



From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire Education Service

Quality Improvement Framework

August 2026



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Overview

As an authority Aberdeenshire Education and Children's Services are required to carry out our duty to ensure the delivery of improvement in the quality of education, which is provided in all our schools, with a view to achieving the strategic vision and priorities of the National Improvement Framework (NIF).

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/statutory-guidance-standards-scotlands-schools-etc-act-2000-9781786528759/>

The Scottish Government: [National Improvement Framework \(NIF\)](#) was established in 2015 and sets out the vision and priorities for Scottish Education. The vision set out for education in Scotland is:

- **Excellence through raising achievement and improving outcomes:** ensuring that every child and young person achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the values, attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to shape a sustainable future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.
- **Achieving equity:** ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, no matter their background or shared protected characteristics, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

The priorities within the NIF 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 achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Across Aberdeenshire we are committed to the delivery of high-quality education system for all children and young people.

The goal of this framework is to ensure that the quality of education, well-being and leadership in all our schools meets high standards and consistently improves. The framework will help the service to identify strengths, areas for improvement and set clear targets for development. It also provides clear guidance for Head Teachers and our central teams to work together in an iterative and collaborative process of improvement.

This framework will be reviewed and updated annually.

Next annual review will be August 2027.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following section outlines the roles and responsibilities of different groups of staff in relation to core areas of practice within our framework. Our improvement framework is based on nationally agreed indicators within How Good is our School? Edition 4.

QI	Elected members	Central QI Team	Leaders across the service	School leaders	Middle leaders	Class teachers
1.3 Leadership of change	Scrutiny of School inspections and reports including NIF/Business plans	Support the ongoing development of self-improving school system. Engage in QIV and VSE processes to validate school self-evaluation. Provide relevant advice and guidance to improve leadership within settings, across clusters and authority wide. Provide support and challenge around progress within school improvement plans to evidence the impact on learners. (School and cluster level) Provide support and challenge around the impact of quality assurance processes on improving outcomes for learners. Facilitating professional learning offer on leadership. (individual, school, cluster, authority level) Share and disseminate national and local practice supporting improvement.	Support with school/cluster self-evaluation processes. Identify and share good practice across the authority. Share relevant skills and expertise to support self-evaluation and improvement. Work with identified schools and cluster to support with agreed areas for development. Share and disseminate national and local practice supporting improvement.	Ensure robust self-evaluation processes are in place. Implement quality assurance processes across the school. Engage in analysis and review of evidence to inform ongoing school improvement. Ensure opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved, lead and contribute to self-evaluation. Manage and guide the pace of school improvement to achieve best possible outcomes for all learners. Share and disseminate national and local practice supporting improvement.	Ensure there are robust systems in place to monitor progress and performance within departments/faculties. Critically analyse evidence to identify strengths and areas for development within departments/faculties. Contribute and collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to school improvement planning/evaluation processes. Ensure opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved, lead and contribute to self-evaluation. Share and disseminate national and local practice supporting improvement.	Participate in and contribute to school self-evaluation processes. Evaluate own practices using evidence, to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Use evidence to guide improvements in practice at classroom level. Share impact for learners of developments with colleagues at department/school level.

QI	Elected members	Central QI Team	Leaders across the service	School leaders	Middle leaders	Class teachers
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)	Scrutiny of school inspection results and impact of plans including NIF and Business plans.	Engage in VSE/QIV approaches, contributing to the evaluation of practice to identify strengths and plan for improvement with individual schools. Provide support and challenge to schools around their approaches to evaluate and improve the quality of LTA across a school. Ensure schools have a locally agreed standard of what constitutes high quality LTA. Review school QA process to support the evaluation of evidence gathered on strengths in LTA as well as supporting the identification of points for improvement. Facilitate professional learning offer on LTA. (individual, school, cluster level)	Engage in VSE/QIV approaches, contribute to the evaluation of practice to identify strengths and plan for improvement around LTA. Share and disseminate national/local practice supporting improvement. Facilitate professional learning offer on LTA. (individual, school, cluster level)	Create a school wide ethos of high expectations, professional learning and continuous improvement. Promote the highest quality in learning, teaching and assessment through ongoing professional learning and dialogue with all staff. Develop and embed approaches to effective pedagogy across the school, ensuring all staff have a clear understanding. Ensure a consistent approach to assessment that is acted upon to improve outcomes for learners. Establish school wide systems and processes for monitoring and moderating practice and assessment information. Ensure data is used effectively to support targeted interventions and leads to improved learner outcomes. Analyse attainment and achievement data to inform whole school priorities.	Set high expectations for the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. Support the development of a shared understanding of high-quality pedagogy for staff. Ensure that tracking and monitoring processes support the planning, delivery and evaluation of universal and targeted interventions for learners. Provide coaching, mentoring and professional learning linked to the school improvement priorities for LTA. Engage in professional discussion with colleagues to improve the quality of education. Analyse attainment and achievement data to inform school priorities for improvement.	Plan and deliver high quality differentiated lessons to meet all learners needs. Use effective teaching strategies to engage learners. Use questioning techniques that promote critical thinking and deeper understanding for learners. Use a variety of formative and summative assessment to evaluate learning and inform next steps. Ensure feedback is given to learners that helps them to understand their next steps. Integrate technology effectively to enhance learning and engagement. Engage in professional learning, reflect on and improve practice. Adapt approaches based on evidence from self-evaluation. Collaborate with colleagues to support the development of a shared understanding of standards and expectations.

QI	Elected members	Central QI Team	Leaders across the service	School leaders	Middle leaders	Class teachers
3.1 Inclusion, equity and wellbeing		Ensure schools have robust systems to monitor wellbeing of learners. Ensure schools regularly review and ensure compliance with safeguarding and child protection policies. Ensure schools have up to date policies/processes around: • Anti bullying • Equality and diversity • Approaches to meeting needs Provide support and challenge to schools around key areas including: • Promotion of a culture of inclusion. • Promoting and addressing wellbeing of all learners • Systems and processes to identify and address barriers to learning • Tracking and monitoring of learner wellbeing. • Approaches to address bullying, discrimination and equity • Partnership approaches to supporting learner need. Engage in analysis of data and evidence to support school improvement and sharing of practice including: • Attendance and exclusion rates • Incident reports • Wellbeing survey results Through QIV and VSE approaches: • observe practice • review school approaches to inclusion, equity and wellbeing engage with stakeholders to understand learner experience and gather their views.	Support with school/cluster self-evaluation processes. Identify and share good practice across the authority. Share relevant skills and expertise to support improvement. Work with identified schools and cluster to support with agreed areas for development. Share and disseminate national and local practice supporting improvement. Engage in VSE/QIV approaches, contribute to the evaluation of practice to identify strengths and plan for improvement. Facilitate professional learning offer. (individual, school, cluster level)	Ensure wellbeing of all is central to the work of the school. Foster a positive school culture promoting kindness, respect and inclusion. Monitor wellbeing and engagement using data and feedback to assess how pupils feel supported and included. Ensure safe- guarding and child protection policies and procedures are in place to protect all pupils and staff. Provide training and guidance on supporting learner's social, emotional and mental health. Ensure strategies are implemented to support all learners, in particular those in need of targeted support and from disadvantaged backgrounds. Ensure the curriculum and learning reflects diversity and provides equal opportunities for all. Use self-evaluation tools, surveys and stakeholder feedback to assess wellbeing.	Ensure wellbeing is promoted across the school. Model and support staff to ensure a positive environment for learning is in place. Review and analyse data associated with Inclusion, equity and wellbeing, identifying and sharing trends found. Plan appropriately for improvement. Ensure ongoing systems are in place to review progress of learners and evaluate the impact of targeted interventions. Ensure all staff are clear on roles and responsibilities around safeguarding and child protection. Provide training, advice and guidance on agreed aspects of practice Monitor and evaluate the performance of department/faculty in identifying and addressing learners needs. Ensure implementation of agreed strategies to support learners.	Create and promote a nurturing and inclusive classroom. Encourage and promote positive relationships, ensuring that every learner feels valued. Promote a culture where learner voice is valued. Identify and respond to the needs of learners through effective differentiation and targeted interventions. Work collaboratively with support staff, parents, carers and external agencies to contribute to targeted plans for individual learners. Foster an ethos of respect and celebrate diversity.

