

# Helmsdale Primary School Standards & Quality Report

---

2022/23



## HELMSDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Helmsdale Primary School**

HIGHLAND COUNCIL | OLD CAITHNESS ROAD, HELMSDALE,  
SUTHERLAND KW8 6JW

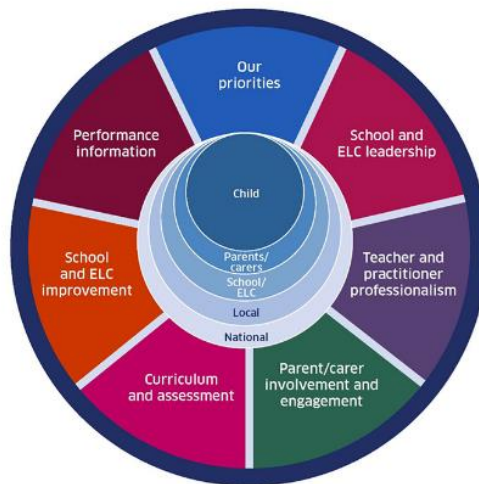
# Introduction: Local and National Context

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%



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be *kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*

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.

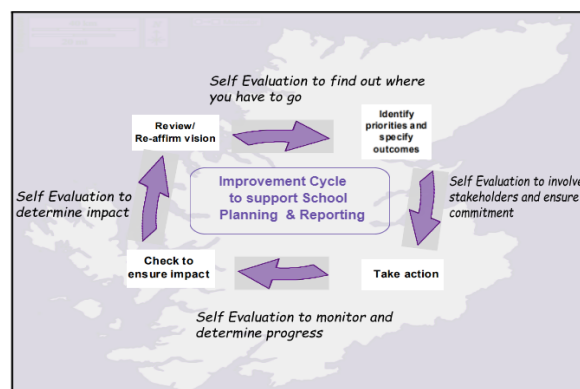
Our children and young people are actively consulted and involved in this process. We also give staff, parents/carers, and other partners the opportunity to participate in discussions and activities to shape our improvement journey.

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.

*Shelly Taylor*  
Head Teacher  
Helmsdale Primary School



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
*kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*

## School Profile

The following information can be found on [Parentzone Scotland](#). 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.

Attendance  
92.3%

Average Class Size  
16

Meeting PE Target  
Target Met in P4-7

Pupil Numbers  
57 (inc nursery)

Teacher Numbers  
4

Pupil Teacher Ratio  
16-1

2022/23 Proportions of pupils achieving Curriculum for Excellence Levels (P1, P4, P7 combined):

Reading

68%

Most

Writing

58%

Majority

Listening and  
talking

79%

Most

Numeracy

84%

Most

Helmsdale has been under the leadership of an Acting Headteacher over the last year- having previously had shared headship and a cluster arrangement with Brora Primary School. Helmsdale Primary is part of the Golspie ASG. The school serves a large catchment area from Forsinard to Loth. The school is comprised of a Nursery and three composite classes- 48 children attending the school and 9 children in nursery. We value the good working relationships with families and wider partnerships. We take pride in being an integral part of the community and make good use of a wide range of local resources.

A significant number of learners in the school are classed as having ASN as per the Highland Council staged approach. We have a visiting Additional Support Needs Teacher (ASNT) for 2 day per week. Children with additional support needs are supported mainly within the mainstream classes. Staff consult with ASNT and other agencies such as- Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist to ensure strategies are in place and needs are met to the best of our provision and ability.

Helmsdale Primary School sits within an area of deprivation as per the SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) index. We have an increasing number of families on low income, which is demonstrated by the amount of PEF (Pupil Equity Funding) for our small school.

Overall, attainment across the school in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Children achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and numeracy and, across the school, a few children are exceeding nationally expected levels. Almost all children who face barriers to learning are making good progress towards meeting their individual targets.

Overall children are making the following progress:

Reading

Good progress

Writing

Satisfactory progress

Listening and  
talking

Satisfactory progress

Numeracy

Good progress

We have had no exclusions this year.



