

2024/25



Sylvie Sinclair (Bower & Keiss Primary Cluster)
THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Introduction: Local and National Context

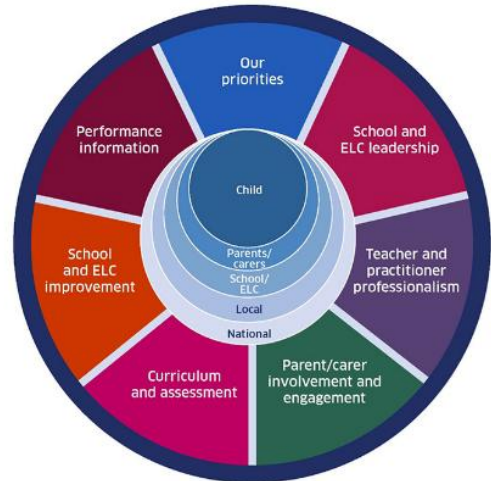
Ro-ràdh: Co-theacsa Ionadail agus Nàiseanta

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



The key priorities outlined in the National Improvement Framework are:

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:

- 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](#)

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

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.

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

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

We are pleased to present our Standards and Quality Report for Session 2023-24. 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.

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

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.

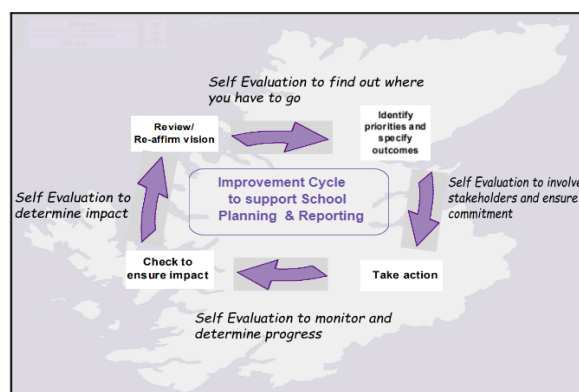
When we develop our improvement plan, we use key questions at scheduled review times throughout the session to know how well we are progressing towards achieving these positive outcomes and changes.

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.

*Sylvie Sinclair
Head Teacher
Bower Primary School*



School Profile

Pròifil na Sgoile

The following information can be found on [Parentzone Scotland](https://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.

Attendance

97%

Average Class Size

11/1

Meeting PE Target

Target Met

Pupil Numbers

21

Teacher Numbers

2

Pupil Teacher Ratio

10.5

2024/25 Proportions of pupils achieving Curriculum for Excellence Levels (P1, P4, P7 combined):

Reading

All

Writing

All

Listening and talking

All

Numeracy

All

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

We have had no exclusions this year.

Bower Primary School is located in a rural setting serving the local community of Bowermadden, Hastigrow, Gillock, Hunster, Brabsterdorrán, Murza, Thura and Kirk on the north east coast of Caithness.

The Head Teacher has overall leadership responsibility for Bower and Keiss Primary School and Nursery cluster. Staff and children from both schools work together regularly.

At Bower Primary School, there are 21 children enrolled from P1 to P7. For the 2024-25 academic year, we organized two multi-composite classes: one for P1 to P3 pupils, and another for P4 to P7 pupils. The teaching team includes three teachers: one probationary teacher in the P1-P3 class, and one teacher in the P4-P7 class. Additionally, we have a CCR (Class Contact Reduction) teacher who provides cover during Class Contact Reduction period, mentoring support, and time out of class for the probationary teacher.

As the school roll comprises a small number of children, attainment and progress will be expressed in ‘overall’ statements, rather than specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence levels. This is to ensure the identity of individuals is not disclosed.

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

Overall children are making the following progress:

Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Numeracy
Very good progress	Very good progress	Very good progress	Very good progress

We have had no exclusions this year.

School vision, values and aims

Lèirsinn, luachan agus amasan na sgoile

At Bower, we are a small school that delivers BIG Education.

Vision:: Our school is a place of learning where everyone (pupils, staff, parents and the wider community) works together in a responsible, respectful, creative, hard-working and successful environment.

Values: We will work together to develop our school values: Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

Aim: At Bower Primary School we aim to:

- Provide exciting and memorable experiences.
- Provide an ethos that fosters integrity and respect.
- Encourage learners to be resilient, independent and make sensible decisions.
- Encourage learners to be confident, to accept and
- Be willing to tackle challenges

These were reviewed in consultation with pupils, staff and parents in October 2023.

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: Integrating the Stephen Graham Programme with Talk for Writing

Purpose:

Staff have received extensive training in the Talk for Writing initiative. Additionally, A member participated in the Stephen Graham initiative during the session 23-24. We recognise the numerous advantages of both initiatives and aim to combine them to create a programme that maximises attainment for all our learners.