QI	Elected members	Central QI Team	Leaders across the service	School leaders	Middle leaders	Class teachers
3.2 Attainment and achievement	Scrutiny of school inspection data and reports submitted to committee on pupil performance within Aberdeenshire	Support and challenge schools to raise attainment and reduce the poverty related attainment gap, through analysis of data, improved professional judgements, target setting and improved learning and teaching, including a key focus on key equity groups Support and challenge schools to improve outcomes for identified groups through their Pupil Equity Fund Enhance capacity of school leaders and teachers in schools in using tracking and monitoring tools including Insight, NSA, the BGE Benchmarking Tool. Support and challenge schools in relation to: • Approaches to raising attainment • Ensuring equity for all learners and closing the gap. • Ensuring achievements are promoted and promoted and celebrated. • The impact of targeted interventions and agreed areas of development on outcomes for learners Through QIV and VSE approaches: • Review assessment practices • Observe practice • Engage in professional discussion around analysis of data to ensure learners are making progress. • Ensure school has appropriate systems to track and monitor pupil progress Through review of improvement planning: Ensure a clear focus on improving outcomes for learners	Engage in VSE/QIV approaches, contribute to the evaluation of practice to identify strengths and plan for improvement. Share and disseminate national/local practice supporting improvement. Facilitate professional learning offer (individual, school, cluster level) Support with school/cluster self-evaluation processes. Identify and share good practice across the authority. Share relevant skills and expertise to support self-evaluation and improvement. Work with identified schools and cluster to support with agreed areas for development.	Establish appropriate systems to track and monitor pupil performance- Individual/cohorts/whole school. Set strategic goals for improvement in literacy, numeracy and overall progress for learners. Align identified priorities with the local authority and national attainment strategies. Provide ongoing professional learning to enhance the quality of practice and improve outcomes for learners. Address any barriers to learning for identified learners, giving ongoing consideration to equity for all. Foster a culture of aspiration and achievement with the school community. Celebrate and promote achievements across the school. Collaborate with local authority, businesses and community partners to enhance opportunities for learners.	Review relevant data on pupil performance at an individual/cohort/year group and take appropriate next steps to secure best possible outcomes for pupils. Set strategic improvement goals with teams to support overall progress for learners. Provide ongoing opportunities for professional learning around key areas of focus. Ensure barriers to learning are being addresses and the impact of interventions put in place is being evaluated in a timely manner. Ensure team are supporting the culture of achievement and aspiration for all learners. Celebrate and promote achievements. Collaborate with local authority, businesses and community partners to enhance opportunities for learners.	Promote high expectations for all learners, encouraging a growth mindset, ambition and celebration of successes. Track and monitor pupil performance within classes. Use evidence-based approaches to identify progress and address any gaps in learning. Plan interventions to support and challenge pupils to achieve best possible outcomes. Recognise and promote wider achievement beyond the classroom and school. Engage parents/carers in supporting their child's progress.

QI	Elected members	Central QI Team	Leaders across the service	School leaders	Middle leaders	Class teachers
School Improvement planning		Review School improvement plan against set criteria ensuring there is a clear focus on improvement in outcomes for learners. Give appropriate feedback to school leaders on their improvement planning. Engage in moderation to ensure consistency and an agreed standard. Establish and support opportunities for peer review of SQUIP. Request and ensure documents are publicly available. Support with VSE and QIV approaches to support the validation of evaluations made, identify good practice to share and support identification of future developments. Engage in review of improvement planning to ensure progress is being made against priorities set.	Engage in VSE/QIV approaches, contribute to the evaluation of practice to identify strengths and plan for improvement. Share and disseminate national/local practice supporting improvement. Support with school/cluster self-evaluation processes. Identify and share good practice across the authority. Share relevant skills and expertise to support self-evaluation and improvement. Work with identified schools and cluster to support with agreed areas for development.	Engage all stakeholders in self-evaluation to inform identification of improvement priorities. Engage in ongoing self-evaluation through agreed quality assurance activities, detailed within an annual calendar. Create S&Q report and improvement plan reflecting priorities agreed through consultation with stake holders and robust analysis of data. Ensure S&Q and improvement planning is submitted at agreed timescales. Act upon feedback shared from QIO/QIM. Ensure documentation is available for parents/carers/ elected members to access.	Contribute to self-evaluation processes within school to inform improvement priorities. Share ideas that will contribute to improvement in agreed areas of focus. Work with staff to ensure all are clear on improvement plans and work together to take identified areas forward. Lead specific areas of development within the school improvement plan. Support and advise staff to develop their practice in line with priorities set. Model and coach staff to move forward with improvements. Engage in ongoing evaluation of priorities for improvement to ensure they are making a difference to learners outcomes.	Contribute to self-evaluation processes within school to inform improvement priorities. Share practice and ideas from what is working well to support improvement in outcomes for learners. Put improvement plans into action within learning and teaching. Lead areas of development within the school improvement plan. Evaluate work undertaken within school improvement priorities to ensure it is having an impact on outcomes for learners.

Targeted, Universal, and Intensive School Support Offer (TUI)

Schools across Aberdeenshire will access different levels of support depending on the needs of the context:



Note: The support a school will access is not linked to when a school was last inspected. Supporting schools in lead up to and during inspection is part of the Universal Offer for all schools.

QIOs/QIMS will be invited to contribute to VSE Trios and Quads' school visits. Quality Improvement Visits (QIVs) will be led by QIOs / QIMs, and the expectation is that all schools are part of a QIV at least once over a 3-year period. The schools that are to engage with a QIV will be informed of the date this will be happening in term 4 for the forthcoming session. This will allow scope for VSE trios and quads to plan their own visits accordingly.

For more information on how to access any of the supports / interventions in this document, please contact cluster QIO / QIM.