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
*kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*

## School vision, values and aims

---

# 'It Takes A Village To Raise A Child'

### HPS Vision-

Our Vision is to work in partnership with pupils, parents, and the wider community.

Our Vision is to create an inclusive and welcoming environment where learning is exciting, challenging, and relevant and everyone is valued and encouraged to achieve their potential.

### HPS Values-

'Growing'

- To be kind
- To be respectful
- To be resilient
- To be motivated to achieve our potential
- To be curious
- To be creative



### HPS AIMS

- ❖ To provide a safe, happy and caring environment for learning.
- ❖ To provide stimulating and challenging teaching and learning experiences both within and out with the classroom.
- ❖ To foster effective partnerships between pupils, staff, parents, outside agencies and the wider community, working together to create a cohesive learning environment.
- ❖ To encourage pupil achievement and attainment by developing skills and positive attitudes encouraging successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- ❖ To deliver a broad balanced and differentiated curriculum encouraging children to progress at their own pace with appropriate support promoting and encouraging appropriate level of independence and learning skills for the future.
- ❖ To work closely with the schools in the Golspie ASG fostering links with colleagues, monitoring standards, and developing transition.



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
*kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*

## Review of progress for session

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:

### Health & Wellbeing

#### Purpose:

We were aware that our children required further support to build confidence and resilience post covid. We also live in an area of rural deprivation where opportunities for extra curricular activities are limited so there was a requirement for wider achievement opportunities to be delivered.

#### Progress:

- All class teachers, EYPs and learners engaged with 'Mindfulness' through the 'Do-Be Mindful' programmes- ELC and middle stages were fully invested in this and now look forward to their meditation time.
- All classes and Early years learners are now engaging in 'Emotional check-ins' regularly.
- Our Outdoor Learning programme has continued to 'grow' with learners accessing a wide variety of activities delivered both during class time and after school.
- Learners have benefitted from high-quality outdoor sessions with various specialists- including working with RSPB Forsinard, participation in the wildflower mosaic project (Highlife countryside ranger, Roz Summers) participation in organised outdoor activities for all stages (Ian Paterson, Go Wild Highlands) and working in collaboration with the neighbouring kitchen garden over the course of term 3-4, launching our Friday after school 'Garden gang'.
- Full and varied activities in place for all children both in and out of school- we have a regular bank of volunteers and have worked alongside the Parent Council and Active Schools to provide block sessions- Zumba, football, Lego club. Upper learners have also participated in woodwork sessions- developing skills for learning, life and work.
- HMIe noted that, "The effective use of the local environment and community partnerships to enrich children's learning experiences, particularly through outdoor learning" was a strength in the school's work.

#### Impact:

- Much of the impact was analytical for measuring health & wellbeing.
- Almost all learners can express and discuss feelings more freely. "There are less behavioural issues than there had been previously" (noted by pupil council- term 3).
- Through their outdoor learning experiences all children have gained confidence and resilience through problem solving.
- Children's knowledge about conservation and maintaining the local area has increased through engaging with RSPB award and planting a wildflower meadow.
- Almost all of our learners have developed practical skills- younger learners building bug hotels and bird boxes and uppers making a workbench.
- Many children in the school participate in after school clubs and all are active in school- P1/2/3 also now benefitting from 2 hours of PE a week. This has resulted in an increase in fitness and general wellbeing.
- All children across ELC and primary have developed their knowledge and understanding of children's rights through assemblies. Rights are beginning to be embedded across the school.

**Good progress has been made in this area.**



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
*kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*

## Next steps:

- Continue with emotional check ins and the promotion of health and wellbeing for all children.
- Moving forward we can now review baselines (Glasgow Motivation and wellbeing survey) at set times throughout the year to measure impact and collect data on our learner's sense of wellbeing in the learning context.
- Continue to foster and further develop links within the community & further afield to provide high quality learning opportunities for our young people- a view to shifting focus on to expressive arts- music, art and drama provision.
- Continue to Engage with UNCRC Rights Respecting Schools' Award, further embedding knowledge and appreciation throughout the school community- working towards achieving our silver accreditation. Create a 'Playground Charter' with reference to UNCRC articles, e.g 'the right to play', 'the right to be safe', 'the right to be included and valued' etc.

