

STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT AITHISG INBHEAN IS CÀILEACHD

2024/25



Dingwall Academy

HIGHLAND COUNCIL | DINGWALL, ROSS-SHIRE, IV7 8DG

School Profile

Pròifil na Sgoile

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 sources.

Dingwall Academy is located in the market town of Dingwall in Ross-shire. It covers a large catchment area including a number of small, rural communities. The projected roll for next session is 1070. Pupils from Dingwall Primary, Ben Wyvis Primary, Tarradale Primary, Mulbuie Primary, Ferintosh Primary, Strathconon Primary, Marybank Primary and Strathpeffer Primary all attend Dingwall Academy. The school also has approximately 80 pupils attending following placing requests.

The Head Teacher, Karen Cormack, is supported by 4 Depute Head Teachers. There are 5 Principal Teachers of Guidance who are the first point of contact for any pastoral support. The school has 12 subject Principal Teachers and 1 Principal Teacher ASN.

The school has several supporting partners, including Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and HighLife Highland.

Overall, attainment across the school in literacy and English and numeracy and Mathematics is good. Children achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and numeracy and, across the school, a few children are exceeding nationally expected levels. Raising Attainment remains a focus for the school, and next session all schools will be required to engaged with the Highland Raising Attainment and Achievement Strategy.

The school currently has 20 pupils in Gaidhlig medium. Pupils can also opt to learn Gaelic, with progression possible to Advanced Higher Level. As part of the Gaidhlig provision pupils have the opportunity to compete in local and National Mods, and to work with the FilmG initiative.

The school accommodates the specialist provision for Highland Deaf Services. Pupils across the school are given the opportunity to learn British Sign Language and this subject is available up to SCQF Level 6.

The mid-area Autism Provision 'An Caladh' is based at Dingwall Academy. Pupils attending An Caladh are referred following a meeting of the Joint Admissions Group (JAG). The Principal Teacher ASN has responsibility for the An Caladh provision.

Non-teaching staff play a crucial role in the running of the school. We have a team of Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) who support pupils in classrooms and group activities. We also have an Attendance Officer who provides support to Guidance and SMT in managing attendance. Attendance remains a focus for improvement in the school, as it does nationally.

Parents and Carers receive a weekly update from the Head Teacher, and pupil achievements and successes are shared via the school Facebook page.

We have an active Parent Council who organise a range of fundraising and information events throughout the session, all parents are welcome to be part of this.

Next session there will be a change to the Senior Management Team with Dr James Vance taking up the post of Head Teacher in August, following the retirement of Mrs Karen Cormack.

Data relating to our context:

Pupil Numbers	Attendance	Exclusions	Teacher Numbers (FTE)
1088	86.7%	23	80

S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
20.4%	17.5%	18.6%	18.5%	15.4%	9.5%

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

Overall ASN	Free School Meal	EAL	Glossary: FTE – Full Time Equivalent SIMD – Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 1=pupils living in most deprived areas 5=least deprived areas ASN – Additional Support Needs EAL – percentage of learners for whom English is an Additional Language
50 - 60%	10 - 20%	0 - 10%	

Attainment

Literacy and Numeracy in S1-S3 – Broad General Education

Level 3 2024/2025 Percentage of pupils achieving Curriculum for Excellence Levels by the end of S3

Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Numeracy
96%	97%	96%	95%

Level 4

Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Numeracy
69%	69%	68%	87%

Gaelic Medium

2024/2025 Percentage of pupils achieving Curriculum for Excellence Levels by the end of S3

Level 3

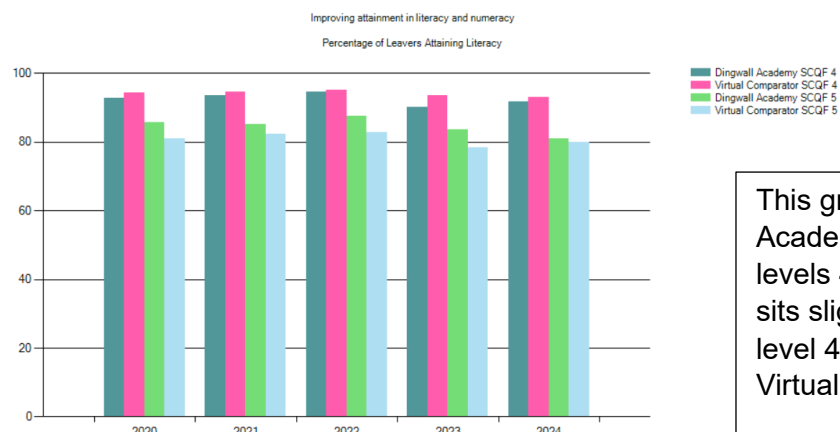
Gaelic reading	Gaelic writing	Gaelic listening and talking
100%	100%	100%