Universal Offer

WHEN	WHAT
Ongoing and throughout the year	- Quality Improvement Framework (Link) - Supported Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) / Trios / Quads Collaborative Working - HT Area Collaboratives - Range of CLPL / Training Courses (see regular CLPL Bulletin) - Leadership Development CLPL (See Bulletin above) - Headteacher Induction - Headteacher Handbook - Curriculum Improvement Cycle Guidance and Support via CICAS - Access to PowerBI data reports & CLPL (Link to go here) - Budget monitoring support/CLPL - Inclusive practice resources and professional learning available via ALDO and Inclusion Equity Wellbeing Viva - Framework of Interventions (Link to IEW) - Probationer support/mentor support - Practical support pre and during Inspection - Literacy and Numeracy ESO Support
Term 1	- Cluster input via QIO/QIM – Attainment Review - Annual HT Conference - Written SQUIP Feedback and Meeting - CIC Day Thainstone Xchange 7th October - SQUIP Review – Key Themes Workshop
Term 2	- Headteacher Area Day (In Person) - Cluster input via QIO/QIM – Quality Assurance
Term 3	- Cluster input via QIO/QIM – Mid-year attainment discussion (predicted attainment data) and SQUIP Progress - Cluster input via QIO/QIM – Safeguarding - Headteacher Area Day (Half Day Virtual (Clusters encouraged to meet in person)) - Secondary Performance Review

WHEN	WHAT
Term 4	- Cluster input via QIO/QIM – High Quality Learning, Teaching and Assessment - SQUIP Review / Moderation Session Drop In (Woodhill House start of June details tbc) - Cluster input via QIO/QIM – Cluster Choice. Perhaps QI Engagement / Self Evaluation / Sharing Practice Session on a chosen theme. - Headteacher Area Day (In Person)

Links to 5 CLPL Sessions as Part of Universal Offer

1. [Demystifying Inspection](#)
2. [Safeguarding](#)
3. [Writing Evaluatively](#)
4. [Effective Use of Data](#)
5. [Effective Allocation of PEF](#)

Targeted and Intensive Support Offers

The below is in addition to everything within the Universal Offer

Targeted and Intensive support will be different in every case depending on context. For example, one school accessing intensive support may require regular meetings and input with QIO / QIM. Another school requiring intensive support may require a QIO / QIM presence onsite consistently for a period of time. Support will be shaped around the needs of the context. But some of the support interventions could be:



Targeted

- An Officer led Quality Improvement Visit if appropriate
- Opportunities to work and collaborate with other schools and share practice (signposting)
- Meetings with / input from QIO / QIM offering bespoke support (at least termly)
- Support Plan in place if appropriate
- Intervention and assistance from colleagues across a range of teams depending on support required – Early Years, IEW etc.
- 121 Input with QIO / QIM on Safeguarding



Intensive

- An Officer led Quality Improvement Visit (specific area of focus)
- Opportunities to work and collaborate with other schools and share practice. (signposting)
- Regular meetings with / input from QIO / QIM offering bespoke support
- Regular onsite working from QIO / QIM if required
- QIM for area also engaged with intensive support.
- Termly update from QIO / QIM to Head of Service
- Support Plan in place
- Follow Through Inspection Planning if appropriate
- Intervention and assistance from colleagues across a range of teams depending on support required – Early Years, IEW etc.
- 121 Input with QIO / QIM on Safeguarding

Central team engagement

During the course of an academic year central officers will engage with school leaders and their teams in a variety of ways, including at individual level, through trios/quads, cluster and authority level.

Exemplification of the approaches officers will take with schools can be seen below:

- Meeting with SLT to discuss and review progress against identified school improvement priorities.
 - Walkthrough of learning environments to consider if school values and improvement priorities are visible in displays and classroom practices.
 - Learning walk with SLT on particular aspects of the school improvement plan.
 - Support and challenge around self-evaluation evidence.
 - Data analysis meeting – analyse attainment and review approaches to tracking and monitoring to ensure pupil progress is monitored. Also, analysis of attendance, incident and exclusion data to identify trends and areas for future focussed work. Following this, a further meeting may be arranged to analyse any improvements in attainment/attendance/exclusion. Consideration of the impact of any agreed interventions that have been put in place.
 - Meeting with Faculty Heads/Senior leaders exploring strategies to raise attainment.
 - Review Pupil Equity Funding and how it is being used to close the attainment and achievement gaps for learners.
 - Work scrutiny – Review pupil work to consider areas such as differentiation, quality of feedback etc. Does pupil work show evidence of feedback, progress and challenge?
 - Participation in and leading of professional learning sessions.
 - Review of approaches to meeting learner needs – (review of support plans, risk assessments, IEPs, CSPs etc. Also support with the progress and impact of the implementation of circle approaches.
 - Pupil and staff voice check-in groups.
 - Focus on key areas within core QIs of 1.3, 2.3, 3.1 and/or 3.2. The table below gives some key areas of focus under each QI.
-

Support Challenge Professional Dialogue

- Conversations always start with wellbeing check
- Prior to the visit, QIO / QIM will have identified key areas for discussion based on school's Self Evaluation

1.1	1.3	2.3	3.1	3.2
QA Calendar QI Engagement Self-Evaluation Practices and Processes Engagement with Wee HGIOURS Looking Outward and Inward as part of Self Evaluation (trios, national, beyond?)	SQUIP progress to date* Collegiate Calendar VVA Distributive Leadership PRD / PPP WTA Curriculum Rationale Budget / Staffing UNCRC Rights Based Approach Stakeholder engagement Theory / research-based approach	Lesson Observations Consistency of Planning / Frameworks etc. Moderation Shared understanding of High-Quality LTA at your school Assessment Calendar Use of Northern Alliance Toolkit Awareness of strengths / areas for development in relation to 4 themes.	Health and Wellbeing Tracking Bullying and Equalities Chronologies / Pastoral Notes / COSE Safeguarding Checklist Multi Agency Approaches / Caseloads of Professionals etc. Circle Implementation	Whole school tracker Attainment discussions / T and M meetings Attainment analysis, trends, cohorts etc. (Whole school approach) Raising Attainment Strategy PEF Allocation Tracking of Wider Achievement Tracking of Skills and application / progress of skills
*Suggested common / useful starting point ☐ Challenge questions from HGIOS ☐ Discussions will focus on evidence base and evaluation of impact				

Cluster working

All school leaders will work with cluster colleagues on a regular basis. To ensure consistency, items for discussion will be collated by QIO/Ms and all will ensure that these messages are shared with the clusters they are responsible for.

Cluster meetings – These should be attended by all school leaders, and this should be in person if possible. Across the school year there is an expectation that there will be a meeting whereby all school leaders will be in attendance to discuss key areas of focus. Cluster chairs should note there are eight themes noted below and therefore eight cluster meetings should take place over a calendar year. Within the agenda, there should be scope given to discussion of these key areas, led by the cluster QIO/M.

The following key areas of work will be shared within cluster meetings.

Term1

Cluster attainment Review – This will include professional discussion around cluster attainment data. As well as this, expectations around what a school should have in place in terms of data will be shared with colleagues. See Appendix 7

Term3

Predicted data Discussion. (Discussion template to be added)

SQUIP Progress Discussion (Discussion template to be added)

Other key agenda items for discussion at cluster meetings throughout the year include:

- Safeguarding
- Quality Assurance
- High quality LTA/Circle/ Northern Alliance toolkit
- Cluster Choice – could include a focus on a particular QI / Self Evaluation / Rolling programme for discussions/sharing practice session on a chosen theme.

Area Days/HT conference/ ASHTA/Area Collaboratives

Beyond the opportunities for cluster working, there will be an annual HT Conference within the first term of the school year. Alongside this will be termly area days. All of these events will be to develop strategic areas and priorities across our service.

Area Collaboratives and ASHTA provide forums for the discussion of operational aspects of schoolwork.

School Visits – QIV

To ensure ongoing quality improvement within our schools, officers will engage in both Quality Improvement Visits (QIV) and Validated self-evaluation (VSE) activities.

QIVs will be led by central teams, VSE activities and visits will be organised thorough our Self-Improving Schools programme. Schools may also wish to be considered for a QIV, this will be agreed through discussion with the QIO for the school.

A programme of visits will be planned for on an annual basis by our central teams. The approach to the visit will be proportionate and will be tailored to the circumstances and situations within individual school settings.

Quality Improvement visits will support school to consider their progress against improvement priorities identified and outline their capacity for continuous improvement. The QIO leading the QIV will work with the HT/SLT to agree the areas of focus for the visit. During the visit there will be a key focus on our two priority areas within Aberdeenshire: Leadership and high-quality learning, teaching and assessment.