Progression:

1. Staff were provided with 6 training sessions covering the principles and methodologies of the Stephen Graham .
2. Stage meetings were organised to review existing curriculum to identify opportunities for integration of both programmes.
3. Lesson plans, writing prompts, reading materials and assessment tools were created by combining elements of both programmes
4. Staff meetings were organised to share expertise and insights (sharing best practices)
5. Mechanisms to check how well the new programme was being used were put in place i.e. HT observations
6. Learner progress was assessed , ensuring teachers assign appropriate

Impact:

1. Teachers learned useful literacy strategies that helped them feel more confident and teach more clearly, using the Stephen Graham approach.
2. The literacy curriculum became more connected and easier to follow, making it simpler to use both the Stephen Graham and Talk for Writing methods across all classes.
3. Teaching materials became more interesting and better suited to what pupils needed, helping them join in more and understand literacy better.
4. Teachers worked together more often, creating a positive learning culture and helping everyone improve their teaching.
5. This helped identify what was working well and where support was needed, leading to more consistent teaching and better learning experiences for pupils.

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

level and identify areas for improvement(Moderation)

7. Parents were kept informed about the integration of the Stephen Graham and Talk for Writing programmes during an open evening.

6. Regular assessment and moderation helped teachers give pupils the right level of work and spot where they needed more help, leading to better progress in learning
7. Sharing information with parents at the open evening helped them understand the new approaches, strengthening home-school partnerships and supporting pupils' learning at home.

Next Step:

Staff will continue taking part in Stephen Graham training to build their skills and confidence in using the approach effectively.

Staff will use rubrics to assess pieces of writing.

School Priority: *Outdoor Learning*

Purpose:

After successfully developing play pedagogy last session, we aim to extend this by prioritising outdoor learning next session. Outdoor learning aligns perfectly with play pedagogy, fostering curiosity, creativity, and physical activity. It enhances children's connection to nature, promotes social interaction and collaboration, and complements our commitment to holistic, child-centred education and the development of children 's meta-skills. Overall, by prioritising outdoor learning next session, we aim to build on the success of play pedagogy and offer our pupils a well-

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

rounded educational experience that nurtures their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development.

- *Progression*

1. Survey was sent to all stakeholders to find out current knowledge and understanding of outdoor learning-
2. Current approaches to outdoor learning were analysed and evaluated.
3. Outdoor policy was created.
4. All stakeholders were engaged in reviewing outdoor learning so that everyone understood what the school was trying through its curriculum.
5. We started to develop outdoor area to allow high quality learning to take place – resources/ areas

- *Impact*

1. The results helped the school understand current knowledge and expectations around outdoor learning, guiding the planning of next steps.
2. Reviewing existing outdoor learning approaches helped staff make evidence-based improvements, resulting in more purposeful outdoor activities that better support pupil engagement, wellbeing, and skill development.
3. Gave clear guidance to staff and families, making sure outdoor learning was consistent and part of everyday teaching.
4. Involving all stakeholders in the review process strengthened communication and collaboration between staff, pupils, and families. As a result, everyone developed a clearer understanding of the purpose and value of outdoor learning within the curriculum.
5. Improved spaces and resources helped pupils enjoy more meaningful and engaging learning experiences outdoors.

Next steps:

- . Engage in professional enquiry and research and engage in professional learning on outdoor learning
- Action what we learned from surveying stakeholders.
- Continue to develop outdoor area to allow high quality learning to take place – resources/ areas

Progress and impact of Pupil Equity Fund

Adhartas agus buaidh Maoin Cothromas Sgoilearan

No Pupil Equity Fund

Wider achievements

Coileanaidhean nas fharsainghe

Opportunities to ensure achievement through a wide range of activities are promoted across the school. We recognise individual achievement by regularly sharing at assembly. Out-of-school events and success in competitions/awards are also shared at assemblies, in newsletters, and on Seesaw. We have 'Celebrating Success' wall displays to further highlight accomplishments.

We believe strong, supportive, and nurturing relationships are key to our school community thriving together. Relationships at all levels are based on our key values of kindness and respect. Children identify with this ethos of achievement and have a strong belief that they can be successful locally and nationally too. We are very proud of our pupils who are confident, aware of their responsibilities, and have a positive "can-do" attitude.

Additionally, we actively encourage and support interdisciplinary activities that provide children with opportunities to explore their interests, develop their talents, and apply their skills across different contexts. Each year, the school takes part in events such as the Science Festival and the Music Festival, where our performances are always very well received.

We also raise money for charity by organising events such as walks and fundraising days, supporting causes like Macmillan and Rainbow.

