff regarding the system was positive, and we were able to make adjustments to the tracker based on staff suggestions.
- New emailed reports: Reports were emailed in printable PDF format to S1 and S2 pupils and their parents/carers. S2 pupils had time in House Tutor lessons to reflect on the contents of their report and to consider how to act on the Next Steps and teacher comments to improve their learning in the coming year. Pupil and parent/carer feedback for the new system of emailing reports was very positive. Using Google Forms for feedback allowed for more efficient communication between home and school.

Regarding the format/delivery, parents/carers said:

I liked the new format a lot and liked it being sent electronically as it is easy for my husband to access it as he works abroad. It's got a clear layout, easy to read and I like the overview page of the subjects.

I was pleased to receive it in this way, just a little sad that a paper copy won't be filed away with the others for future reference :) But yes, this way makes most sense going forward.

Pupils said:

I liked the layout of the report and it was very easy to access.

It was good because it was through the email.

- **An entirely new tracking system for Primary Schools was created and is currently in the process of being rolled out. Feedback from Primary teachers and HTs has been very positive, with some of the most valued aspects being: timesaving, efficient, ease of use, clear overview of up-to-date data, staff involvement with data, and consistency across the ASG.**
- **Tracking for Transition: Although the new Primary tracking system is in its very early days, it has already facilitated focused communication between primary and secondary for the purposes of providing a smooth transition. The trackers provide a place for P7 teachers to share their deep knowledge of their pupils with secondary teachers much earlier than was previously possible. This will allow secondary colleagues to work more effectively with pupils much more quickly, particularly those with ASN**
- **Family Learning: We held a family event, 'Learn Together with Dingwall Academy' for S1 and S2. Pupils and parents/carers attended together. All participants found learning about learning pathways, the exam system, Google Classroom, Wellness for learning, option choices, and different ways to learn very helpful. 100% said they would be interested in returning for further sessions focusing on skills for learning.**
- **We engaged with the My Future My Success (MFMS) programme. The MFMS continues to work with 20 young people; we have weekly feedback on all pupils and their varying levels of engagement. This programme has been very positive and has prevented these young people from completely disengaging.**
- **We created a full programme of employability activities for pupils not entitled to study leave. 30 pupils engaged in the programme and 21 pupils have completed the SQA Level 4 Employability Award. As a result of their engagement in the programme 3 pupils gained an apprenticeship, 3 pupils are on long term work experience, and others have made valuable links that may lead to positive destinations.**

Next steps:

- The post of Attainment Depute is not continuing next session, we therefore need to ensure that there is capacity to manage the tracking systems put in place this session.
- Introduce Scottish Studies in S3 @Level 4 and 5.
- Increase opportunities at SCQF Level 6 in S5 and S6. Consider early presentation at L6 in some subjects.
- We will work with the Aspire North programme to target pupils for Higher Education. The target is to have 20 pupils involved in the programme from S4, S5 and S6.
- We will work with Academy9 to provide additional employability opportunities.
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/academy9/>
- We will work with pupils who were involved with the Study Leave employability programme to provide follow up support. We will offer additional employability linked courses including barista training and nail bar training.
- We will aim to have all S5 Christmas leavers complete the employability programme during terms 1 and 2.
- Strengthening the ASG network: we need to build on the progress made during session 2022 – 23 to provide genuine opportunities for collaborative working between primary and secondary. We need to ensure that there is capacity to manage the tracking system put in place to support transition.
- We need to explore options for delivering the construction course in school.
- We need to work with the MFMS programme to provide more opportunities for pupils involved in the programme to gain qualifications.
- Focus on attendance and attainment in S5 and S6.
- Broaden the team able to deliver the MHWB course
- Senior Phase Monitoring and Tracking – our system must be able to provide immediate access to:
 - Number of subjects being presented for
 - Number of subjects on track
 - Highest current level of literacy and numeracy
- We will consider using the SEEMiS M&T currently piloted at Culloden Academy.
- Refresh House Tutor materials and hold regular meetings with House Tutor staff.



Evaluation of Progress

We believe we have made the following progress this session:

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

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

We are confident in our capacity for continuous improvement.

Planning Ahead

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](#) or by contacting the school office.