Level 4

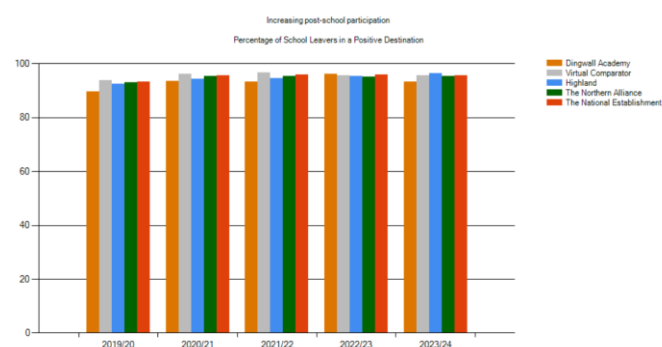
Gaelic reading	Gaelic writing	Gaelic listening and talking
100%	100%	100%

ATTAINMENT

Literacy and Numeracy in the senior phase.



Destinations of School Leavers



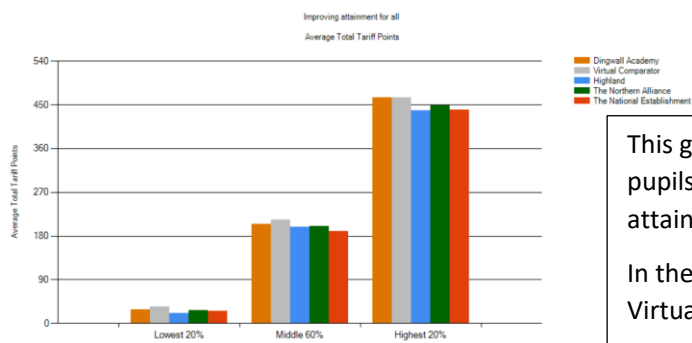
Pupils can also work with partner organisations to achieve qualifications. This includes Inverness UHI, North Highland College and Youth Scotland. During session 24 - 25, pupils achieved qualifications in 25 different courses with 8 partner organisations.



Scotland's Rural College



North Highland College
University of the
Highlands and Islands

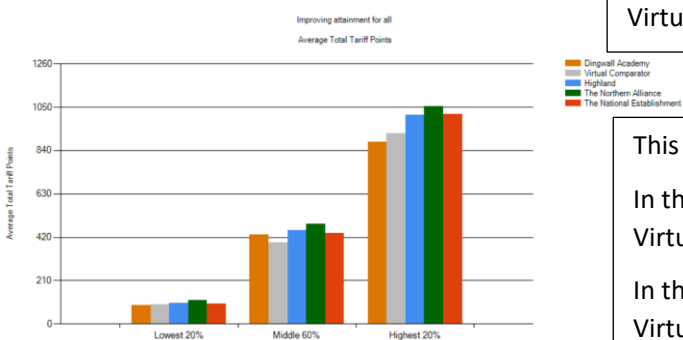


This graph shows the attainment of pupils in **S4**. The graph divides pupils into the lowest and highest attaining 20%, and the middle attaining 60%

In the lowest attaining 20% Dingwall Academy is slightly behind the Virtual Comparator.

In the middle attaining 60% Dingwall Academy sits slightly behind the Virtual Comparator.

In the highest attaining 20% Dingwall Academy is in line with the Virtual Comparator.