When engaging in a QIV consideration will be given to:

- Current context of the school
- Current evaluations of QIs and the school's self-evaluation of their work
- Attainment data and analysis
- Current priorities and progress being made against these.

The agenda for a QIV will be discussed at least two weeks before the visit takes place. The QIO and HT/SLT will agree key focus areas and the timetable for the visit.

Prior to a QIV all members of the team will have access to agreed documentation. This may include:

- SIP
- S&Q report
- Data – including attainment, achievement, attendance, exclusion etc.
- Any other agreed documents (i.e.) QA calendar, faculty improvement plans, survey results, forward plans, assessment evidence, ASN paperwork etc.

The duration of the visit will depend on the size of school, context and agreed focus areas for the visit.

Key activities will also have been agreed in advance and may include:

- A tour of the school
- Introduction meeting between SLT and team.
- Attainment meeting
- Observations of learning and teaching
- Pupil focus groups
- Parent Focus groups
- Staff focus groups
- Review of learner's work.

The school should ensure that all agreed documentation will be available for the visit.

Tour of the school

A small group of learners will give the team a short tour of the school. This gives the team an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the setting and hear from learners around their thoughts and involvement in the life and work of the school.

Introduction meeting

This would be an initial meeting with the HT/SLT around the current position of the school. It will give school leaders the opportunity to share the schools' strengths, areas identified for development. Consideration will be given to the progress being made against these priorities and the impact on outcomes for learners. Typical areas for consideration can be found in Appendix 1.

Observations

Within the agreed timetable there will be observations of learning and teaching across classes. Discussions around any particular areas of focus for observations will have been agreed prior to the visit and any agreed documentation to be used for these. Within larger school settings, classes that will be observed will have been agreed. Exemplification of observations to be used can be seen in Appendix 3.

During or at the end of an observation there may be an opportunity to give brief verbal feedback, however this may not be possible, Information in relation to observations will be collated and shared with the HT. An overall summary of observations and key messages will be shared when giving feedback to the HT/SLT and will also be shared within the QIV report.

Focus groups

During a visit a number of meetings may occur. This will be in line with the key areas of focus agreed for the visit. It may include pupil, parents and staff groups.

Set questions will be used and these will link to the agreed areas of focus for the visit. Exemplification of focus group questions can be seen in Appendix 4.

Review of class work

During a visit the team will review samples of work provided and will also take the opportunity to review work displayed in classroom and across the school. During learning observations, the team will also take the opportunity to review learners work within the classroom.

Attainment meeting

As part of the visit the team will consider and review the attainment and achievement of learners. This may be through a focussed meeting or as part of the team briefing prior to the visit. Data should be made available as agreed with the lead QIO prior to the visit. Some key questions around 3.2 raising attainment and achievement will be considered within this meeting. Exemplification of questions can be seen in Appendix 5.

QIV report

Following a QIV, the lead QIO will take responsibility for completing the school report. This will be shared and discussed with the HT/SLT within three weeks of the visit. This will be a summary of information gathered relating to the areas of focus. Key strengths and areas for development will be shared. Agreed next steps and timelines will be discussed when the report is shared with the SLT. The lead QIO will ensure all agreed actions are followed up on. The structure for a QIV report can be seen in Appendix XXX The QIV report is a document for professionals within a school. HTs may choose to share high level messages with stakeholders but the document itself is not created for sharing with all stakeholders, rather it is to be used to support ongoing developments of priorities.

Validated Self-Evaluation – School Improvement Partnerships

Validated self-evaluation works through our School Improvement Partnerships which are an ongoing aspect of the universal offer in Aberdeenshire. All schools work within a partnership with other school in order to take forward improvements within and across establishments.

Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) aims to support and challenge school to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for learners, sharing good practice, engaging in professional dialogue and securing ongoing improvement.

Clear guidelines for VSE have been shared with all Head Teachers. A SharePoint site has been created to provide support to all schools and ensure clear expectations in relation to our Self-Improving Schools Partnerships.

Minimum requirements for all partnerships have been shared with all schools. These include:

- Review of SQUIP – Term 1 session 24/25
- Review of impact of PEF – Term 1 session 24/25
- Plan and agree VSE within partnership – Term 3/4 Session 24/25

Further to this schools can work within their partnerships to take forward mutually agreed areas of practice. This may include:

- Reviews of quality indicators – sharing practice and areas for development
- Review of Quality Assurance processes
- Review and analysis of data

Within the SharePoint site further resources are available to support school leaders to undertake this work.

[Towards a Self-Improving School System: School Improvement Partnerships - Home](#)

During session 2025-2026, key areas for discussion within Partnerships will be shared. A key focus for discussion during this session will be around the developing practice linking to the implementation of CiRCLE across all schools. Support and guidance around this will be issued within Term one of this school session.

Performance Reviews

Cluster attainment review

Each cluster will have a biannual attainment review. The first review will take place in term 1 of the session and will give school leaders an opportunity to consider their attainment data at school and cluster level. QIOs will arrange for these meetings to take place and share relevant data and points for discussion to support the professional discussions that take place.

Within Term 3 a further cluster attainment meeting will take place looking at the predicted data for schools. Again, officers will share data and points for discussion.

Key messages from cluster attainment reviews will be shared at central officer meetings, supporting the identification of key strengths and areas for improvement at an authority level.

Exemplification of data shared and points for discussion can be found Appendix 7.

Performance Review – Academies

Each year a performance review will take place with each academy, involving the senior leadership teams, QIO/Ms and the Chief Education Officer. Agreed areas for focus will be shared at ASHTA prior to meetings taking place in term 3.

Exemplification of an agenda for this Performance Review can be found Appendix 8.

Individual school attainment review

Either at a school or officer request, a meeting can take place to review the attainment of a school. This will be agreed between the Head Teacher and QIO.

For this meeting, school leaders should ensure they can share the following information to support any discussions:

- Tracking and monitoring system for the school
- Exemplification of tracking and monitoring meetings with staff
- Overview of current attainment data including any standardised assessment information
- Overview of predicted attainment data for school session
- Analysis of data to show progress of learners over time
- Any agreed approaches to moderation supporting the validity and robustness of data

Key questions for consideration for school leaders ahead of an individual meeting can be found Appendix 6.

School inspection

This section is designed to ensure school leaders are aware of the approaches that will be taken by Central Officers when notification of inspection is received:

Initial Notification and Preparation

- Head Teacher will receive inspection notification.
- Clarify the communication protocol, including restrictions on who may be informed and when.
- Allow time for reflection and initial preparation.
- Engage with Early Years colleagues to initiate dialogue around planning for inspection (if required)

Phase 1: Initial Meeting – Establishing Priorities

Focus on identifying immediate priorities and setting the foundation for collaborative preparation.

Key Actions:

- Ensure the School Quality Improvement Plan (SQUIP) is current and accessible.
- Review/Create Summary Self Evaluation paper to reflect current position and outline next steps.
- Prepare and review the Safeguarding Paper.
- Create subfolders and begin populating with relevant evidence required for Education Scotland. (Link to guidance from Education Scotland and Appendix 3 can be found here. - [full-model-headteacher-briefing.pdf](#))
- Discuss approaches to evidencing practice and impact of developments.
- Schedule initial Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) discussions and visits—short, frequent engagements (e.g., 3–4 sessions of 30 minutes – school dependent).
- Prepare for meetings involving Management Information (MI) sensitivities.

