

KIRKCALDY HIGH SCHOOL

Standards and Quality Report (SQR) for Session 2019-2020



Context of our School

We aim always to be:

"A happy, fair and supportive learning community which improves life chances through inspiring ambition, creativity, hard work and perseverance."

Our values are;

Respect for Self, Respect for Others, Respect for Learning

Our catchment extends from Redcraigs in the west to Hendry Road in the east and includes the Valley and Templehall areas of the town, as well as the new developments to the north of Chapel Level. Our cluster of primary schools comprises Capshard, Fair Isle, Torbain and Valley, although each year we receive many placing requests from other parts of the town, especially Smeaton and Gallatown. We also attract significant numbers from Cardenden. This contributes to a sharply rising roll, which currently stands at just short of 1400.

A large part of our catchment comprises neighbourhoods which are identified as being areas of multiple deprivation in SIMD surveys. This means that KHS has been awarded a significant amount of "Pupil Equity Funding" which has been used to address gaps in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing (including mental wellness), attendance and positive destinations with target groups.

Recently, we were proud to be recipients of the President's Award at the "COSLA Excellence Awards", in recognition of our sector leading work in reducing homophobia and improving school inclusiveness. We were nominated by Fife Council in the "Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health" category. Inclusive education and tackling health and wellbeing inequality are major priorities for us.

Review of Progress – Session 2019/20

Attainment Overview

The latest available "insight" data shows that 92.5% of leavers attain Level 4 in Literacy and Numeracy against 84.8% for our "virtual comparator". At Level 5, the figure is 62.7% against 58.8% for our comparator. 2020 was a strong year for S4 attainment in particular, with a significant rise in the % of SQA candidates gaining 5 or more awards at Level 5. However, comparisons are difficult due to the change in assessment methodology used by the SQA this year. It is also the case that for many of our S4, there was the opportunity to take a new additional Level 5 qualification in "Applications of Mathematics".

Evaluative statement of attainment over time

We can report an improving position in almost all indicators, except for a decline in S6 attainment in 2020 – this was a "blip" year/cohort and we have a generally improving trend. For example, the % attaining 3 or more Highers in S5 has risen from 19% in 2014 to 27% by 2020. Around a third of all leavers now have 3 or more Highers (A-C).

School Improvement Priority 1: Improved Attainment and Achievement

NIF Priorities

Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

NIF Drivers

Teacher Professionalism, Assessment of progress, Performance Information

HGIOS 4 Quality Indicator

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

Progress: Our learners are benefiting from staff engaging well with the "benchmarks", which are being used for moderation activities. Our learners are benefiting from increased targeted primary transition visits in Literacy and Numeracy, although these were difficult in the spring of 2020 due to COVID-19.

Our learners have had an extended provision of DYW related activities and work placements and increased opportunities for wider achievement awards. There is an increased number of learners experiencing work placements and completing additional qualification (SQA work placement or volunteering unit). There is also an increased number of learners on Foundation Apprenticeships, with greater advertising of FA options, greater choice/personalisation for learners looking for vocational learning.

Learners typically engage well in programmes of ongoing Study Support and a programme for Saturday Schools and Easter School sessions. Master Classes prior to each SQA exam are also timetabled. Of course, in 2020, due to COVID-19, this programme was disrupted.

Impact: Our learners are benefiting from increased staff confidence with regard to making professional judgements of CFE levels achieved in Numeracy & Literacy. SNSA results for S3 show improvement, with the top 3 bands for Numeracy and Literacy having increased by around 10% in 2019 and this was reflected in the strong results of the S4 cohort in the 2020 SQA awards.

Our English teachers have a better understanding of levels achieved by learners and the content of P7 lessons. This has informed S1 lesson planning for next session, so that a more homogeneous experience for learners is offered. Our learners have had opportunities for individual teacher support as well as group work opportunities to facilitate focused revision.

Next Steps: We need to build on the good practice in Numeracy & Literacy by ensuring that all staff across the school are more skilled in moderation and making judgments about the progress of our learners. This will be especially important given the new SQA arrangements for National 5 in 2021.

We are developing the "Accelerated Reader" programme for S1 learners, funded by "PEF". This will include planned daily reading practice, to establish a trend for a long-lasting reading culture as these learners progress through school.