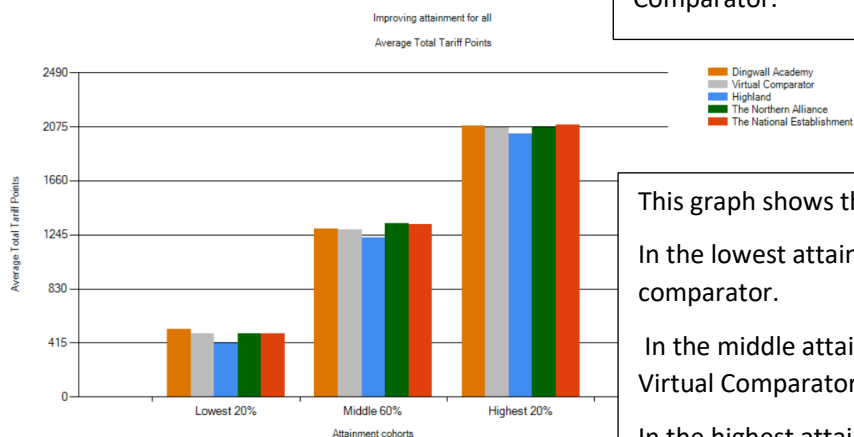


This graph shows the attainment of pupils in **S5**.

In the lowest attaining 20% Dingwall Academy is in line with the Virtual Comparator.

In the middle attaining 60% Dingwall Academy sits ahead of the Virtual Comparator.

In the highest attaining 20% Dingwall Academy is behind the Virtual Comparator.



This graph shows the attainment of pupils in **S6**.

In the lowest attaining 20% Dingwall Academy is ahead of the virtual comparator.

In the middle attaining 60% Dingwall Academy is in line with the Virtual Comparator.

In the highest attaining 20% Dingwall Academy is in line with the Virtual Comparator.

In 2024:

50% of S4 pupils achieved 5 or more subjects at Level 5

41% of S5 pupils achieved 3 or more subjects at Level 6

18% of S5 pupils achieved 5 or more subjects at Level 6

69% of S6 pupils achieved 3 or more subjects at Level 6

57% of S6 pupils achieved 5 or more subjects at Level 6

49% of S6 pupils achieved 1 or more subjects at Level 7

Level 5 includes National 5.

Level 6 includes Higher.

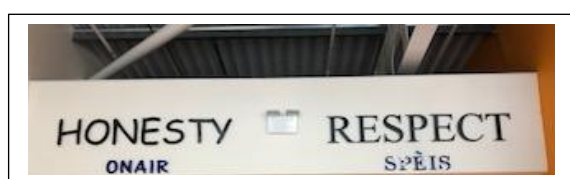
Level 7 includes Advanced Higher.

School vision, values and aims

Lèirsinn, luachan agus amasan na sgoile

A school with a sense of community. A school where, by taking 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.”



Review of progress of improvement plan projects for session 2024/25

Ath-sgrùdadh air adhartas airson an t-seisein

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

School Improvement Priority 1 Learning and Teaching	
Summary of impact	Next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following feedback from staff and the pupil voice, there was an agreed focus on quality feedback in the classroom. During the September in-service all teaching staff took part in a workshop session focused on quality feedback. Nearly all staff found the September in-service session useful and said that it would impact positively on their practice. <p>September In-Service Workshop</p> <p>Following the September in-service, 2 working groups were formed. 1 with a focus on supporting staff, and the 2nd focused on helping pupils understand their part in taking on and using feedback to improve learning.</p> <p>Further feedback from staff identified some of the impediments to pupils recognising and acting on feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misalignment - teachers are giving feedback, but pupils either do not recognise they are getting feedback, or don't act upon it. Frustration that pupils ignore, don't act on feedback. Teachers sometimes feel a need to justify themselves e.g. through written reports <p>All pupils were asked to provide detail on their experience of feedback in the classroom. Most pupils said that they recognised feedback but less than half said that they knew how to use feedback.</p> <p>Learning Week In May, a learning visit week took place. The purpose of the week was:</p> <p><i>"The purpose of the week is for staff to have an opportunity to discuss and share good practice, with a particular focus on quality feedback."</i></p> <p>53 learning visits took place. Most staff found the learning visits useful, almost all said that the visits encouraged them to reflect on their own teaching. Almost all said that they had the opportunity to discuss classroom feedback as part of the visit. The majority of staff visited said that they would change their classroom practice because of the learning visits. Nearly all staff said that they learned from the experience and enjoyed talking with other classroom practitioners.</p>	<p>Subject specific visual references to be provided for each classroom detailing what quality feedback looks like and sounds like.</p> <p>Further work with the pupil voice to discuss pupil responsibility. "What is feedback and how do I use it?" Pupil guide produced.</p> <p>Feedback week to be agreed and used as a launch for above initiatives.</p> <p>Authority learning and teaching policy to be reviewed. Schools required to have their own policy that aligns with this and with the revised LNCT16 policy.</p>

