

Education and Learning Directorate
Annual School Improvement Planning
2026-2027

School: Castle Douglas and Dalry partnership

Date: 31st May 2026

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2026 – 2027 *(Limit the number of priorities to ensure they are manageable and achievable.)*

School Priority /Improvement Area for Learners	2.3 Learning & Teaching	
Evidence to support decision to prioritise this area (include baseline measures)	Outcomes for Learners/School Community	Key Tasks
<p>Learning and teaching sit at the heart of a successful school because they shape not only attainment, but the kind of young people pupils become. In <i>What is Education For?</i>, Gert Biesta argues that education should never be reduced simply to examination success or economic outcomes. He states that education has three purposes: “qualification, socialisation and subjectification.” In other words, schools must help young people gain knowledge and skills, learn how to participate positively in society, and develop as independent individuals capable of thinking for themselves. This reminds us that excellent learning and teaching must go beyond content delivery and instead create meaningful experiences which challenge, inspire and empower learners.</p> <p>Similarly, in <i>A Curriculum of Hope</i>, Debra Kidd emphasises that the curriculum should provide “hope, connection and meaning.” Kidd argues that children learn best when learning is engaging, relevant and rooted in curiosity. High-quality learning and teaching therefore matters because it builds confidence, develops creativity and allows young people to see themselves as capable learners with a future worth striving for. In schools serving diverse communities and facing varying levels of disadvantage, this sense of hope can be transformational.</p> <p>These ideas align strongly with Quality Indicator 2.3, Learning, Teaching and Assessment, within Education Scotland’s HGIOS 4 framework. HGIOS 4 highlights the importance of learning experiences that are appropriately challenging, engaging and well-matched to learners’ needs. It emphasises the need for effective questioning, high-quality feedback, differentiation and assessment approaches that support progress for all learners.</p>		

<p>Strong learning and teaching should promote learner participation, independence and resilience while ensuring that attainment and achievement continue to improve.</p> <p>Together, Biesta, Kidd and HGIOS 4 present a shared vision of education: one where learning and teaching are not transactional, but transformational. Effective classroom practice develops knowledge and skills, but also nurtures confidence, creativity, compassion and ambition. When schools prioritise high-quality learning and teaching, they create the conditions where young people can succeed academically while also developing the values, character and hope needed to thrive in an increasingly complex world.</p> <p>Baseline measures and priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Develop a shared school understanding of high-quality learning and teaching. 2 Improve lesson structure, pace, differentiation, and formative assessment. Almost all FSM / PEF pupils do not attain in line with the virtual comparator 3 Embed consistent expectations across departments. There is variability in results across subjects with some sector leading and some that are not in 2025 results window. 4 Teacher working groups relaunched. Historically there have been a few leadership opportunities across the school. All middle leaders and class teachers are given opportunities to lead real change and measure impact. 	<p>Success Measures</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Increased consistency observed across classrooms from feedback by staff and pupils 2 Improved pupil engagement with pupils being involved in classroom observations. 3 Easier access to learning walks supports classroom observations that will be discussed within facility meetings 4 Feedback sought from visitors on experiences within the school. 5 Positive learner feedback. 6 Better quality evidence from learning visits. 	<p>Key Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Embed the school Learning & engagement framework aligned to HGIOS4 QI 2.3 DHT to review and evaluate complete by 2027. Additionality with pupils involved in evaluations of learning experiences within the classroom. 2 Introduce regular learning visits and peer observations alongside pupil feedback. DHT / L&E working group competition by May 2027. 3 Develop clear non-negotiables: Learning intentions and success criteria Retrieval practice Differentiation Checking for understanding DHT and working group will consult and outline as part of the policy by Oct 2026. 4 Increase moderation and collegiate planning within schools and with other schools all facilities PT`s from Aug 2027 5 Provide CLPL focused on adaptive teaching and explicit instruction. (DHT using access to Bruce Robertson website to direct resources to staff ongoing) 6 Working group;
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		BGE development (achievement of a level and interventions) DHT/PT/Teacher from Aug 2026	
NIF Priority		NIF Outcome	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leadership Effective leadership creates the culture, expectations and professional standards required for strong learning and teaching. Teacher professionalism HGIOS 4 2.3 directly connects to pedagogy, assessment literacy, differentiation, feedback and reflective practice. Assessment of children’s progress Central to 2.3 through effective formative assessment, moderation and use of data to inform next steps. School improvement Learning and teaching should sit at the center of improvement planning and self-evaluation. Performance information Schools use attainment, achievement and engagement data to evaluate the impact of teaching approaches. 	
		2.3	
Responsible/Lead Person	Time Allocations	Funding – including PEF	Expected Completion Date
Info within Key actions	Info within Key actions	£0	info within key actions
Parental and Learner Engagement Opportunities		Linkage to Framework for Inclusion	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Parents involved in focus groups and questionnaires for policy development Learning with your child opportunities within facilities expanded Learning and engagement policy shared with stakeholders 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting learners needs within the class with a focus on differentiation Tracking of pupils and interventions with an evaluation on success 	