Furthermore, we prioritise the well-being and mental health of our pupils. We have dedicated staff members ensuring that every child has access to support when needed. Our inclusive and nurturing approach fosters a sense of belonging and emotional resilience among our pupils, empowering them to overcome challenges and reach their full potential.

We are a Right Respecting School. We were successfully awarded Bronze award in June 2024 and working towards our Silver award.

Comments from learners, families, stakeholders and staff

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

Bower Primary School	Pupil Questionnaire Results – May 2025
Responses (16)	in percentages

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I enjoy learning in school.	50	50		
I get along well with people in my class.	69	31		
I enjoy lunch time in the dinner hall.	56	44		
I feel safe in school.	75	25		
My teacher listens to my views.	69	31		
Staff talk to me regularly about how to improve my learning.	63	37		
I get help when I need it.	56	44		
Children in school are friendly	44	56		
I think it's a good idea to wear school uniform.	44	56		
I have adults in the school I can speak to if I am upset or worried about something.	69	31		
Pupils think that teachers at Bower PS are good.	63	37		
Staff make sure pupils behave well.	44	56		
Staff are good at dealing with bullying behaviour.	50	50		
The pupil council is making improvements to the school.	56	44		
I take part in out-of-class activities and school clubs.	50	50		
People think Bower is a good school.	75	25		
I am pleased this is my school.	75	25		

Parent Questionnaire Results – March 2023				
Responses (6) in percentages				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My child likes being at this school.	100			
Staff treat my child fairly and with respect.	100			
I feel my child is safe at school.	100			
The school helps my child feel confident.	83	17		
I feel the staff really know my child as an individual.	100			
My child copes well with learning.	50	50		
My child receives the help he/she needs to do well.	83	17		
The school is welcoming and there are opportunities to get involved.	100			
My child is encouraged by the school to be healthy and take regular exercise.	83	17		
The school supports my child's emotional well-being.	83	17		
My child is making good progress at the school.	50	50		

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

I receive helpful, regular feedback of how my child is learning and developing e.g. informal feedback, reports and learning profiles.	67	33		
School and class newsletters are informative and easy to understand.	67	33		
The information I receive about my child reaches me at the right time.	50	50		
I understand how my child's progress is assessed.	33	67		
The school gives me advice on how to support my child's learning at home.	50	50		
I receive helpful and regular information about the school.	67	33		
The school organises activities where my child and I can learn together.	67	33		
The school seeks my views and listens to my concerns.	83	17		
I feel comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions and/or problems.	100			
I feel encouraged to be involved in the work of the parent council.	83	17		
I am kept informed about the work of the parent council.	50	50		
I am satisfied with the quality of teaching in the school.	100			
The school is well led and managed.	83	17		
The school encourages children to treat each other with respect.	83	17		
I would recommend the school to other parents.	100			

Teacher Questionnaire Results – May 2025 Responses (2)		In percentages		
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Bower PS has a welcoming atmosphere.	100			
I find it rewarding to be a member of staff at Bower PS.	100			
I feel a valued part of the school community.	50	50		
Staff at all levels within the school communicates effectively with each other.	100			
Staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect	50	50		
Staff and pupils respect each other.	50	50		
I have been actively involved in developing the school's vision and values.	50	50		

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

I have opportunities to be involved in agreeing priorities for the school.	50	50		
I have regular opportunities to help shape the curriculum by having staff discussions and working groups.	50	50		
Moderation activities are helping me sound professional judgements.	50	50		
Staff have a shared understanding of their responsibilities for all in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.	50	50		
I am actively involved in the school's on-going self-evaluation.		100		
Staff are given the opportunity to learn and share practice with colleagues from the school and other schools.	50	50		
Staff are encouraged to share good practice.	100			
I have good opportunities to take part in continuing professional development.	100			
I am aware of and involved in the school's strategies for raising attainment for all.	100			
I am aware of the school's procedures for protecting children	50	50		
Pupils take an active part in their learning.	100			
Pupils are involved in setting learning targets.	50	50		
All pupils are given activities which meet their learning needs.		100		
Staff regularly ask for pupil's views on how their learning experiences could be improved.	50	50		
Pupils are provided with opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others.	50	50		
The school has effective strategies to support pupils with their learning.	50	50		
Support for pupils with additional needs is effective.	50	50		
The school arrangements for engaging parents in their child's learning are effective.	50	50		
Collaborative working across the school is effective in taking forward improvement.	50	50		
The school implements the behaviour policy effectively.	50	50		
I am provided with feedback when I report an incident.	50	50		
I receive appropriate support for planning, preparation of resources and assessment.	50	50		
I feel my workload is manageable.		100		
I feel supported by the management team.	50	50		
Leadership at all levels is effective.		100		
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Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