We need to increase the number of Senior Phase students undertaking the SQA Leadership Award, completing work placements and related qualifications. We have increased the number of learners completing Foundation Apprenticeships, and we are involved in a greater range of frameworks. We can introduce additional qualifications for learners at college (Tues/Thurs pm) eg Steps to Work, and improve learners' journeys by completing related work placements where appropriate. We will also explore additional qualification options for S6 (eg Open University YAS Awards)

School Improvement Priority 2: *Increased Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion*

NIF Priority

Improvements in Health and Wellbeing.

NIF Drivers

School Leadership, Teacher Professionalism, Parental Engagement; Assessment of Progress

HGIOS 4 Quality Indicator

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

Progress: There is considerable evidence that the school is widely regarded as being highly inclusive and health promoting (see Pupilwise and Parentwise Surveys). We were recipients of the COSLA "Excellence Award" 2018 for "Reducing Inequality and Improving Health" and our LGBT+ equalities group was named Most Influential Fifers of the year, placed at number 1 in the top forty Fifers by the Fife Free Press. We are also recent recipients of the UNICEF Rights Respecting School "Gold" Award and the LGBTYS "Gold Charter". "PEF" spending on initiatives to reduce gaps in attainment, attendance, health and wellbeing and family engagement is beginning to show encouraging results.

Targeted groups of learners have benefited from a focus on improving engagement and outcomes within Literacy and Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing (especially in relation to their Physical, Mental, Emotional or Social Health through the use of various interventions). Our learners most at risk of not attending school have been supported through our Family Link worker. This support includes home visits and being proactive in bringing learners into school attendance through: following routines to better wellbeing behaviour; trying to reduce barriers to academic progress (such as offering access to alternative educational provision such as the YMCA in the Valley or access to education outwith school times) as well as communicating with the hardest to reach parents/carers using alternatives such as home visits/texts to update.

Our focus on mental health has resulted in the production of an online "Toolkit" which was especially useful during the period of remote learning in "lockdown". Extensive planning is undertaken with our associated primary schools to ensure that all staff in KHS are aware of young people who require additional support. Supported Learning staff attend planning meetings from primary 6 and meet with staff from the primary schools a number of times during P7. In addition to attending meetings and sharing information, Supported Learning teachers and PSAs run a bespoke enhanced transition programme, tailored to meet the individual needs of the child. However, this programme was disrupted in 2020 and largely replaced by online activities.

Impact: Our learners are responding positively to these targeted interventions. We have evidence that regular attenders' attainment in Literacy and Numeracy has improved. Our learners involved in the Health & Wellbeing target group are taking part in more physical activities, have an improved confidence and generally are showing a more positive outlook. Our learners involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme do very well, with a group achieving their Bronze Award in May 2020.

The attendance rates for learners in the target (PEF) caseload have generally improved. Learners previously disengaged with learning are making better academic progress, for example by managing to complete Literacy and Numeracy qualifications at National 4. The sharing of good practice; communication of support priorities for individuals; ongoing quality assurance discussions (professional review) and cohesive planning (whereby professionals are engaged with each individual pupil) are all recorded which makes tracking more transparent, in terms of interventions and outcomes and ensures more cohesive intervention strategies are employed.

Our learners have a smooth and positive transition to Kirkcaldy High School and are given the opportunities to forge positive relationships with peers from other primary schools, Supported Learning teachers and PSAs based at Kirkcaldy High School. Given the close relationship of secondary and primary staff support strategies can be shared with all teachers in KHS giving the learners the most positive experience possible.

Next Steps: We have developed appropriate data sharing re ASN, pastoral issues etc by making an "Equity" spreadsheet widely available. We will continue to extend multicultural awareness across the school. We have improved parental engagement by providing opportunities for online engagement. We want to ensure our school community has a shared understanding of wellbeing, by promoting understanding of the "indicators". The aims and measurement methodology of our PEF related work needs to be more specific, allowing for any necessary interventions. We will continue to broaden the experience and level of staff and pupil awareness of wellbeing indicators.

We will use in service training to develop understanding and how indicators can/should influence improvement planning. We will conduct an audit showing how indicators are being used by Departments at present and support learners making a film showing how indicators are being used throughout the school that can be used to raise awareness and develop understanding.

School Improvement Priority 3: Improvements to our Curriculum

NIF Priority
Closing the Attainment Gap, Improvement in Employability Skills
NIF Driver
Assessment of Children's Progress, Teacher Professionalism

HGIOS 4 Quality Indicators

2.2 Curriculum

Progress: Our learners are benefiting from our UNICEF "Gold" status and improved understanding of the Articles of the UNCRC across learning (Rights Respecting School). CPD twilight session for staff have been held. Lesson inserts highlighting rights are commonly shared with learners. The basis of Sustainability week (S1-S3) has generated lessons with explicit links to Sustainable Development Goals.