## School Priority:

# Raising Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

## Purpose:

To raise attainment in Literacy and Numeracy following the analysis of data, evidencing dips at all stages.

## Progress:

- Quality Assurance calendar put in place- specific dates for learning visits to classes to observe teaching practice- HT shares strengths and areas for improvement where necessary with teaching staff.
- Attainment meetings held between HT and teaching staff- Nov, Feb and May allow for discussion about learner's progress and highlights where any support may be required.
- Tracking meetings held with Early years staff at same periods in the year as teachers- looking at literacy and numeracy progress as well as developmental overviews.
- Standardised Assessments now in place across the school- all classes using Highland Numeracy diagnostics in term 1 and reviewed in term 3, to provide data and identify any dips where targeted intervention may be necessary.
- PEF funding used to fund support worker hours to focus on developing literacy and numeracy.
- Regular meetings with partner agencies are held throughout the year to review Individualised targets.

## Impact:

- All teaching staff are now more confident in analysing data and in their use of CfE benchmarks to award achievement of a level. This has allowed for more informed and accurate feedback to be given to children and parents.
- Steady improvement across all stages in numeracy and mathematics- number recognition and times tables. All most all learners progressed a stage from term 1-3.
- HMle noted "Teacher's use of diagnostic assessments to identify gaps in children's understanding of numeracy is beginning to have a positive impact on children's attainment."
- Steady improvements in attainment in reading across the year- most learners are at expected 'age & stage' or beyond.
- Children in receipt of PEF support are making satisfactory improvement in literacy and numeracy.

**Satisfactory progress has been made in this area.**



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
*kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*

### Next steps:

- Prioritise developing writing skills across all stages and advance listening and talking skills for all.
- All staff to use Highland Literacy progressions consistently to inform planning and assessment.
- Review approaches to planning to ensure learners build on prior learning more effectively.
- Investigate other assessments to use.
- We will continue to prioritise improving attainment in literacy over the 2023-2024 session.

### School Priority:

## Understanding and Improving Assessment and Moderation Strategies in Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### Purpose:

This project was developed as an ASG wide focus, in response to dips in attainment in both Literacy and Numeracy across Highland. A variation in confidence across schools in using the Benchmarks to award a level was apparent.

### Progress:

- More robust quality assurance procedures have been introduced.
- Benchmarks are now used as a tool to guide discussions throughout attainment meetings have allowed for valuable professional dialogue to take place.
- Teaching staff have attended ASG moderation events. Staff have used time to moderate writing- all teachers found the process worthwhile.
- Early years practitioners conduct high quality observations to inform judgement and share findings with stakeholders.
- ELC have had several parent mornings and school had a sharing the learning open morning in term 3- building back stronger links post covid/post refurbishment.
- HMle stated, "Teachers use a wide range of standardised and summative assessments in different contexts across the curriculum".

### Impact:

- Almost all staff now have a better understanding of levels and are more confident in awarding a level.
- Collegiate working is evident in the moderation process across the cluster and becoming more evident across the primary ASG- teachers more confident.
- Staff have increased confidence in submitting ACEL judgements which are linked to both ongoing & standardised assessments.
- Clear tracking of each individual child is evident.
- Moderation across ASG and LA is consistent.
- Attainment in both Literacy and Numeracy is increasing.
- Clear path identified of where we are and where we need to go.
- Staff development needs identified, and training organised for next session.
- Increased knowledge of Assessment and Moderation strategies.
- Benchmarks are being used more effectively as a tool to guide assessment and moderation discussions across the authority.

### Satisfactory progress has been made in this area.

### Next steps:

- Continue to work on assessment and moderation within the school and across the ASG.
- Further develop knowledge and skills in interpreting assessment data to ensure it accurately informs planned learning and teaching.
- Involving parents more in the planning/assessment process- termly overviews to be shared with families and parents invited to comment more on work sent home/shared online.
- ELC to have the chance to meet with colleagues across the ASG to moderate practice, similar to the opportunity Primary staff benefitted from.



