

Standards and Quality Report

2022/23

ULLAPOOL HIGH SCHOOL



Ullapool High School

HIGHLAND COUNCIL | MILL STREET, ULLAPOOL, IV26 2UN

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

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

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

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

Our School

Ullapool High School is a six-year secondary school in the village of Ullapool. Our projected school roll for session 2023/24 is 180 pupils. Our catchment area covers the following schools: Lochinver, Achiltibuie, Badcaul, Scoraig and Ullapool Primary schools. Some pupils travel for over an hour each way to school. There is hostel accommodation available for pupils.

As a Gaelic Medium school, it is important recognise and celebrate the Gaelic language and culture. The development of a Gaelic-positive ethos is a priority in the 2023-24 school improvement plan.

Our catchment area ranges from decile band 4-8 on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The nature and size of our catchment area means that this measure does not capture the hardship that many families face. Five Percent our young people are entitled to free school meals. In addressing the Scottish Attainment Challenge, we use our knowledge of individual circumstance to make a positive difference to youngsters who may have an extra poverty related barrier to education. All pupils have access to a Chromebook and can borrow equipment, including musical instruments from departments to support their studies. As a result of our targeted numeracy support (funded by the Pupil Equity Fund) the gap in attainment between the identified pupils and their peers being significantly reduced. Early intervention in S1 and S2 is having the most impact, with improvements ranging from 20% to 162% (30 set questions within Numeracy Ninjas). Pupils' engagement and confidence in maths has also improved.

Pupils participate in a variety of activities to promote wellbeing and to build relationships with staff and each other outside of the classroom environment. This includes outdoor learning/fieldwork, Hill to Grill IDL project (John Muir Trust), athletics, football, folk group, darts club and drama club. A strong Duke of Edinburgh programme, supported by some curricular time, sees almost all our young people having access to the bronze level award.

Although the majority (71%) of pupils feel that they have the opportunity to take part in school clubs, the lack of evening transport is a significant barrier for some. However, following a successful funding application (Highland Cares) and by working in partnership with a local councillor, youth worker and the local authority, we hope to be able to provide transport to Lochinver twice a week, starting in August. It is hoped that this will support young people from a remote part of our catchment area to access after-school clubs. This will have a positive impact on well-being and help create a greater sense of community – these are particularly important post Covid.

Our new lates procedure is showing signs of impact – with a 30% reduction in lates across the school over a 4-month period. Staff have also reported that there is less disruption to lessons due to lateness. We will continue to monitor the data and provide support to those finding punctuality a challenge.

Average attendance for the session as of 11th June 2023 was 89% - this is line with previous year (post-covid) and national figures. Our attendance levels have been negatively impacted by lockdown. Effective partnership working with parents and agencies will be vital in supporting our young people to

engage and sustain their attendance at school. Our revised attendance procedures will be implemented next session. This will ensure that we are following the latest local authority guidance.

There were no exclusions in session 2022-23.

Forty-nine percent of our young people have an additional support need. Most parents are positive about the additional support provided by the school and prefer their child to be supported within the classroom. Almost all pupils (94%) were aware of learning support staff being in their lessons and 78% of respondents said they took advantage of this support.

Constraints relating to staffing and timetable, as well as the need for action in relation to improvement planning and a range of operational procedures has limited the senior leadership team's ability to focus on strategic improvements. The lack of capacity and time constraints also led to some decisions being made in a less collegiate manner than normal.

Although we aim to provide as much choice as possible, our curriculum offer is limited by our size/staffing levels. Links with Inverness and West Highland Colleges and local employers help us to increase the range of opportunities for our young people. Our Level 5 presentation rate for last year's S4s was one qualification lower than the national average (3.59 compared to 4.61). The figure for the current S4s is, however, more positive at 5.25. Feedback from parents and pupils also indicate that a greater range of subjects, particularly at Level 6 is required. We have added National 5 Psychology to our curriculum for session 2023-24 and we hope to be able to offer Higher Psychology the following year. There is a shared commitment across the school to review the curriculum, in consultation with the school community. This will be a priority in our 2023-24 school improvement plan. Our curriculum will be informed by Scottish Government guidance following the completion of the review of Scottish education, including Professor Hayward's 'It's Our Future' report on qualifications and assessment.