Phase 2: Follow-Up Meeting – Strengthening Consistency and Clarity

Focus on building a coherent narrative and ensuring alignment across improvement drivers.

Key Actions:

- Reinforce a consistent voice across improvement planning, scoping documentation, and shared messages.
 - Consider implementing brief, regular staff catch-ups to support consistency in key messages to be shared, including:
 - Improvement planning
 - Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) strategies/interventions/impact
 - Attainment tracking
-

- Curriculum implementation ensuring entitlements/Development of curriculum to meet learner needs.
- High-quality learning, teaching, and assessment (LTA)
- Learner autonomy and pupil-led approaches
- Identify key areas to highlight collectively as a team.
- Define the structure and expectations of the scoping meeting and prepare accordingly.
- Clarify evidence-gathering approaches and ensure transparency in documentation. If required, request a guest SharePoint account for HMI access—log this request at least ten days in advance.
- Confirm logistical arrangements, including inspector team locations within the school.
- Address any safeguarding concerns raised by children.

Phase 3: Subsequent Discussions – Deepening Preparation

Focus will be on operational readiness.

Key Actions:

- Engage with the Nutrition Inspector if applicable—ensure awareness of food allergies and dietary needs.
- Conduct a Health and Safety walkaround with Janitorial staff if appropriate.
- Provide focused inputs aligned with Quality Indicators (QIs) and prepare for agreed meetings and discussions.
- Review the Safeguarding Checklist.
- Facilitate a focused discussion on promoting positive behaviour, including:
 - Recording and follow-up processes (RAMBIS, Pastoral notes, CAIRS, school logs)
- Explore outward-looking practices, including:
 - Moderation activities
 - Cluster collaboration
 - VSE trios
 - RICS engagement
 - National networks
- Engage with individual teachers to ensure confidence and clarity—emphasise that staff should showcase their usual high-quality practice, not tailor lessons to perceived inspection expectations.

Final Week Preparation

Key Actions:

- Attend a staff meeting to:
-

- Outline the inspection process
- Facilitate a Q&A session
- Provide reassurance and encouragement
- QIO to complete preparatory documentation for senior leaders (e.g., Laurence Findlay, Susan Smith).

Ongoing Support

- Take direction from the Head Teacher and provide responsive support as needed.
- Continue to assist with the development of the summary papers and Appendix 3 documentation.
- Review submitted files and ensure completeness and clarity.
- Check timetables for inefficiencies and adjust where appropriate.

Following inspection, key messages will be shared with both Head of Service and Director. QIO/M will support with next steps in line with the feedback received.

QIO/M for school will also lead on the editing and return of SIF and letter to the managing inspector following discussion with the Head Teacher.

School reports will be shared at Area Committees where HTs are expected to attend to support discussions with elected members. QIO/Ms to attend as required.

Appendix 1 QIV visit Pre Discussion

Officer record: before the QIV

Prior to a forthcoming school visit, QIO / QIM will organise a meeting, at least one week prior to QIV. The aim of the meeting is to build a collective understanding of the key priorities for the visit.

You may not need to explore all the below and there is an extent to which you will be guided by the discussion

School:		Date:	
Lead Officer:		Head Teacher:	
Why are we visiting? What is the main focus for the visit?			
Who is attending and why? Include officers, HT/SLT, parental engagement link, parent/pupil/staff/support staff groups where relevant			
S&Q report / Improvement Plan / LTA statement / QIV timetable / tracking data / pre-discussion notes / observation or feedback templates / safeguarding evidence and any other relevant.			
Strengths/areas for development (potential to discuss cohort issues, trends and areas to consider during the visit i.e. writing/numeracy)			
Build in time for school tour, team briefing, professional dialogue (including time between observations to share key messages), evidence review, stakeholder voice, team debrief and HT feedback. Any sensitivities/adjustments needed:			
How will lesson feedback/key messages be shared in a supportive and proportionate way? (Individual lesson observation sheets will not be shared directly with teaching staff)			

Introduction meeting QIV

(A selection of exemplar questions below – not all will be used)

- Can you share the key strengths of your school at this time, what are you most proud of?
 - Are there any aspects that are working particularly well, what do you think has made this happen?
 - What are the main areas for improvement that you have identified this session?
 - Can you talk through your priorities for improvement and how these were identified?
 - How do you/will you know that the changes you are making are having an impact on learners?
 - How are you/will you be using data to evaluate the impact of interventions?
 - Tell me about the quality of learning and teaching across the school and share some evidence to support this being the case? How do you monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching across the school?
 - How do you ensure consistency in high quality practice across the faculty/school?
 - What is the gap for your school and what action are you taking to close the gap?
 - How are learners' voices influencing improvement and decision making across the school?
 - How is distributed leadership being developed to support improvement?
 - How do you know that your self-evaluation is robust and reliable?
 - How are you building a culture of self-evaluation and continuous improvement across the school?
-

Appendix 2 - QIV Visit

Officer record: during the QIV

School:		Date:	
Lead Officer:		Head Teacher:	
Context setting with HT/SLT	Relevant contextual information; improvement priorities; strengths/challenges; safeguarding or wellbeing context as appropriate.		
School tour	Learning environment; visible learning; quality of displays; wider achievement; pupil conduct in classrooms/open areas; general climate and routines.		
Learning observations	Focus agreed before visit, e.g. differentiation, pace, challenge, relationships, engagement, learning intentions/success criteria, formative assessment, questioning. Consistency in approach across school in line with policy or LTA agreement. Support – universal, (CiRCLE), Approaches to play pedagogy etc		
Planning and work/evidence sampling	Progression; entitlement across curricular areas; planning for differentiation/ASL; Evidence of feedback; self/peer assessment; consistency of approaches across stages/school. Presentation of jotters/ amount of work in jotters/appropriateness of work etc..		
Tracking, monitoring and assessment	Tracking systems; evidence of tracking discussions; attainment over time; cohort analysis; moderation; assessment calendar and impact on next steps/Interventions as a result of data		
Stakeholder voice	Learner/staff/support staff/parent discussions using pre-agreed prompts. Be clear what you want to find out from each stakeholder group – Questions/Prompts created and shared in advance.		
Team debrief	Positive messages; areas for development; signposting; agreed actions; follow-up timescales.		

	Agree overall key messages for lead officer to share with staff at the end of a visit.

Officer record: after the QIV

School:		Date:	
Lead Officer:		Head Teacher:	
Report and sharing	Date report shared with HT:		
School/HT actions	Are they detailed in report? Yes/No		
Officer actions	Are they detailed in report? Yes/No		
Follow-up and review	How will actions be checked? When will progress be reviewed?		

Quick checklist for lead officers

Done	Check
☐	Rationale and focus agreed with HT and shared with QIV team.
☐	Data, S&Q and Improvement Plan reviewed before visit.
☐	Team membership, roles and timetable confirmed.
☐	Documentation/recording templates shared in an agreed Teams space or repository.
☐	Feedback approach discussed, including how learning observation messages will be shared.
☐	Time built in for team briefing, evidence review, debrief and next-step planning.
☐	High-level messages and agreed next steps recorded before leaving the school.
☐	Report shared with HT and actions/follow-up timescales confirmed.

Appendix 3 Classroom Observation Exemplar

School Visits – Observation

Class:

Ethos of the Classroom:

- Is it positive?
- Interactions - positive and respectful
- Respectful relationships in evidence
- Well organised

During learning:

- Learning well structured
- Are pupils motivated and are they interacting well with the learning?
- Are they engaging in the learning?
- Skilful approaches to questioning being used to support learning?