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
*kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*



## Progress and impact of Pupil Equity Fund

At Helmsdale Primary school the majority of our PEF funding has been spent, invaluable on employing a 'young person's practitioner'- support worker through 'Action for Children'.

HMIe inspectors commented,

***"Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is used appropriately to support groups and individuals in their learning through the provision of enhanced staffing. As a result, the majority of children facing barriers to learning as a result of their socio-economic circumstances are making satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy."***

It is encouraging to be able to give these learners the tools they need, and the little boost required to become more successful in their learning. Almost all children have gained confidence and thrived from the small group focused work to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

A majority of learners across all stages have made a marked improvement in their reading skills through use of games and increased opportunities to read aloud.

Children in the middle stages have made marked improvements in their attainment of numeracy and a majority of the class are hitting second level in the Highland Numeracy baseline assessments.

## Wider achievements

Helmsdale Primary school recognises success both within and out with the school- at assemblies and through class displays and parent pages/ Class Dojo profiles.

Fortnightly assemblies are held and there is a learner from each stage nominated to receive 'Head teacher awards'- which celebrate wider successes, not just academic achievements. Wider achievements out with school time are recognised- such as participation in Highland dance and taekwondo.



We continue to celebrate positive citizenship and build on the recently developed school values.

HMIe inspection findings highlighted; ***"Staff ensure that wider achievement is celebrated and shared through assemblies, attractive displays, newsletters and social media. Children engage with a wide range of experiences through participation in activities both within school and within their local community. They participate in community events, such as the annual river opening parade. Children are beginning to develop their leadership skills through participating in a range of committees, including the recently re-formed pupil council, Rota-Kids and involvement in the local Playspace***



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
***kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.***

**Project. Children undertaking official roles, such as president, vice-president and secretary, speak positively about how this builds their confidence.”**

Learners in P4-7 gained bronze accreditation in the RSPB challenge for successfully engaging in activities to do with conservation and wildlife.



Learners have benefitted from blocks of swimming tuition this session- funded partly from a community micro-grant sought through the Parent Council.

Learners in P6/7 benefitted from woodwork sessions and had a block of rugby training through Ross Sutherland Rugby Club.

We have a focus on implementing and fully embedding the UNCRC and have created unique class charters.



Learners have represented the school in many sporting competitions over the course of the year, badminton, cross country, dancing, basketball and football.

Parents have been more actively involved this session and we look forward to developing links further and having stakeholders in more next session, having been unable to throughout term 1 & 2 due to the major heating and plumbing refurbishment.



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be **kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.**



## Comments from learners, families, stakeholders and staff

### Learners-

#### Nursery:

- ✓ "I've been enjoying learning about dinosaurs."
  - ✓ "Playing outside is good."
  - ✓ "I liked visiting Primary 1"
  - ✓ "Drawing round glue sticks."
  - ✓ "Outside on scooters"
  - ✓ "Singing with Mrs Muir."
  - ✓ "Dress up days I like."
- ✓ "I like walks about the village."



#### Primary 1/2/3:

- ✓ "I'm enjoying gardening club."
- ✓ "I like writing about real experiences."
- ✓ "I've liked everything about maths."
- ✓ "P.E and drawing pictures has been the best!"
  - ✓ "Lego club is fun."
  - ✓ "I love using the Chromebook!"
- ✓ "The science workshop was great- we learnt about forces."
  - ✓ "I'm proud of learning to read by myself."
  - ✓ "Rock pooling was really, really good!"
- ✓ "Sports day- I went so, so fast and it was sunny!!"