Impact: Greater awareness of rights for learners across the school. More discussion in lesson introductions and plenaries of Children's Rights. More explicit (and diverse) displays around the school as visual prompts. Use of Twitter to communicate updates and celebrate successes in UNCRC work. Our Equalities Group is becoming ever more active.

Next Steps: Continue to provide: CPD for staff; updates for parents/carers (via, for example Rector's weekly update). We also need to continue wider campaigning locally and internationally to promote awareness of rights and Sustainable Development Goals.

School Improvement Priority 4: Effective Leadership of Change

NIF Priority
Improvement in attainment, equity, health and wellbeing and positive destinations
NIF Driver
School Leadership, Teacher Professionalism, Parental Engagement, Performance Information

HGIOS 4 Quality Indicators

1.3 Leadership of Change
2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Progress: Our learners and staff are familiar with our new Learning and Teaching Policy and copies of our Learning Charter are visible across the school. The implementation of our new relationships strategy (based on the work of "Pivotal Education") was affected by the virus disruption and will be the main strand of our next Improvement Plan. Our Collegiate sessions were planned around a TLC format and focussed on consistency, recognition and scripted interventions. We have had a much stronger focus on regular faculty meetings and in particular around attainment tracking, with regular Attainment Liaison Meetings between DHTs and PTCs.

Impact: Our staff completed action plans after whole staff training sessions, which encouraged them to be more reflective and to focus more on impact. Feedback from learning visits suggests that the quality of questioning is improving, learner engagement/enthusiasm is good and teachers are planning well. Areas for continued improvement are pace and challenge, and promoting skills for learning, life and work. Also, we can focus more on the use of Assessment for Learning strategies as this is not as consistent across the school as we would wish.

Regular faculty meetings have taken place, with the main agenda being Department/Faculty Improvement Plans. PTCs completed post prelim proformas which were discussed at faculty meetings and any interventions required in terms of raising attainment were also discussed/decided.

Next Steps: Feedback from our learners and staff highlighted a need to continue to focus on building positive relationships in order to ensure young people are ready to learn. In the session ahead as well as continuing to provide CPD opportunities in learning and teaching, we will be engaging in further whole school training (despite constraints) around our relationships framework based on "Pivotal Education".

We are also faced with considerable uncertainty and will continue to develop an agile framework for decision making in light of the ongoing pandemic.

Evidence of wider achievements impacting on outcomes for all learners:

- COSLA Excellence Awards (Reducing Inequality and Improving Health) 2018
- Fife Free Press "Top Forty Fifers" – Number 1 in 2018
- Kingdom FM "Best School" Winners 2019
- Pupilwise and Parentwise Surveys 2018 (see KHS website)
- Rights Respecting School "Gold" 2019
- LGBTYS "Gold" Charter Award 2020.

Key Improvement Priorities for Session 2020/21

PRIORITY 1: Improved Consistency in Learning, Teaching and Relationships (with a positive impact on overall attainment)

- Embed the 5 principles of identified good practice; Consistent, calm adult behaviour; First attention to best conduct with rewards and recognition, praise etc; Relentless routines – rules, follow-up; Scripting difficult interventions and de-escalation; Restorative conversations
- Improve our ability to deliver digital learning (including remote or "blended" learning)
- Respond to changing requirements of SQA assessment for 2021, including moderation
- Continue to embed all aspects of the UNCRC.

PRIORITY 2: Improvements in Health and Wellbeing

- Ensure a safe learning environment, adapting risk assessments etc to reduce the risk of virus transmission
- Continue to support initiatives to improve mental health (of both children and adults associated with the school)
- Reduce the poverty gap in attainment and post school destinations through targeted support using PEF
- Continue to build our shared understanding of wellbeing (using ES indicators).

Our Capacity for Continuous Improvement

This is considered to be "very good" as evidenced by the recent "Staffwise" surveys. For example 89% of staff agree that there is a positive ethos in KHS (sector average 60%), 68% of staff report that change is well managed in KHS (47% across the sector) and 66% consider that communication is effective (against 48% across Fife secondaries).

HMIe Quality Indicators: Self Assessment

Quality Indicator	School Self Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of Change	Good/Very Good (see "Staffwise")
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Very Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good