Learning Activities:

- Are they well matched to learners needs/abilities?
- Opportunities for challenge
- Support given

Explanations and instructions:

- Are they clear?
- Is there Ongoing intervention/feedback (oral & written)

Are there opportunities for learners to lead their learning, exercise choice?

Do learners understand the purpose of their learning?

Learning Intentions shared
Referred to during/end of lesson

Are they able to share how they know if they will be successful?

Success criteria - co-construction included.
referred to in feedback, mid -stop, plenary

Evidence of learning:

- Jotter work/displays
- Quality of learner's work
- Self/peer assessment/KWL/Mind maps
- Mid stops/Plenaries/Co construction/ pupils reviewing learning
- Written feedback

Use of technology to support/enhance learning

**Creative approaches to learning.
Promotion of higher order thinking skills**

Class Visit	Analysis (Strengths and areas for development/points for discussion)

**Universal support for learning - a few things to consider from the CIRCLE
Resource and Inclusive Classroom Scale**

Physical Environment	• Accessibility and adequacy of space • Set up of space/layout • Sensory aspects e.g. light, noise • Visual supports • Ease of access to resources • <i>Environment is organised & inviting</i>
Social Environment	• Learner centred • Attitudes, respect, understanding • Approaches to nurture /relationships • Learners' views sought, choice in learning • <i>Learners feel safe and valued</i>
Structures and routines	• Enjoyment and demand of activity • Rules and boundaries – consistent, clear • Consistency of routines • Collaborative decision making/pupil participation • <i>Learners know what to expect</i>
Motivation	Learners' values, abilities and interest are considered e.g. • Self-assessment and goal setting • Differentiation • Variety of teaching methods • Constructive feedback • Elements of personalisation & choice • Experiential learning • <i>Learners are engaged & interested in activities influencing positive behaviour</i>

Appendix 4 - Exemplification of staff focus groups

Teaching Staff Focus group – Bank of exemplar Questions

Improvement
• How are staff involved in school self-evaluation and identifying improvement priorities? • How do staff contribute evidence, views or professional judgement to evaluate progress against the school improvement plan? • Can you give an example of a change or improvement that came from staff feedback or professional dialogue? • How are staff updated on the impact of improvement work?

Learning, Teaching and Assessment
• How clear are the school's expectations for high-quality learning, teaching and assessment? • What do staff understand high-quality learning, teaching and assessment to look like in this school? • What aspects of LTA are most consistent across the school? • How do staff use assessment information to plan next steps? • How do tracking discussions lead to action? • What professional learning or collaboration has had the greatest impact? • What helps staff improve practice? • How consistent are expectations for learning, teaching and assessment across classes, stages or departments? • Where is practice strongest, and what has helped this become embedded? • How do staff know whether learners are engaged, challenged and making progress?

Assessment, feedback and next steps
• How do staff use assessment evidence to plan next steps in learning? • How do learners receive feedback, and how do staff know it helps them improve? • How are moderation and professional dialogue supporting shared standards? • How do staff check that learners understand what they are learning and what success looks like?

Tracking, monitoring and intervention

- How are tracking discussions used to identify learners who require additional support or challenge?
- What happens after a tracking meeting?
- How are interventions recorded, monitored and reviewed?
- How do staff know whether interventions are making a difference?
- How are staff involved in analysing data or identifying patterns over time?

Self-evaluation and school improvement

- How are staff involved in evaluating what is working well and what needs to improve?
- How do staff contribute evidence to the school's self-evaluation?
- How are improvement priorities agreed, shared and reviewed with staff?
- Can staff give an example of feedback or professional dialogue leading to a change in practice?
- How does the school share the impact of improvement work with staff?

Inclusion, support and meeting learners' needs

- How confident do staff feel in meeting the range of learners' needs?
- What universal supports are used consistently across the school?
- How are targeted supports planned and reviewed?
- How do staff work with support staff, partners or families to support learners?
- What helps staff ensure equity of experience for learners?

Professional learning and collaboration

- What professional learning has had the greatest impact on classroom practice?
- How do staff collaborate to improve learning, teaching and assessment?
- What opportunities do staff have to share effective practice?
- What further support or professional learning would help strengthen consistency?

Support Staff QIV Focus Group – Question Bank and Prompts

To share with support staff: We are keen to get your perspective because support staff very often see and hear things across the school that others may not. We are keen to understand what is working well and what could be even better.

Core questions

- What is working well in the school just now?
- How would you describe the ethos and relationships across the school?
- Do you feel included and valued as part of the wider school team? What helps with this?
- Do you get the information you need to carry out your role well? What helps, and what could be better?
- How do you contribute to supporting children and young people's learning, wellbeing and inclusion?
- Are routines, expectations and systems clear across the school?
- What is one thing that would make the biggest positive difference for pupils or families?
- What should leaders know from the perspective of support staff?

Optional follow-up prompts

- Can you give an example of something that is working well?
- What helps communication work well between support staff, teaching staff and senior leaders?
- Are there regular opportunities to share concerns, ideas or observations?
- How well are pupils' individual needs understood and planned for?
- What helps pupils feel safe, included and ready to learn?
- Are there any barriers that make your role harder or reduce the impact you can have?
- What training or support would help you feel more confident in your role?
- Are there any systems or routines that could be improved?

Role-specific prompts

- **PSAs:** How are you involved in supporting learning, wellbeing, inclusion and positive relationships?
- **PSAs:** Do you feel you have the information and support needed to meet pupils' individual needs?

Role-specific prompts

- **Office staff:** What do you notice about how families, visitors and pupils experience the school?
- **Office staff:** Are communication systems clear and manageable?
- **Janitorial, catering and cleaning staff:** Are routines, facilities and practical arrangements supporting the smooth running of the school?

Safeguarding and child protection prompts

- Do you know what to do if you have a concern about a child or young person?
- Are child protection and safeguarding procedures clear to you?
- Do you feel confident that concerns are listened to and followed up appropriately?
- Have you had the training or information you need to feel confident in this area?

Closing questions

- What are you most proud of in your work here?
- What do you think visitors should understand about this school?
- Is there anything we have not asked that you think is important?
- What would help the school improve further for children, young people, families and staff?

Faculty Head/Middle Leader – Bank of Exemplar Questions**Across the school****Understanding priorities**

- What are the key improvement priorities for the school this session?
- How confident are you that staff in your faculty understand these priorities?
- How do you ensure your faculty's work contributes to the wider school improvement plan?
- What do you see as the biggest improvement challenge for the school just now?

Evidence and self-evaluation

- What evidence do you use to know how well the school is improving?
- How are middle leaders involved in self-evaluation across the school?
- How are learning visits, learner conversations, staff feedback or data used to inform improvement?

Leadership of change
• How are staff supported to understand and engage with improvement work? • How do you build consistency of practice across your team? • What professional learning has supported improvement this year? • How do you know whether professional learning is changing classroom practice? • How do you analyse tracking and attainment data within your faculty? • How do you identify learners at risk of underachievement? • What interventions are in place, and how do you know they are working? • How do you use learner voice, learning visits or work sampling to evaluate LTA? • How are faculty priorities linked to whole-school improvement priorities? • What evidence shows impact?
Tracking progress
• How is progress against improvement priorities monitored? • What happens if improvement activity is not having the intended impact? • How are successes shared across faculties or departments? • What are the next steps for improvement at whole-school level?