School Priority /Improvement Area for Learners	3.1 Health & Wellbeing	
Evidence to support decision to prioritise this area (include baseline measures)	Outcomes for Learners/School Community	Key Tasks
<p>Health and wellbeing are fundamental to successful learning, positive relationships and long-term life outcomes. Within Education Scotland’s HGIOS 4 framework, Quality Indicator 3.1 highlights the importance of ensuring that all learners feel safe, respected, included and supported. Schools that place wellbeing at the centre create environments where young people are more able to engage in learning, build resilience and achieve success.</p> <p>In <i>What is Education For?</i>, Gert Biesta argues that education is about far more than academic attainment. His concept of “subjectification” emphasises helping young people develop as confident, thoughtful individuals who can exist positively within society. This directly connects to health and wellbeing because pupils cannot flourish if they do not feel valued, listened to and emotionally secure. Biesta reminds educators that schools have a responsibility to develop the whole child, not simply produce examination results.</p> <p>Similarly, in <i>A Curriculum of Hope</i>, Debra Kidd highlights the importance of belonging, connection and dignity within education. Kidd argues that schools should provide “hope” through meaningful relationships and rich experiences which allow young people to see value in themselves and their future. This is especially important for learners facing adversity or disadvantage, where strong pastoral care and nurturing relationships can become life-changing. When pupils feel known, supported and respected, they are more likely to participate, persevere and succeed.</p> <p>HGIOS 4 Quality Indicator 3.1 reinforces these principles through its focus on wellbeing, inclusion and universal support. Effective schools promote positive relationships across the school community and ensure that children and young people understand how to maintain their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Staff work collaboratively to</p>		

identify barriers to learning and provide timely interventions that support attendance, engagement and achievement. Learner voice also plays a central role, ensuring young people feel empowered and involved in decisions affecting their education and wellbeing.

Together, Biesta, Kidd and HGIOS 4 present wellbeing not as an “add-on” to education, but as a core condition for success. High-quality pastoral care, nurturing relationships and inclusive practice enable pupils to develop resilience, confidence and self-worth. When schools prioritise health and wellbeing, they create environments where young people feel safe enough to take risks in learning, build positive relationships and develop the skills and character needed to thrive both within school and beyond it.

Baseline measures and priorities

- 1 Improve relationships, belonging, and attendance (**attendance below stretch aim 88.6%** (May 2026).
- 2 Continue to develop nurturing and trauma-informed approaches (**Zero exclusion 2025-2026**).
- 3 Strengthen literacy/numeracy intervention support (Lexonic / numeracy interventions). **Numeracy is on target and matches attainment in senior phase. S2 causing concern with numeracy ability. Literacy across BGE needs to improve 20% to be in line with flight path.**
- 4 Continuing to offer family learning opportunities across the school / development of family engagement policy. (Family learning / learning at home opportunities is the poorest area when asking for feedback about the school.
- 5 Develop wellbeing tracker – **used to increase and sharpen target groups.**

Success Measures

- 1 Reduction in exclusions.
- 2 Improved attendance.
- 3 Increased pupil wellbeing survey scores.
- 4 Faster identification of support needs.