Non-Teaching Staff Questionnaire Results – May 2025

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Bower PS has a welcoming atmosphere.	100			
I find it rewarding to be a member of staff at Bower PS.	75	25		
I feel a valued part of the school community.	75	25		
I feel appropriately supported by the school to undertake my role.	100			
I enjoy working at Bower PS.	75	25		
I understand how to apply the school's procedures relating to child protection and safeguarding.	25	75		
Pupils are safe at Bower PS.	25	75		
Staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect.	100			
Colleagues treat each other with respect.	100			
Pupils are encouraged and supported to treat each other with respect.	100			
Children are well-behaved and polite.	100			
The school implements the behaviour policy effectively.	100			
I am provided with feedback when I report an incident.	100			
Staff at all levels within the school communicate effectively with each other.	100			
I feel my workload is manageable.	75	25		
The school is well led and managed.	75	25		
Leadership at all levels is effective.	75	25		

Comments from families:

Comments from families:

Bower PS	Session 2024-2025	Parent Questionnaire Results		Percentages	
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My child likes being at this school	100				
Staff treat my child fairly and with respect	100				
I feel my child is safe at school	100				
The school helps my child feel confident	67	33			
I feel the staff really know my child as an individual	100				
My child copes well with learning	67	33			

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

My child receives the help he/she needs to do well	100			
The school is welcoming and there are opportunities to get involved	100			
My child is encouraged by the school to be healthy and take regular exercise	67	33		
The school supports my child's emotional well-being	67	33		
My child is making good progress at the school	67	33		
I receive helpful, regular feedback of how my child is learning and developing e.g informal feedback, reports and learning profiles.	67	33		
School and class newsletters are informative and easy to understand	67	33		
The information I receive about my child reaches me at the right time	33	67		
I understand how my child's progress is assessed	33	67		
The school gives me advice on how to support my child's learning at home.	67	33		
I receive helpful and regular information about the school	67	33		
The school organises activities where my child and I can learn together	100			
The school seeks my views and listens to my concerns	100			
I feel comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions and/or problems	100			
I feel encouraged to be involved in the work of the parent council	67	33		
I am kept informed about the work of the parent council	100			
I am satisfied with the quality of teaching in the school	100			
The school is well led and managed	100			
The school encourages children to treat each other with respect.	100			
I would recommend the school to other parents	100			

Comments from stakeholders:

It's a nice school, with a personal feel that enables the children of all ages to mix and play.

Connections and relationships between everyone incredibly open and caring with the family feel every wee school should have.

Staff are caring, friendly, professional, hardworking and nurturing. Clearly a very close team that works very well together to the benefit of the pupils.

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

Good small school, really good standards.

Family feel, good Seesaw app to see how the children are doing.

Comments from staff:

Bower Non-Teaching Staff Questionnaire	Session: 24-25	Percentages		
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Bower PS has a welcoming atmosphere	100			
I find it rewarding to be a member of staff at Bower PS	75	25		
I feel a valued part of the school community	75	25		
I feel appropriately supported by the school to undertake my role.	100			
I enjoy working at Bower PS	75	25		
I understand how to apply the school's procedures relating to child protection and safeguarding	75	25		
Pupils are safe at Bower PS	75	25		
Staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect	100			
Colleagues treat each other with respect	100			
Pupils are encouraged and supported to treat each other with respect	100			
Children are well behaved and polite	100			
I am provided with feedback when I report an incident	100			
Staff at all levels within the school communicates effectively with each other	100			
I feel my workload is manageable	100			
The school is well led and managed	75	25		
Leadership at all levels are effective	75	25		

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	Choose an item.	Very good	Choose an item.
Leadership of change			

Happiness, Respect, Kindness, Community, Teamwork and Healthy.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Choose an item.	Very good	Choose an item.
QI 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Choose an item.	Very good	Choose an item.
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement/Securing children's progress	Choose an item.	Very good	Choose an item.

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

- Continue to raise literacy attainment, with a particular focus on writing, by further developing staff expertise in delivering the Stephen Graham writing approach.
- Continue to improve numeracy attainment across all stages.
- Further develop our outdoor learning environment to enhance engagement and support learning across the curriculum.
- Continue to build teacher confidence in tracking and monitoring learner progress effectively.
- Ensure teachers have access to user-friendly, consistent, and comprehensive planners across all areas of the curriculum.

Planning ahead

A' planadh air adhart

Details of the school's improvement priorities and planned actions for 2025–26 will be outlined in the School Improvement Plan, which will be available on our website at the beginning of the new school session.