Questions about improvement in the subject faculty
Faculty priorities
• What are your main faculty improvement priorities this session? • Why were these priorities chosen? • How do they link to whole-school priorities, attainment data, learner needs or national/local priorities? • What does success look like for your faculty this year?
Attainment and achievement
• How do you analyse attainment and tracking data within your faculty? • What trends are you seeing across year groups, courses or levels? • Which groups of learners are doing well, and which groups need further support? • How do you identify learners at risk of underachievement? • What interventions are in place, and how do you know they are working?
Learning, teaching and assessment
• What are the strengths in learning, teaching and assessment across your faculty?

- Where is practice most variable?
- How do you know what learners experience across different classes?
- How do you use learning visits, work sampling, moderation or learner voice to evaluate practice?
- What approaches are in place to ensure appropriate pace, challenge and support?

Curriculum and pathways

- How well does your curriculum meet learners' needs?
- How do you review course choice, uptake, progression and outcomes?
- Are there any gaps in pathways or progression routes within your subject area?
- How do you support learners to understand the relevance of your subject to skills, careers and future destinations?

Equity and inclusion

- What approaches are used to support learners with additional support needs?
- How are gaps in attainment or engagement identified and addressed?
- How do you ensure expectations remain high for all learners?

Faculty leadership and staff development

- How do you support and challenge staff within your faculty?
- How do you develop consistency in expectations, assessment and feedback?
- How are staff strengths used to support improvement across the faculty?
- What professional learning has had the greatest impact on practice?
- How do you support probationers, new staff or less experienced colleagues?

Impact and next steps

- What evidence shows that your faculty improvement work is making a difference?
- What has improved most this session?
- What are you less confident about?
- What are your next steps for sustaining or accelerating improvement?

Useful follow-up questions

- What evidence supports that view?
- How do you know?
- Can you give an example?
- What difference has that made for learners?

Useful follow-up questions

- Is that consistent across the faculty?
 - How are you monitoring impact?
 - What have you changed as a result?
 - What would learners say about this?
 - What would staff say about this?
 - What are the barriers, and how are you addressing them
-

Appendix 5 - Exemplification of pupil focus groups

Sample questions for P1 to P3 Focus group

Questions
Learning • What do you like learning about in school? • What helps you when learning is tricky? • Who helps you in class? • How do you know if you have done good work? • What do you do if you are stuck? • Can you show me something you are proud of? • What makes your classroom a good place to learn? School improvement Questions • Have staff asked you what you think about school or your learning? • Have you helped choose something or make something better in your class or school? • What would you change to make school even better?
Further examples P1 to P3 group
<i>Learning and engagement</i> • What is your favourite thing to learn? • Can you tell me what you are learning today? • What makes learning fun? <i>Support and challenge</i> • What do you do if something is tricky? • Who helps you if you are stuck? • Do you ever get work that makes you really think? • What helps you keep trying? <i>Feedback and next steps</i> • How do you know when you have done a good job? • What does your teacher say or do to help you make your work better? <i>Pupil voice and improvement</i> • Do adults ask what you think about school? • Have you helped choose something for your class? • What would make school even better?

P4 to P7 Pupil Group Exemplar Questions

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

- What helps you understand what you are learning?
- How do you know what successful work looks like?
- What kind of feedback helps you improve?
- Can you explain a recent next step in your learning?
- What happens if the work is too easy or too hard?
- How do teachers check your understanding?
- How do you get to talk about or lead your learning?
- What would make learning even better in this school?

School improvement

- How do adults in school ask for your views about learning or school life?
- Can you think of a time when pupil views led to a change in the class or school?
- How are pupils involved in improving learning, behaviour, relationships or the wider life of the school?
- Do you get feedback about what happened after pupils shared their views?

Learning and engagement

- Can you explain what you are learning and why it matters?
- What helps you understand new learning?
- When are you most engaged in learning?
- Do you get opportunities to work independently, with a partner and in groups?

Clarity, success and feedback

- How do you know what successful work looks like?
 - How often do you talk about success criteria?
 - What feedback helps you improve your work?
 - Can you describe a next step you are working on?
-

Challenge and support

- What happens when work is too easy?
- What happens when work is too hard?
- How do adults help you without doing the work for you?
- Do you feel learning is challenging enough?

Pupil voice and school improvement

- How are pupils asked for their views about learning or school life?
- Can you give an example of something pupils helped to improve?
- Do pupils get told what changed because of their feedback?
- What would you improve about learning in this school?

BGE S1 -S3 Pupil Group**LTA**

- Across your subjects, how clear is it what you are learning and why?
- Do you feel challenged in most subjects?
- How useful is feedback in helping you improve?
- Are you clear about your strengths and next steps?
- How do teachers check your understanding during lessons?
- Are learning experiences consistent across subjects, or do they vary?
- What helps you feel supported and included?

Consistency across subjects

- Across your subjects, how clear is it what you are learning?
- Are expectations similar across subjects, or do they vary?
- Where do you experience the strongest learning?
- Are there subjects where learning feels less clear or less challenging?

Pace, challenge and support

- Do you feel the pace of lessons is usually right?
- What happens if you finish work quickly?

Pace, challenge and support

- What support do you get if you are finding something difficult?
- How do teachers help you think more deeply?

Assessment, feedback and progress

- How do you know how well you are progressing?
- How helpful is feedback across different subjects?
- Can you explain what you need to do to improve?
- How often do teachers check your understanding during lessons?

Learner voice and improvement

- How are young people asked about learning and teaching?
- Are learner views used to improve subjects or school life?
- Can you give an example of a change made because of learner feedback?
- How does the school let you know what has changed as a result?
- How are young people involved in evaluating learning, teaching or the wider life of the school?
- Can you give an example of when young people's views have influenced a change in school?
- Are you involved in groups, committees, surveys or discussions that help the school improve?
- How do staff let you know what has changed as a result of learner feedback

Senior Phase Pupil Voice

Understanding of your progress, assessment, support, expectations, intervention and pathways.

- Are you clear about what is required to achieve your target grade or level?
- How do you know how well you are progressing?
- What feedback helps you improve?
- What support is available if you are at risk of not achieving?
- Do you feel interventions are helping you make progress?
- Are you clear about assessment expectations and deadlines?
- How well do courses link to your future plans or pathways?

Progress, targets and expectations

- Are you clear about your target grade or level?
- How do you know whether you are on track?
- How often do you discuss progress with staff?
- Are expectations clear across your courses?

Assessment, feedback and next steps

- What kind of feedback helps you improve most?
- Do you know what to do next after receiving feedback?
- How clear are assessment deadlines and expectations?
- How do teachers help you prepare for assessments?

Support, intervention and challenge

- What support is available if you are at risk of not achieving?
- How helpful are study support, interventions or targeted check-ins?
- Do you feel appropriately challenged in your courses?
- What helps you stay motivated and make progress?

Pathways and learner voice

- How well do your courses link to future pathways?
 - How are senior phase learners asked for views about courses, support or assessment?
 - Have learner views led to changes in teaching, feedback, assessment or study support?
 - What would improve the senior phase learner experience?
-

Appendix 6 - Exemplification of parent/stakeholder focus groups

Parent/Carer Stakeholder Group

Questions
• What does the school do well in supporting your child? • How well does the school communicate with you? • Do you feel you understand what your child is learning? • Do you feel clear about your child's progress and next steps? • How does the school help you support learning at home? • If you raise a concern, how well is this listened to and followed up? • What helps your child feel safe, supported and ready to learn? • What could the school do even better? • How does the school ask for parent/carers views about learning, support or school improvement? • Do you feel parent/carers views are listened to and used to help shape improvement priorities? • Can you give an example of something that changed because families shared their views? • How does the school share what it has learned from parent/carers feedback and what it plans to do next?