Our last Council visit (March 2023), which focused on learning and teaching, highlighted the following:

Strengths:

- There is a calm, welcoming and supportive ethos across the school.
- A nurturing ethos in lessons with positive relationships between staff and young people.
- Pupil behaviour.
- Almost all staff appear to know pupils as individuals and what specific needs are.
- Effective teacher explanations
- Most staff used questioning for factual recall well.
- Most young people were on task during lessons.
- Almost all senior phase pupils were aware of current working levels.
- Most learners talked positively about the school.

Next steps:

- Develop a clear understanding of what high-quality learning and teaching looks like in the school.
- Improve our use of learning intentions and success criteria (the frequency and quality of). This includes linking learning intentions to skills for learning, life and work to help young people to understand the relevance of their learning.
- Make more effective use of available data, formative and summative assessment information, and knowledge of individuals, to plan for appropriate pace and challenge for all and to reduce periods of downtime during lessons.
- Develop and extend the use of questioning to develop higher order thinking skills.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to demonstrate and lead their own learning, independently, with peers or in groups.
- Support all young people to be able to articulate their working level and next steps.
- Further develop the use of digital technology to enhance learning and provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate understanding and application of learning through tasks requiring creative problem solving.

As a result of the self-evaluation evidence relating to learning and teaching, including the information outlined above, we are developing a Learning and Teaching Framework, in consultation with staff and pupils. This will provide a greater understanding of what high-quality learning and teaching looks like and as a result, lead to pupils experiencing a more consistent learning experience across the school.

Our School Vision, Values and Aims

Our revised vision, values and aims will be launched in August 2023.

Our *vision* is to provide individuals with the opportunity to maximise their potential in a safe, creative and nurturing environment. In doing so, we *aim* to develop resilient, confident and motivated young people who are active citizens in their community.

At Ullapool High School, we *value*:

Wellbeing

Equality

Respect

Environment

Ambition

Community

High quality learning and teaching

#wereach

Our vision, values and aims provides a clear expression of about what the school community wants the school to be - this will support us in our improvement journey.

Pupil Voice: what is working well in our school?

Our young people identified the following strengths and/or improvements this session (surveys and focus groups):

- Relationships across the school are positive and nurturing.
 - ✓ Most pupils (72%) report that staff treat them fairly and with respect.
- The introduction of Gaelic inputs at assemblies.
- Support for Learning:
 - ✓ pupils scored the SfL team at 3.8 for friendliness, 3.5 for helpfulness and 3.2 on helping to understand work out of a possible maximum score of 5.
 - ✓ When asked to exemplify the type of support they found helpful, pupils said, "numeracy", "help with art", "spelling", "explaining work", "help reading", "helping me understand", "when I find it hard", "when I'm stuck" and "support with assessments".
- Our numeracy groups: "it was fun and I learned at the same time", "X is nice to work with", "I found this group very helpful. X is always very supportive and patient. I think the group really helps."

Our young people influence and lead improvements in school through:

- Our Equally Safe at School (ESAS) group.
- Our joint pupil/staff vision and values working group:
 - ✓ The launch video was created solely by pupils.
 - ✓ Almost all pupils participated in a series of activities to inform our revised vision, aims, values and motto.
 - ✓ P5-P7 pupils from our associated primary schools also had the opportunity to vote on our school motto

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

Our young people identified the following areas for improvement and/or changes they would like to see:

- Gaelic:
 - ✓ Our Gaelic medium pupils would like more opportunity to speak Gaelic in school and to link more with other young people in Gaelic Medium secondary schools.
 - ✓ Our Gaelic medium pupils would like more opportunities to celebrate the Gaelic language and culture.
- Our current behaviour system:
 - ✓ Less than half of young people (44%) feel that staff help them be responsible for their own behaviour.
- Wellbeing and ethos:
 - ✓ Sixty-seven percent of young people feel safe in school.
 - ✓ Fifty-two percent of pupils feel that the school provides opportunities to get regular exercise and less than half (29%) feel that the school encourages them to make healthy choices.
- Limited leadership opportunities:
 - ✓ Most young people feel that they do not have the opportunity to influence improvements in the school (74%).
- The quality of their learning experience:
 - ✓ Fifty two percent of young people are happy with the quality of teaching in the school.
 - ✓ Less than half of young people enjoy learning at school (35.5%).
 - ✓ Forty percent of young people feel that they are given the opportunity to influence what and how they learn.
 - ✓ Fifty seven percent of young people feel that teachers help them to understand how they are progressing, and that feedback helps them to improve their learning.
 - ✓ Less than half (15%-49%) of young people feel that the school is helping them become more confident.
- Homework:
 - ✓ Feedback from pupils (via focus groups) highlighted the need for a clearer understanding of the purpose of homework and a greater variety of tasks.
 - ✓ Less than half of young people (37%) feel that homework helps them to understand and improve their work.
- More choice in the curriculum.

Our Improvement Journey Headlines Session 2022/23

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

Improvement Project 1: Strengthen our approaches to self-evaluation

Primary focus: School and ELC Leadership

Year of Project: 1

Purpose: Ongoing reflection and analysis of a range of evidence (data, observations people's views) will enable us to build on our successes and make evidence-informed decisions which put the learner at the centre.

Progress and impact:

- Revised departmental improvement planning processes (standard and quality report and improvement plan) implemented. The sharing of documents via SharePoint has supported peer support/the sharing of good practice. The revised documents have a clear focus on the outcome for learners and the use of a range of self-evaluation evidence to the measure impact on learners. SLT will continue to support PTs to further develop their knowledge and skills around self-evaluation and improvement planning. See next steps.
- The introduction of pupil, parent and staff surveys, pupil focus groups and How Good is Our School?4 audits have provided a clear picture of our strengths and improvement priorities. This information has been used to create our self-evaluation summary, standard and quality report and school improvement plan for session 2023-24. See next steps.
- Draft self-evaluation calendar and exemplar documentation created and shared with PTs in preparation for implementation in session 2023-24. Moving forward, this will support PTs to further develop quality assurance/self-evaluation procedures within their departments. See next steps.
- Examples of whole school tracking and monitoring systems gathered. This information has informed decisions about the format of our new tracking and monitoring system which will be implemented in August 2023. The proposed system has been shared with staff. The effective use of data across the school has been supported by staff training (Insight Advisor). See next steps.

Satisfactory progress was made in this area.

Next steps:

- 2023/24 self-evaluation calendar finalised – August 2024. This will support staff at all levels to make evidence-informed decisions which put the learner at the centre.
- The proposed introduction of extended leadership meeting with a focus on improvement planning, including departmental self-evaluation activities, attainment meetings and data analysis will provide an opportunity for support and dialogue.
- Extend use of How Good is OUR School?
- Provide more opportunities for parents to be actively engaged in the improvement process. A closer relationship with the Parent Council will be important moving forward. It is hoped that they will, for example, play a key role in our curriculum review.
- The introduction of a new whole school tracking and monitoring system, with increased tracking periods and clear procedures for analysis, will inform planning and support early intervention, and the timely review of these approaches; thereby supporting pupils to reach their potential. Staff training will remain a priority to ensure that data is well understood and used effectively to improve outcomes.

Improvement Project 2: Improve the consistency and quality of young people's learning experiences.

Primary focus: Teacher and practitioner professionalism

Year of Project: 1

Purpose: Positive, aspiration relationships and reflective inclusive practice are key to excellent learning and teaching and raising attainment for all.

Progress and impact:

- The introduction of an electronic pupil profile. The google-based profile which replaces the current paper-based system was trialled, this year, by S1s. This system enables pupils to capture and reflect on their learning in a more engaging and interactive way. It also supports the development of their digital literacy skills and allows pupils to easily share their successes and next steps with parents.
- A new homework policy will be launched in August 2023. The revised policy includes a termly plan for S1-S3 pupils, homework club and the use of parental texts. It is hoped that this will lead to more pupil's regularly engaging in high quality homework tasks which consolidate the skills and knowledge developed in class, thereby increasing pupil confidence, and raising attainment.
- A new positive relationship system will be launched in August 2023. The policy which includes a 'Respectful Classroom' charter, and the introduction of a 'time-out' and 'merit' system is linked to our values of respect, ambition and high-quality learning and teaching. This should lead to a reduction in low-level disruption in the classroom and support individuals to take responsibility for their own actions. Pupils will also benefit from having a more consistent approach across the school.