Key Actions

- 1 refresh relational behaviour policy.
- 2 Continue to train staff in nurture and trauma-informed practice and nurture groups. **DHT to identify inset for final input by psychological service by Jan 2027**
- 3 Strengthen staged intervention systems. DHT using wellbeing tracker to share confidential information with linked support plans + potential PEF project for middle to lower range abilities (**embedded into practice Aug 2026 and impact evaluated by May 2027**).
- 4 Embed pupil voice groups. **(PTC / PSPT lead. Showcasing impact from Oct 2026)**.
- 5 Improve attendance tracking and early intervention. **DHT / Pupil support continue work begun in 2025/26 with creation of target groups.**
- 6 Silver award for RRSA, ESAS / Respect me / equalities group developed. **DHT / PTPS lead from Aug 2026.**

		<p>7 Family learning expanded across all facilities with pupil support offering anti bullying workshops. (PTC / PSPT) / DHT Family engagement policy to be developed). By May 2027</p> <p>8 Complete nurture training with final module completed. DHT to arrange final module with physiological services by Jan 2027.</p> <p>9 Wellbeing tracker embedded into school practice. DHT creation of wellbeing tracker and embedded into practice Aug 2026 and impact evaluated by May 2027.</p> <p>10 Wellbeing surveys issued (PSPT Dec 2026). Trialed to one year group by December then expanded to all year groups by June 2027</p> <p>11 Working groups Behaviour (celebrating good behaviour) DHT/PT/Teacher from Aug 2026.</p>
NIF Priority	NIF Outcome	HGIOS?4 / Quality Improvement Framework ELC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental engagement Positive partnerships with families strengthen attendance, wellbeing and learner support. School leadership Leaders establish inclusive values, nurture positive relationships and create a culture of belonging. Teacher professionalism Staff understanding of nurture, trauma-informed practice, inclusion and 	<p style="text-align: center;">3.1</p>

		<p>wellbeing is central to effective support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School improvement Wellbeing and inclusion should be embedded within improvement planning and self-evaluation processes. • Performance information Schools use attendance, exclusion, participation and wellbeing data to identify needs and target interventions. 		
Responsible/Lead Person	Time Allocations		Funding – including PEF	Expected Completion Date
info within key actions	info within key actions		<p>1.Pef teacher £5000 2.Home link £26000 3.Meeting PEF pupils incidental needs £2000</p>	info within key actions
Parental and Learner Engagement Opportunities			Linkage to Framework for Inclusion	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Involvement in behavior policy as a listening group. 2. Sharing of information around support plans for PEF pupils. 3. Working with families in the attendance pilot 4. Rights respecting assembly with parents and other info nights. 5. Wellbeing survey information shared with stakeholders. 			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Meeting learners needs, engaging with all stakeholders to improve attendance and positively affect attainment. 2 All pupils have been allocated their stage. 	

School Priority /Improvement Area for Learners	3.2 Raising attainment	
Evidence to support decision to prioritise this area (include baseline measures)	Outcomes for Learners/School Community	Key Tasks
<p>Raising attainment is a central responsibility of every school because attainment opens doors to future opportunities, life chances and social mobility. Within Education Scotland’s HGIOS 4 framework, Quality Indicator 3.2 focuses on securing high levels of progress and achievement for all learners while ensuring equity and inclusion remain at the centre of school improvement. Effective schools recognise that raising attainment is not simply about increasing data, but about improving outcomes and removing barriers which prevent young people from achieving their potential.</p> <p>In <i>What is Education For?</i>, Gert Biesta warns against reducing education solely to measurable outcomes. However, he also recognises the importance of “qualification” — ensuring young people gain the knowledge, skills and credentials needed to participate successfully in society. This highlights that attainment matters because it equips learners with the tools required for employment, further education and informed participation in the wider world. The challenge for schools is therefore to raise attainment while still maintaining humanity, creativity and individuality within learning.</p> <p>Similarly, in <i>A Curriculum of Hope</i>, Debra Kidd argues that young people achieve more when learning is meaningful, engaging and ambitious. Kidd emphasises that schools should have high expectations for every learner regardless of background or circumstance. She suggests that hope is a powerful driver of attainment; when pupils believe success is possible and feel supported by strong relationships, they are more likely to persevere and achieve. This is particularly important when addressing the poverty-related attainment gap, where targeted support and inclusive practices can significantly improve outcomes.</p> <p>HGIOS 4 Quality Indicator 3.2 reinforces the need for schools to use robust data, effective tracking and targeted interventions to improve</p>		

attainment over time. Strong schools analyse progress carefully, identify learners requiring additional support and implement strategies which improve literacy, numeracy and wider achievement. Staff maintain consistently high expectations and ensure learning pathways meet the needs of all learners. Attainment is viewed alongside achievement, recognising success across academic, personal and vocational areas.