<p>Nurture provision</p> <p>All staff took part in workshops with a focus on embedding nurture. Almost all staff found the workshops useful to their daily practice. Nurture is embedded in the school's Promoting Positive Relationships policy.</p> <p>In December, eight S1 pupils started working in a daily nurture group.</p> <p>Summary of nurture</p> <p>All pupils who were part of the nurture group found it a positive experience. All pupils said that it helped them come into school. Almost all of the group felt that it helped build their confidence.</p> <p>Nurture key data</p> <p>A working group comprised of representatives from the Support Department has been established to review support provision and interventions. This group will ensure that our support provision is working to meet pupil needs.</p>	<p>There is a need to review all support provision with the purpose of providing clarity to staff on the purpose, target group and referral process for all support provision.</p> <p>Focus on transferring the skills and competencies developed in the nurture group to the wider school setting.</p>
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School Improvement Plan Priority 2 Curriculum and Developing our Future Workforce	
Summary of impact	Next steps
<p>The S3 and S4 curriculum now includes the SQA Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB) Course, and the SQA Scottish Studies Course. This is in addition to subject option choices. In 2024, overall S4 attainment benefited from 104 pupils attaining the MHWB course at level 5.</p> <p>S2 options for S3 typically follow a pattern where almost all pupils have a balanced curriculum including science and social subjects. This session, there was a reduction in the number of pupils opting for certain subjects. Individual options were reviewed, and changes made.</p> <p>A staff working group looking at Learning for Sustainability was established.</p> <p>Revised DYW Role:</p> <p>The school continues to grow their highly effective and collaborative partnership with Sandy Mackenzie (DYW Co-ordinator), which is deeply embedded within the life and ethos of the school. Most departments are now engaged with DYW. This strong working relationship has enabled an exceptional level of community engagement, connecting the majority of pupils with a wide range of local employers, training providers, and community organisations. DYW co-ordinator plays a central role in shaping personalised pathways for learners, ensuring a child-centred approach that supports the ambitions, interests, and needs of each individual.</p> <p>DYW co-ordinators presence in the school is consistent and well-integrated, contributing meaningfully to curriculum planning, targeted interventions, and whole-school initiatives. Through this partnership, the majority of pupils are offered rich and relevant opportunities to explore the world of work, develop employability skills, and move confidently towards positive post-school destinations. This year, SM was involved</p>	<p>Continue the delivery of Scottish Studies in S3 and review units delivered.</p> <p>Review the delivery and structure of the MHWB course.</p> <p>Review of S3 curriculum and options process to ensure balanced choices.</p> <p>Learning for Sustainability – timeline and action points to be agreed and shared with all staff, leading to a shared understanding of the learning for sustainability agenda.</p> <p>SDS, DYW and Highlife staff will mentor a group of S6 pupils to support pupils into volunteering.</p> <p>Introduction of Jobs Club:</p> <p>Purpose of Jobs Club</p>