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
*kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*



### **Primary 4/5:**

- ✓ “I enjoyed The Wild Robot novel study with Miss Buckley.”
- ✓ “The BFG class book was fun with the funny giant voices Mrs Taylor puts on.”
  - ✓ “I’ve enjoyed P.E on Tuesdays and playing Danish long ball.”
- ✓ “Outdoor learning with Mr Paterson was really good- I can tie lots of knots now.”
  - ✓ “Swimming lessons were good, I got more confident.”
  - ✓ “Doing space art was messy but fun!”
- ✓ “It was good when Mr Quigley came, and we did book creator on the Chromebook.”
- ✓ “Doing spelling stations and using the threading letters and playdough is good.”
  - ✓ “Making our ‘market stall’ to learn about money was nice maths”
- ✓ “Elephant toothpaste experiment was fun- we learnt about exothermic reactions!”
  - ✓ “Painting decorations for the village Christmas trees was super cool”



### **Primary 6/7:**

- ✓ “The silent disco was hilarious, and we all enjoyed it.”
  - ✓ “Newton Rooms robotics session was good!”
- ✓ “Making lava lamps as part of our STEM was exciting”
- ✓ “The sport tournaments- football and basketball and badminton too have been good!”
  - ✓ “I really liked representing Helmsdale in the dancing competition.”
    - ✓ “I was proud reading out at the Easter service.”
    - ✓ “Learning about the Victorians was interesting.”
- ✓ “It was nice to help those in need with the shoebox appeal.”
  - ✓ “Football festival was good, even if we didn’t win!”



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
*kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*



## **Families-**

H Family *“The nursery is very welcoming and staff keep parents updated regularly with the goings on in nursery. The new mind map display board is great for the children to keep track of and interact with and for parents to visibly see achievements. Improvements are well placed.*

S Family, *“It’s been a very busy year: our kids have benefitted from an increased amount of extra-curricular activity- thanks to the teachers, staff & volunteers. Other highlights: PE with PE teacher for the juniors is very much enjoyed; continued Feis music lessons; Active schools coordinator organised cross-country competition; football competition & associated training; swimming lessons; various talks and workshops from external providers- the digital & music/ move it sessions being a real hit.*

*We look forward to a focus, as indicated by staff, on priority areas around literacy & writing attainment as well as increased play-based learning for the juniors- maybe with more outdoor learning time building on that already achieved. We are more reassured this will be enabled/possible by the three classes remaining, and the appointment of the permanent head teacher. We are also heartened that kind behaviour and respect to all is central to the HPS ethos from nursery up.”*

W Family, *“We are happy with the progress both children have made over the last year. It is great there’s now more after school clubs and I have really enjoyed my time volunteering at the school too.”*

## **Stakeholders-**

HMI inspectors noted from their visit in March this year that, *“All staff know children and their families very well and positive relationships are evident between staff and children across the school. This supports the majority of children to be actively engaged in their learning.”*

Laura Burns, Highland Council Project manager, *“The project team had a long running heating project at Helmsdale Primary, and we found the Head Teacher and her staff to be very amenable, working alongside project staff and contractors with very little fuss. The heating project was a major disruption to the running of the school, however the staff dealt with it all with good humour and were very accommodating to all.”*



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
*kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*



The children's support worker who attends weekly states, "***Helmsdale Primary is one of my favourite schools to attend due to the cheerful staff, lovely environment and cheery displays***".

***"I've been enjoying the outdoor learning days. Smashing kids, great atmosphere at the school. It's always fun to come over!"*** (Ian Paterson, Go Wild highland)



## **Staff-**

***"We are a great little team; morale is good, and we have a clear vision of what we need to do in order to continue to keep improving, we are chuffed with the progress we have made and changes to the nursery setting this academic year."*** (Mrs R Taylor, Early Years Practitioner)

***"Staff have faced many challenges over the course of the last year and have come through strong due to the fact we are a great team!"*** (Mrs Henderson, P1/2/3 class teacher)

***"I've really enjoyed my year in the middle stages and becoming part of the team at Helmsdale- I've been made to feel so welcome!"*** (Miss Buckley, P4/5 class teacher)

***"I have very much enjoyed my time in Helmsdale Primary and will be sad to retire this Summer."***  
(Mrs Mackay, Pupil support assistant)

***"It is nice to be part of a very supportive team, we have a giggle!"*** (Mrs Kingston, P6/7 class teacher)



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
***kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.***

## Capacity for continuous improvement

---

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:

	<b>ELC</b>	<b>PRIMARY</b>
<b>QI 1.3</b> Leadership of change	Good	Good
<b>QI 2.3</b> Learning, teaching and assessment	Good	Satisfactory
<b>QI 3.1</b> Wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good	Good
<b>QI 3.2</b> Raising attainment and achievement/Securing children's progress	Satisfactory	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

---

- We will continue to focus on raising attainment for ALL- particularly in literacy.
- We will look at our curriculum rationale to ensure clear progression and coverage of experiences and outcomes across all stages.
- A key priority across Early level will be to introduce more meaningful play-based learning opportunities.

