Improvement Plan 2023/2024

St Bernadette's RCPS 2023-24

Clackmannanshire Council | Comhairle Siorrachd Chlach Mhanann

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Our ethos is rooted in our Faith. All members of our school community are encouraged to live the Gospel Values, loving and supporting each other while striving to develop our unique gifts and abilities. We aim to enable each of our children to achieve their God – given potential.

Our vision for our children is that they;

- develop a strong connection to their environment and a determination to contribute to it;
- are empowered to make choices that enhance their health and wellbeing throughout their lives;
- develop the skills for learning, life and work that they will need to thrive in the workplace.

When we talk about this with our children, we talk about our 3Bs: **Belonging, Believing & Building Blocks**

Our School Improvement Plan has been developed in consultation with staff, families and children. It is also a reflection of our Standards & Quality Report. This plan is part of a 3 year plan whose elements are described in the overview shown below.

BELONGING   - Our Communities
Our World - Laudato Si
Parish - Review of Sacraments
Campus - Development of Grounds - Active Travel
Families - Family Engagement - Pupils & Parents As Partners – Digital communication
School - Paul Dix - Mindfulness - Circle Time - Peer Mediation - Laudato Si
Class - Paul Dix - Mindfulness - Circle Time - Peer Mediation - Laudato Si

BELIEVING - Empowered Through Active Learning Pedagogies
Writing - immersive & holistic teaching of Literacy - RIC CLPL - Colourful Semantics
Playful pedagogy (from P1-P7)
Cooperative Learning
Growth Mindset
Outdoor Learning
2+1 Languages

School Improvement Plan 2021-24

BUILDING BLOCKS - Accurate Assessments Guide Us To Build On Strengths
Inter-authority - Moderation of Writing through RIC Writing Programme
Cluster - Moderation of Progress Tool
School - Moderation of Progress Tool - RIC Assessment & Moderation - Assessment for Learning
Class - Growth Mindset - Assessment for Learning Strategies

Overview

Headteacher: Nuala McElroy

Priority	Long Term Improvement Outcome	Accountable Person
1	**Belonging:** The percentage of children with attendance above 90% will increase from 74% to at least 80%.	N McElroy
2	**Believing:** The percentage of children who state that they like learning and that learning is fun will rise by at least 5%.	N McElroy
3	**Building Blocks:** Children's attainment in Writing will increase by at least 5%.	N McElroy

Priority 1

Long Term Improvement Outcome
(Aspirational, Transformational; relates to improved outcomes for learners)

Belonging: The percentage of children with attendance above 90% will increase from 74% to at least 80%.

NIF Priority	NIF Driver(s)	HGIOS4/HIGIOELC QIs
Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people	School Leadership Teacher Professionalism Parental Engagement Assessment of Children's Progress School Improvement Performance Information	1.3 Leadership of change 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement / securing children's progress

Contextual Analysis/Rationale

Contextual Analysis
Attendance
Our overall attendance rose by 1%, from 91.9% to 92.9%.

There is evidence of a poverty-related attendance gap. More children in SIMD 9-10 have high attendance than children in SIMD 1-2 and more children in SIMD 1-2 have low attendance than children in SIMD 9-10 as seen in the table below.

	SIMD 1 & 2	SIMD 9 & 10
Average attendance	91.9%	93.9%

Children with attendance less than or equal to 90%	30.9%	26.1%
Children with attendance more than or equal to 95%	42.9%	52.2%

The evidence, above, of a poverty-related attendance gap is particularly troubling given the evidence of a clear link between attendance and attainment shown in the table below. Children who have a higher attendance rate achieve more success in their learning.

Attendance	Reading	Writing	Listening & Talking	Numeracy
Less than or equal to 90%	79%	54%	79%	71%
More than or equal to 95%	89%	79%	89%	81%
Attainment Gap	**10%**	**25%**	**10%**	**10%**

Our data, as shown above, is in line with research findings published by University College London, in July 2020 'School absences and pupil achievement'. The findings include:

- Each day of individual pupil absence results in around 0.3-0.4% of a standard deviation reduction in achievement.
- Equivalently, eight days of absence would move a pupil one place down a ranking of 100 pupils (e.g. from 50th to 51st).
- Pupils from low-income households see a larger negative effect from each day of absence

Professor Lee Elliot Major and Dr Andy Eyres of the London School of Economics published 'Rising school absences: the post pandemic education divide' in October 2022. Their research led them to state that 'increased absence rates have the potential to significantly reduce attainment for absent pupils.' They found that the effect of persistent absence (defined as attendance of 90% or less) was greater in terms of attainment than might be expected. A child missing 10% of school days, 19.5 days might be expected to be approximately a school month behind in attainment but, in studies, the effect was shown to be two to three months.