<p>in the P7 transition visits to develop the relationships from the beginning of their Dingwall Academy journey. The collaborative approach continues to enhance the school's capacity to deliver meaningful outcomes for all young people.</p> <p>Number of pupils taking part in work experience has increased significantly. Of the young people who expressed interest in work experience, the majority successfully started, and the school continues to support those who have not yet found a position available through High Hope. For a few young people these work experiences led to full time employment.</p> <p>Notable events/ programmes: EDT Silver and Gold cadets (36 pupils) Morrison's Building Your Future (10 pupils) SSE Experience days (40 pupils) Employability Programme (10 pupils)</p> <p>Positive Destinations: The positive destination figure was marginally down on last year's figures. Upon the release of the data in February we identified a cohort of pupils who had been in negative destinations when the data was captured. In the interim period, of the 13 pupils, 2 have returned to school, 1 has entered training and 3 have entered employment.</p> <p>We continue to have very successful Partner meetings, and all staff and partners involved feel they are effective. This year we focused on integrating our specialists' provisions within the partner meetings to build our enhanced transition support.</p> <p>We were saddened to see the end of MFMS as that was one of our most successful partners in working with our most disengaged young people. As a school, we will continue to work hard to reach our most disengaged.</p> <p>Review of Future Focus: This year saw the introduction of our Future Focus programme. Pupils can opt for the subject in S5 and S6. The course is focused on employability, empowering and upskilling young people to move onto positive destinations.</p> <p>Future Focus Apprenticeship Success and Post-School Pathways Over the course of the year, 11 young people successfully secured apprenticeship positions. This outcome was supported through a collaborative approach involving classroom learning experiences, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), and Skills Development Scotland (SDS). In addition, 6 pupils transitioned into full-time employment, while the remainder have returned to school.</p> <p>Of those who returned, two pupils are continuing to explore their post-school options and are receiving ongoing targeted support from SDS and DYW within the classroom setting. The remaining pupils are committed to completing S6, with clearer intentions to pursue positive destinations thereafter.</p> <p>One of the initial goals of the course was to establish sustainable partnerships that would serve as a foundation for future delivery. This objective has been met successfully, particularly through the development of strong working relationships with Fairburn, the local Housing Association, and the Highland Council Welfare Team. These</p>	<p>Increase links between DYW and ASN department, to broaden employability opportunities for ASN pupils.</p> <p>Finalise service offer from SDS. This will allow us to be more targeted and focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part time jobs • The development of hobbies • Work experience opportunities • January college courses and application support • Apprenticeship opportunities • September college courses and application support <p>Develop capacity within staff to deliver the Future Focus course.</p>
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<p>core partnerships have been further enriched with additional, short-term collaborations tailored to the interests and needs of the current cohort.</p> <p>Future Focus Community Engagement and Personal Development Throughout the year, almost all pupils engaged meaningfully with a range of community partners. Increased confidence in communication and community interaction was a clear area of growth, reflected by the majority in pupil voice feedback. Several pupils described their initial experiences approaching local businesses as part of their SCQF Level 5 Local Investigation unit as challenging. However, by the end of the course, the majority reported feeling more confident in interacting with others in various professional and social contexts—this progress was particularly evident during final mock interviews.</p> <p>Future Focus Reflections on Accreditation and Partnership Delivery This year has also served as a learning opportunity in exploring what is achievable in terms of accreditation. While the partnership with the Engineering Development Trust (EDT) provided valuable experiences, it also proved more time-intensive than anticipated, which impacted the delivery of some planned accreditation outcomes.</p> <p>Almost all pupils achieved the Silver Industrial Cadets Award, but this is not SCQF accredited. This insight will inform future planning to ensure a more balanced and manageable integration of partner contributions within the course framework. Almost all pupils completed Successful Tenancy and Personal Finance at level 4 and Barista Skills at level 5.</p> <p>Overall, we learnt significant amounts in the year one pilot and are moving confidently into year two with a clear plan to maximise accreditation and positive destination for the new cohort.</p>	<p>Moving forward we have amended the course to maximise accreditation. Level 6 Powering Futures will have 2 x periods per week and the remaining periods will focus on the above qualifications.</p>
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School Improvement Plan Priority 3 Raising Attainment	
Summary of impact	Next steps
<p>Insight Training In December, all teaching staff took part in Insight Training with Lewis Paterson. As a result, all staff are more confident in accessing and using Insight data. This session highlighted the need for all staff to be more aware of how Dingwall Academy presentation figures compare with National figures. All staff now have access to data comparing school presentation figures with national presentation figures. We also acknowledge that direct comparisons cannot always be made.</p> <p>We reviewed and issued revised presentation advice. All staff are now more aware of the need to consider all options before withdrawing a pupil or changing their level.</p> <p>Presentation Advice</p> <p>New M&T system</p>	<p>School procedures align with the new Highland Raising Attainment and Achievement Strategy. This will include a clear timeline and detail responsibilities for analysing exam data and Monitoring and Tracking Data.</p> <p>Review presentation policy to ensure it is in line with authority policy</p> <p>Tracking system to be outlined to all staff.</p>