Appendix 6 - Raising attainment meeting

Exemplar Questions

- What strategies are in place to raise attainment across the school?
- What does your attainment data tell you about the progress of different groups within the school? (FSM/ASN/EAL/CE)
- How do you identify and support learners at risk of underachieving?
- How do use attainment data to identify gaps and target interventions appropriately?
- How do you ensure equity in attainment for key focus groups and identified learners?
- What interventions are in place to support literacy and numeracy development?
- How do you track and celebrate wider achievements beyond academic success?
- How are you promoting an ethos and culture of high expectations for all learners?
- How are you ensuring the highest attaining learners are sufficiently challenged?
- How do your staff track learner progress and ensure this data is used to inform teaching?
- How do you know that professional judgements made are robust? What moderation is being undertaken within and out with school that is supporting consistent, valid and reliable judgements are being made around pupil progress?
- How do teachers plan learning, teaching and assessment to ensure coherence and progression?
- How do you know that interventions and work on areas for improvement is making a difference to learners' progress, attainment and achievement?

Appendix 7 – QIV Report Proforma



From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



School Visit Brief Summary / Overview

School,	
Month / Year	
Visiting Team	

During our visit, we worked closely with HT and trio partners to ensure everyone was fully involved in emerging dialogue. This served to identify strengths and consideration of next steps. The below is a brief summary as discussed throughout the visit. This should not be shared publicly, but clearly the key messages might be useful as focus for discussion with stakeholders as appropriate.

Old Rayne and their experiences of being looked after by the friendly and respectful staff.

- Learning and engagement - Quality of teaching - Effective use of assessment - Planning, tracking and monitoring

School's Self Evaluation at point of visit:

1.1	1.3	2.3	3.1	3.2

Prior to visit, discussion with HT identified the following:

<u>A Few Current Key Strengths</u>	<u>Current Improvement Priorities</u>
-	-

A few current developments school currently working on in relation to 2.3...

<u>Collective Observations / Evidence from Stakeholder Discussions</u>

<u>Summary of Considerations for Next Steps as Identified by Team</u>

<u>Specific Actions for School or Team with Timescales</u>	
Agreed Actions	Timescales

<u>Follow up to QIV</u>

(Closing sign off statement here)

Thanks,

QIO

Appendix 8 – Cluster Attainment

Cluster Meeting – ACEL Data

Attainment information – Review Discussion exemplification

Officers would complete for the attainment at cluster level, but HTs could also use these questions in their own setting. SIMD might not be pertinent but would imagine FSM would be. We could use Qs 3 to 8 as a general discussion?

Cluster Attainment Discussion - CLUSTER

1.	Understanding the data What patterns or anomalies in the data shared stand out to you?
	For example – Writing at P4. Attainment for pupils in P7 who are entitled to FSM Writing is a consistently lower area of attainment across stages. Have you engaged in moderation at cluster level to support a shared understanding of standards?
2.	Making the difference What universal or targeted interventions have shown impact in your own settings? How have you measured/evidenced the impact?
	Any strategies that are improving performance/proving effective in your own schools? Any particular professional learning that is making a difference?
3.	Planning for improvement What are you doing/planning to do to make a difference? What approaches are in place to raise attainment and improve outcomes for learners? (anything specific in writing, reading, L&T and numeracy?) Any targeted supports being put in place that will make a difference? Any particular measures you have in place around progress, how will you continue to monitor progress?
	
4.	Use of data How do you analyse and use attainment information to identify next steps?

	What systems are in place to ensure all staff are aware of and using data to inform planning?
	
5.	Considering cohorts How are you considering/reviewing attainment of relevant cohorts in your setting with staff? SIMD/LAC/FSM/EAL etc
	Do all staff have an understanding of the demographic of your school? Are staff considering this as they plan for learning?
6.	What strategies are in place that are proving to be effective in removing barriers to learning and ensure equity for all?
	How is PEF being used to remove barriers to learning and improve outcomes? What evidence do you have that your use of funding is making a difference? What strategies are in place that are proving to be effective in removing barriers to learning? (Any reference to Circle?)
7.	Attendance and engagement Have you explored the link between attendance and attainment for learners not meeting expected levels? • What actions are being taken to improve attendance and engagement?
	
8.	Developing high quality practice What is working well as you continue to work to ensure that high-quality learning, challenge, support, and interventions are provided for all pupils?
	

Predicted data – cluster review

Cluster Meeting – Power Bi Predictions

What I would be envisage would be that we would complete for the attainment at cluster level, but they could use these questions in their own setting. SIMD might not be pertinent but would imagine FSM would be etc. We could use Qs 3 to 8 as a general discussion?

1.	What is your predicted attainment for P1, P4 and P7 telling you? (Areas of strength/Areas for development. Any information around specific cohorts (SIMD/EAL/FSM/LAC)?
2.	How much variability is there between literacy and numeracy?
3.	What are you doing/planning to do to make a difference? What approaches are in place to raise attainment and improve outcomes for learners? (anything specific in writing, reading, L&T and numeracy?) Any targeted supports being put in place that will make a difference? Any particular measures you have in place around progress, how will you continue to monitor progress?
4.	How do you analyse and use predicted information to identify next steps?
5.	Is every teacher aware of SIMD and other relevant data on their pupils? Looking at the predicted data is the gap narrowing? How well do learners in SIMD 1-2 attain in comparison to the average attainment for P1, P4 and P7. How well do learners who are entitled to FSM achieve in comparison with the average attainment for learners in P1, P4 and P7.
6.	What strategies are in place to remove barriers to learning and ensure equity for all?
7.	What have you put in place to ensure that high-quality teaching, challenge, support, and intervention are provided for all pupils?
8.	Look back at the attendance of all children who are not meeting their expected levels. Is there any relationship between their attendance and their attainment? What action do you need to take?

Appendix 9 - Performance Reviews Academies

Performance Reviews Format 2025

Section 1 - Introduction

Context of the school:

Brief overview of current context of the school in terms of strengths, circumstances/ challenges and the school's capacity for ongoing improvement.

15 mins.

Section 2

Self-Evaluation for self-improvement (QI – 1.1):

HT/SLT to illustrate self-evaluation processes that have led to current improvement priorities related to HGIOS 4 Quality Indicators/Themes:

- How did you decide upon your priorities for session 24/25? Outline your self-evaluation processes and how these informed your improvement priorities.
- Describe progress/impact so far. How do you know? Any areas where progress is not as expected? What actions are being taken?
- What are your next steps?

45-60 mins, allowing for discussion/questions.

Section 3

Raising Attainment and Achievement (QI – 3.2)

HT/SLT to share information on the following themes:

- BGE/SQA Attainment – quality of passes, predictions V final grades, appropriate challenge?
- Analysis of cohorts – year groups but also protected characteristics etc
- Attendance/Exclusion – patterns/successful approaches to improve attendance & reduce exclusions
- Achievement/Positive Destinations

Key questions for consideration:

- How effective are our approaches to raising attainment and achievement?
- How well can we demonstrate improved attainment for groups and individuals facing barriers to learning?
- To what extent are we closing the poverty related attainment gap?
- To what extent have we succeeded in securing positive destinations for our leavers?
- To what extent are our levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy improving over time?
- How well do we use tracking and monitoring information to measure progress over time for individuals and cohorts, and to identify areas for improvement?

60 mins, allowing for discussion/questions.

Conclusion

Discussion of next steps and any support that can be offered from the Centre

30 minutes