Satisfactory progress was made in this area.

Next steps:

- Continue to roll out the electronic profiling system. Moving forward there will also be a focus on supporting pupils and staff to develop their language around skills.
- Carry out a review of the new homework policy – this will include feedback from pupils, staff and parents.
- The restorative practice training session, planned for the September in-service day, will further develop staff's knowledge and skills in this area and support the implementation of our positive relationships system.
- Carry out a review of the new positive relationship system - this will include feedback from pupils, staff and parents.
- The development of a Learning and Teaching Framework, in consultation with staff and pupils. This will provide a greater understanding of what high-quality learning and teaching looks like and as a result, lead to pupils experiencing a more consistent learning experience across the school.
- Staff will be supported to reflect on and develop their practice using 'Teaching Sprints' (Dr Simon Breakspear). This involves staff engaging in professional dialogue and research, a period of deliberate classroom practice which is followed by a review and analysis of impact. Pupil feedback will be used to measure impact in the classroom and inform next steps.

Improvement Project 3: Further develop leadership at all levels.

Primary focus: School and ELC Leadership

Year of Project: 1

Purpose: In order to build the school's capacity for change we need empowered leaders at all levels.

Progress and impact:

- We have re-introduced the Equally Safe at School (ESAS) group. Although the group is still in its infancy, it has the potential to raise awareness of gender-based discrimination and abuse. The group are supported by several members of staff and RASASH (Rape and Sexual Abuse Services).
- Our revised vision, values and aims will be launched in August 2023. The review process was led by a joint pupil/staff working group and pupils have taken responsibility for creating our launch video. Our vision, values and aims provides a clear expression of about what the school community wants the school to be - this will support us in our improvement journey.
- The introduction of School Improvement Groups (August 2022) has provided staff with the opportunity to lead change within the school. The progress made by these groups has, however, been limited by operational constraints. Examples of improvements being made by our school improvement groups include the new homework and positive relationships system (which will be launched in August 2023), as well as the introduction of an electronic profile which has been trialled by S1s.
- More staff are leading whole school activities, including our P7 transition programme and the development of our school website.

Progress in relation to this priority has been poor. Constraints relating to staffing and timetable, as well as the need for in relation to improvement planning and a range of operational procedures has limited the senior leadership team's ability to focus on strategic improvements.

Next steps:

- Develop a whole school wellbeing strategy. We are looking to take a similar approach to Stonelaw High School (South Lanarkshire) who were rated as 'excellent' for QI 3.1 (ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion). This strategy will support us to embed wellbeing across the school and provide pupils and staff with a range of leadership opportunities.
- Moving forward, we need to link the work of the Equally Safe at School group to the whole school wellbeing strategy.
- Decisions around resource allocation has created some additional capacity for change across the school for session 2023-24.
- Reduce the number of school improvement groups to improve focus on key priorities.

Evaluation of Progress

We believe we have made the following progress this session:

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

Quality Indicator	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
1.3 Leadership of Change	Weak	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Satisfactory	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

Moving forward, we will continue to develop learner participation, including use of 'How Good is OUR school?'

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

Evidence supporting each theme:

Please refer to the information above.

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

We have some concerns about our capacity for continuous improvement.

More robust and co-ordinated approaches to self-evaluation at all levels is required. This will support the school community to understand the reasons behind improvement priorities.

Leadership at all levels is required to ensure the appropriate pace and sustainability of improvements. Developing a culture of empowerment and continuous improvement takes time.

Planning Ahead

Full details of the school's 2022/23 improvement priorities and actions are detailed on the school improvement plan, which can be accessed on our website <https://www.ullapoolhigh.highland.sch.uk/> or by contacting the school office.