<p>The SEEMiS system was used for Monitoring and Tracking in the senior phase. This provided summary data that could be accessed by all staff. This data is now accessed centrally to demonstrate progress towards attainment targets. There are still some limitations to the data, particularly in terms of providing cumulative data. The majority of staff are aware of how to use this data to bring about improvement.</p> <p>This data enabled targeted learning conversations with senior phase pupils.</p> <p>Highland Tutoring Service Engagement with HTS was variable, with 10 children referred to the programme during the session.</p> <p>As a result of non-engagement, we created our own in-school programme to support pupils struggling to engage. 8 pupils were given the opportunity to engage with the school through a combination of online and in-school provision. 4 pupils were successful in attaining further qualifications.</p> <p>Attendance The overall aim was to continue raising the profile of attendance among pupils and stakeholders, and ultimately to increase attendance across the whole school. The school participated in the Education Scotland Attendance Project which was a key part of the attendance strategy.</p> <p>Attendance targets were set at the beginning of the year, based on data from previous years, and the majority of these were met.</p> <p>Please refer to the document linked below for further information relating to the 2024/25 session.</p> <p>Attendance Information and Data 2024/25</p>	<p>Tracking of interventions to measure impact on engagement, attendance and attainment.</p> <p>Work with SDS, DYW and Highlife to increase number of S6 pupils attaining Leadership Award @L6.</p> <p>Increase number of S4 pupils attaining Scottish Studies @L5.</p> <p>Look at capacity in English with a view of formalising our own online support.</p> <p>Overall attendance target of 87%.</p> <p>Focus on reducing the % of unauthorised absences.</p> <p>Continue to raise the profile of attendance with pupils and stakeholders.</p> <p>Build on the interventions planned as part of the Education Scotland Attendance Project.</p>
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Progress and impact of Pupil Equity Fund

Adhartas agus buaidh Maoin Cothromas Sgoilearan

Our Pupil Equity Fund is used to support 2 posts in school:

- Part time attendance officer
- Teacher to support pupils with Social, Emotional and Behaviour needs.

Wider achievements

Coileanaidhean nas fharsainghe

- Most pupils feel that they can learn new skills and develop a variety of talents and interests.
- The school has a wide range of extra-curricular activities and pupils can experience a range of competitive and non-competitive activities.
- The school enjoys considerable success at Ross-shire school events, including cross country, athletics and swimming. All pupils are encouraged to take part in our annual wellbeing walk, and S1 pupils also take part in a further walk during the summer term.
- This session, the School Football teams won three of the North of Scotland Cups.
- Senior pupils were members North of Scotland Football Team that won the Scottish Cup.
- Volleyball is thriving in the school, with over 80 pupils regularly taking part.
- We have a very active and successful mountain biking club; part of their programme includes the 24-hour Strathpuffer Endurance event.
- There is a full inter-house programme of sporting activities.
- The music department run an excellent extra-curricular programme – with pupils able to take part in choir, Ceilidh Band, Orchestra and Jazz Band. Pupils are given the opportunity to enter local and National Mods.
- The school competes in debating competitions with pupils winning the Highland Schools Debating competition and reaching the finals of the Scottish Mace debating competition.
- S3 pupils are given the opportunity to take part in the Wilderness Challenge based on the Alladale Estate.
- S3 pupils take part in the YPI initiative (Youth Philanthropy Initiative) and this year won £3000 for Sight Action.
- The school has an active STEM club who produce a monthly newsletter for pupils and parents.
- Senior pupils are given the opportunity to achieve Leadership Qualification, this can be through work in PE, STEM activities or whole school activities.
- S2 pupils can take part in the Remote2 Mars Rover programme, this involves building and coding a Lego rover robot for testing in a NASSA underground lab.
- S6 Pupils deliver the MVP Programme (Mentoring in Violence Prevention) to S2 pupils.
- All S2 pupils have the opportunity to visit the Science Newton Room based in Dingwall.
- We have pupils involved with both the Children's Parliament and the Children's Commissioner.
- During study leave, targeted pupils are given the opportunity to take part in a structured employability programme.
- The school takes part in the Aspire North programme; this encourages and supports pupils into Higher Education.
- The MCR programme is embedded in the school and provides mentoring support and group work.
- Highlife Highland co-ordinates the Dingwall Youth Forum. This year, 1 pupil completed over 1000 hours of volunteering, and another over 500 hours.
- Pupils have all been given the opportunity to contribute to the Pupil Voice, and this feedback has been used to inform improvement planning for next session.
- We have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group in the school.
- The drama club has restarted; the group wrote and produced their own short pantomime during the summer term.