## Planning ahead: 2023-2024 session

---

Key priorities are outlined in the family friendly school improvement snapshot on the final following page:







In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be-  
*kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*



## Helmsdale Primary School: Parent & Child Friendly School Improvement Plan 2023-2024

Each year school staff must identify areas to focus on within the school, these are linked to Quality Indicators (QI's) & gives us areas to improve on throughout the year. (QIs are set out in 'How Good Is Our School?' 4th Edition which is created by Education Scotland & used for self-evaluation of the school and for inspections.)

<p><b>Focus 1: Attainment in Literacy</b> <i>Why?</i> We must raise standards in writing and improve skills in listening and talking to increase overall attainment in literacy at all levels.</p>	<p><b>Focus 2: Curriculum Rationale</b> <i>Why?</i> We require a Helmsdale specific curriculum rationale and planning overview which celebrates the many unique opportunities we have within our locality.</p>	<p><b>Focus 3: Play Based Learning</b> <i>Why?</i> We need to increase opportunities for play based learning across Early level and beyond.</p>
<p>❖ Helmsdale Primary school staff are going to upskill their teaching skills around writing and become more familiar with Highland literacy planning frameworks and progressions.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We will have increased opportunities for writing for enjoyment across all stages.</li> <li>✓ Teaching staff will review the writing curriculum and engage in training sessions with Australian, Stephen Graham, who is a Professional Development Literacy Consultant.</li> <li>✓ We will have a greater focus on handwriting, spelling, grammar, and punctuation- ensuring there is increased time built into every class timetable for explicit teaching time.</li> <li>✓ Staff in Early years will attend training on implementing literacy outdoors and provide further opportunities throughout the setting for mark making and developing pre-writing skills.</li> <li>✓ PEF support will predominantly focused on improving attainment in literacy.</li> </ul>	<p>❖ Helmsdale Primary stakeholders will work together to create a unique curriculum rationale-specific to our setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We will work together to map out events and celebrations that the school are involved in throughout the year and look at what areas of the curriculum these include and which experiences/outcomes they cover.</li> <li>✓ Mrs Taylor will lead on creating an interdisciplinary planning overview which looks at bundling CfE experiences and outcomes and ensuring clear and consistent coverage over time.</li> <li>✓ We will continue to build on our understanding on children's rights and further develop this through working towards silver accreditation.</li> <li>✓ We will further embed our vision, values and aims and they will feature schoolwide.</li> <li>✓ We will draw up a playground charter.</li> </ul>  	<p>❖ Helmsdale Primary staff will endeavour to provide more opportunities for learning through play within the early stages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Teachers &amp; Early years staff will become more familiar with key documents such as 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me'</li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Practitioners will get together with colleagues in other schools across the ASG and Highland region to share good practice.</li> <li>✓ Staff will provide spaces to capitalise on children's interests, creativity, and motivation- further developing the curiosity approach and inclusion of loose parts in ELC.</li> <li>✓ An action plan will be drawn up to monitor the progress of implementation in P1/2/3.</li> </ul>

 Our Values-In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be- *kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*

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 '[HELMSDALE PRIMARY](http://helmsdale.primary@highland.gov.uk)' website or by contacting the school office- [helmsdale.primary@highland.gov.uk](mailto:helmsdale.primary@highland.gov.uk) or 01431 821 244.

On behalf of the Helmsdale Primary school staff, I'd like to thank you all for your continued support and engagement over the course of the 2022-2023 session.

We are delighted to be ending the school year with a full complement of staff and we are very much looking forward to working with you all, as key stakeholders, to continue our journey to excellence.

Kind Regards,  
*Shelly Taylor- HT*  
And all at Helmsdale Primary School



In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be- *kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*