Together, Biesta, Kidd and HGIOS 4 present attainment as both an educational and moral responsibility. Raising attainment is not about creating pressure for its own sake, but about ensuring every young person has access to opportunity, dignity and future success. When schools combine high expectations with excellent teaching, nurturing relationships and meaningful learning experiences, they create the conditions where all learners can thrive and achieve their full potential.

Baseline measures and priorities

- 1 Embed robust tracking and monitoring systems. **Our attainment data 2025 while an improving picture is below the virtual comparator for 5 at 5 in 4th year and requires consistency of intervention across the school. Our data is better for 6 and 7 Nat 5's. Our higher cohorts were not stretched enough. Data is now used to drive all decisions from options in lower years to intervention in SQA years.**
- 2 Improve literacy and numeracy attainment. **Numeracy data is line with comparator schools. Literacy data while improving picture still requires more accurate assessment in the BGE to match attainment in the senior phase.**
- 3 Reduce attainment gaps – **targeted Pef / middle range pupil / LAC / young carers by staff within facilities and as a whole school.**
- 4 Strengthen circular design – **the curriculum has been changed with expanded offers since it was written and needs to be revisited.**

Success Measures

- 1 Improved literacy/numeracy data.
- 2 Showing data is used to create target groups with measurable positive impact
- 3 More accurate teacher professional judgement on levels and progress.
- 4 Improved attainment in targeted cohorts.

Key Actions

- 1 Embed data tracking calendar and refine using evaluative statements. **DHT / tracking document refined and focused on evaluative statements and measurable impact from Aug 2026**
- 2 New reporting across all year groups embedded into school practice. **HT / DHT to seek feedback from all stakeholders in 2026/27**
- 3 Use SNSA, benchmarking, and teacher judgement more effectively. **DHT / new S1 August 2026, creating identified groups for intervention support**
- 4 Target interventions for identified pupils. **All staff - Linking tracking periods across the year with evidence of impact – what actual difference did we make? / PEF intervention project for identified young people as required. Evaluated June 2027.**
- 5 Continue to develop supported study, Easter school and master classes. **DHT by March 2027**
- 6 Continue to embed global bridge – new first years. **DHT from Aug 2026**
- 7 Refine curriculum rationale policy. **HT and DHT by Jan 2027.**

		<p>8 Working groups; Raising attainment (embedding positive habits in all) PT/HT/teacher / Curriculum improvement cycle (ensuring we are on the front foot and informed) DHT/PT/Teacher from Aug 2026.</p>	
NIF Priority		NIF Outcome	HGIOS?4 / Quality Improvement Framework ELC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of children’s progress Tracking, monitoring and timely interventions are central to improving attainment. Performance information Schools analyze attainment, achievement and participation data to identify strengths, gaps and next steps. School improvement Improvement planning should focus clearly on measurable improvements in outcomes for learners. Teacher professionalism High-quality pedagogy, moderation and effective interventions directly influence attainment. School leadership Leaders create a culture of high expectations and accountability for learner progress. 	<p>3.2</p>
Responsible/Lead Person	Time Allocations	Funding – including PEF	Expected Completion Date

info within key actions	info within key actions	1.Lexonic £500	info within key actions
Parental and Learner Engagement Opportunities		Linkage to Framework for Inclusion	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback on reporting system throughout the year 2. Sharing SNSA data and CAT tests with parents including supportive actions 3. When a learning conversation occurs, the event is recorded via satchel for parent info 4. Sharing information from working groups and the CIC (curriculum improvement cycle). 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of pupil's skills linked to meta skills. 2. Development to meet the needs of the different stage's pupil may be at. 	