Comments from learners, families, stakeholders and staff

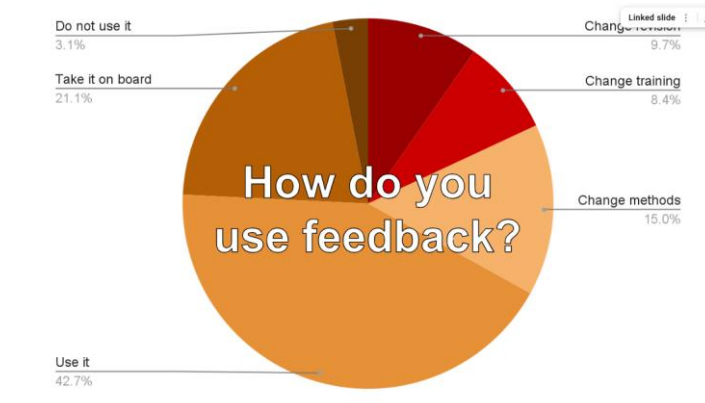
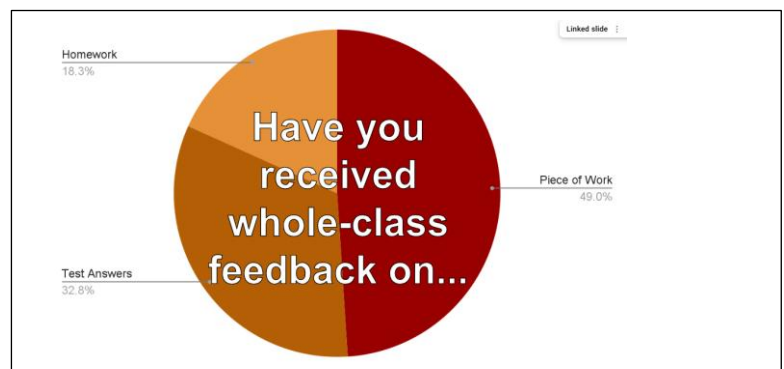
Beachdan bho luchd-ionnsachaidh, teaghlaichean, luchd-ùidhe is luchd-obrach

We have an active Parent Council who are always keen to support and promote the school. The school improvement priorities are discussed at the Parent Council. This year they organised a very successful Christmas Fair and provided financial support for Sports Day, Prize Giving and the Wellbeing Walk. .

The Parent Council have also supported the replacement of projectors across the school, and our employability programme.

Most parents are aware of the school's improvement priorities.

All pupils were given the opportunity to provide feedback on their own experience of feedback in the classroom.



Pupils in S2, S4 and S6 were all given the opportunity to complete the Equally safe at School questionnaire.

S6 pupils were asked to provide feedback on priorities for improvement.

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 progress as follows:

	2024 - 25
QI 1.3 Leadership of change	Good
QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Good
QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion	Good
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and Achievement	Satisfactory

Our overall evaluation of our capacity for continuous improvement is:

We are confident in our capacity for continuous improvement.

Key priorities for improvement planning

Prìomhachasan airson planadh airson leasachadh

Improvement Priority Title
1. Learning and Teaching
2. Data and Self Evaluation
3. Curriculum

Planning ahead

A' planadh air adhart

Full details of the school's 2025/26 improvement priorities and actions are detailed on the school improvement plan, which can be accessed on our [website](#) or by contacting the school office.

The full School Improvement Plan will be available at the end of September

Respect - Responsibility - Honesty - Determination