The findings above are in line with our experience that when our children have very low attendance, they find it hard to maintain the relationships that make them feel known, liked, respected and important to others in the class. While they are absent, friends find new people to play with and things happen amongst the children that they are unaware of. At the same time, learning becomes more difficult because key concepts, or opportunities to apply new learning, are missed. The toll on feelings and learning makes coming to school even more difficult so attendance falls and the situation gets worse.

To decrease the attainment gap, we must raise attendance. Unfortunately, Elliot Major and Eyres found that 'the evidence on how to reduce persistent absenteeism is extremely weak'. Our work on attendance will be informed by the work being done by the Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative (FVWL RIC) and our fundamental belief that relationships are key to this issue. We believe that to raise attendance, we must ensure that all of our children feel that they are valued members of our school family. We need to support children and families to prioritise school attendance.

Our action plan, detailed below, consists of universal actions that aim to raise attendance overall, and targeted actions that aim to raise the attendance of a small group whose attendance is particularly concerning.

Priority 2

Long Term Improvement Outcome
(Aspirational, Transformational; relates to improved outcomes for learners)

Believing: The percentage of children who state that they like learning and that learning is fun will rise by at least 5%.

NIF Priority	NIF Driver(s)	HGIOS4/HIGIOELC QIs
Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people	School Leadership Teacher Professionalism Parental Engagement Assessment of Children's Progress School Improvement Performance Information	1.3 Leadership of change 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement / securing children's progress

Contextual Analysis/Rationale

Contextual analysis:

In 2022-23, we succeeded in widening our curriculum while maintaining our high attainment in Literacy and Numeracy. However, we have not been able to persuade all of our children to enjoy learning despite introducing Soft Start, Fun 31, Chromebooks and more hands-on learning experiences. The percentage of children who say that they like learning is 72.4% and the percentage of children who find learning fun is 64%.

Research published in the Nature Portfolio Journal: Science of Learning, 15 June 2021 examined 'Associations between school enjoyment at age 6 and later educational achievement' and concluded 'That enjoying school is positively associated with achievement may be intuitive, but it is remarkable that school enjoyment as early as age 6 explains differences in GCSE outcomes a decade later so well. The differences in achievement by enjoyment were almost as large as differences by parental occupational social class and sex, which have been widely acknowledged to be intervention worthy inequalities.'

The report on the National Discussion on Education in Scotland articulates this sense of enjoyment as part of their vision in this way: '*Each child and young person* receives great teaching, resources, and support for joyful learning that builds their confidence and equips them to be successful and to contribute in their life, work, and world, so they know how much *they matter.'*

As research shows that finding learning fun and enjoyable affects wellbeing and attainment, it becomes even more important that we are able to incorporate content and pedagogies that engage and motivate our children. To do this effectively, we will be working with our children to determine what it is that they find effective and engaging in their learning using HGIOURS 'Our learning and teaching'.

That work will then inform our actions so the list of key actions below is not exhaustive.

Priority 3

Long Term Improvement Outcome (Aspirational, Transformational; relates to improved outcomes for learners)		
Building Blocks: Children's attainment in Writing will increase by at least 5% at P1, P4 and P7 combined.		
NIF Priority	**NIF Driver(s)**	**HGIOS4/HIGIOELC QIs**

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing		1.3 Leadership of change
	Teacher Professionalism	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children	Parental Engagement	3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion
Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy	Assessment of Children's Progress	3.2 Raising attainment and achievement / securing children's progress
	School Improvement	
Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people	Performance Information	

Contextual Analysis/Rationale

Contextual Analysis

Attainment over time:

Looking at attainment over time, we can see that our attainment in writing dropped during Covid and has not recovered.

Year	2017-18	2018-19	*2019-20*	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Writing	75	82	*75**	66	69	70

* estimated by the authority on the basis of National Assessments and previous performance.

Rationale

We can see from the data tables above that we have to raise attainment in writing to match our previous performance. The actions detailed below are aimed at raising attainment in Writing for all our children rather than narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap. Our plans for narrowing the attainment gap are detailed in our PEF plan.

Our teachers were clear in our self-evaluation surveys that writing is the area of teaching that they feel least confident in. They asked for a whole school resource that would embed progression and would provide a structured approach with ideas for rich experiences in reading, listening and talking as well as writing. After extensive research, we found The Literacy Tree which is an immersive scheme that teaches writing through a shared text with an emphasis on discussion. All teachers are excited by this award-winning resource and we hope that our children will share their excitement as writing lessons become more engaging. One advantage for our small school is the provision of planning resources for whole school units of work as well as class units. This will allow for shared planning and assessment to deepen our understanding of progression. Teachers have reported that this year's shared planning sessions have been very useful.