

Peebles High School
School Improvement Report
2023-24



Review of Progress 2022-23

Context of the setting

Our school roll is 1330 serving the Tweeddale area in Scottish Borders. Our cluster primary schools are Kingsland, Priorsford and Halyrude in Peebles, St Ronan's in Innerleithen as well as Walkerburn, West Linton, Broughton and Newlands primary schools.

In terms of the profile of our pupil population, 38% of our pupils use school transport and 7% of our pupils are entitled to free school meals. The distribution of our pupils across the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles and % are 1-3 - 0.3%, 4 – 6%, 5 – 4%, 6 – 19%, 7 – 22%, 8 – 19%, 9 – 16%, 10 – 12%.

A new school building is being built in the school grounds to be opened in October 2025 with the current building demolished by March 2026.

The school had an HMI inspection in October 2023 and the report was published in January 2024. [Peebles High School | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#). Headteacher Campbell Wilson left in January 2024 to be replaced in a temporary role until January 2025 (when the HMI further inspection will have taken place) by Kevin Ryalls.

The HMI report in January 2024 specified 3 Areas for Improvement (AFIs) below which have informed all improvement work since January 2024.

AFI 1

Senior leaders and staff need to improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment in the Broad General Education. They need to develop approaches to ensure that all young people make appropriate progress in their learning.

AFI 2

Staff should develop a clear understanding of how to identify and respond to all young people's individual learning needs.

AFI 3

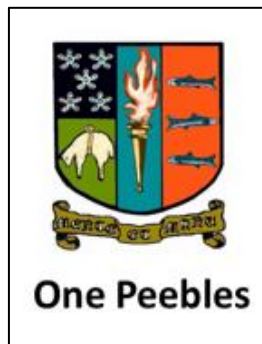
The strategic leadership of the school requires improvement. Senior leaders should monitor and evaluate the work of the school more effectively to identify priorities for improvement. They then need to evaluate how well these priorities are making a difference to improving outcomes for young people. This is especially important for the safeguarding of and raising the attainment and achievement of all learners.

Vision, values and aims

The rights and responsibilities of our school pupils are:-

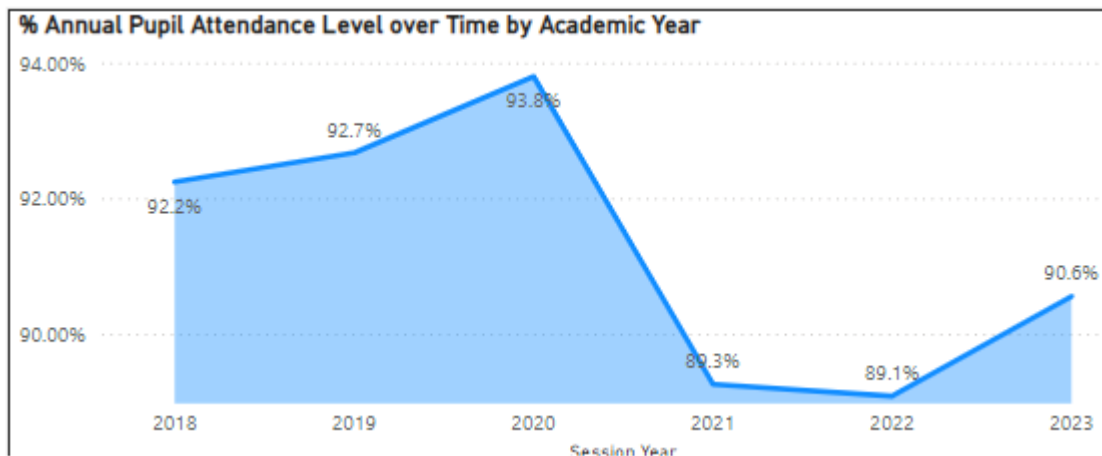


The school values are Wisdom, Compassion, Justice, Integrity and the school motto is Mente, Manu, Corde. Since January 2024, and moving forward the school vision will be built around the unifying vision of One Peebles.



Attendance

The appointment of 3 Pastoral Support Assistants (PSAs) in October 2023 has seen an increase in attendance. Attendance 2021-22 – 89.3%, 2022-23 – 89.1%, 2023-24 90.6.



Exclusions

In session 2022-23 there were 27 exclusions. In session 2023-24 there were 27 exclusions of which 60% involved a small number of young people who are now all supported by Connect (see Inclusion section below).

Engagement with parents and other stakeholders

The Parent Council meets monthly and parents are directly involved in school improvement work alongside staff and pupils around school website and curriculum development, as well as policies in relation to dyslexia, reporting, communications and behaviour.

The Student Parliament meets regularly and provides a means for pupils to communicate with SLT around for example course choice.

Partners have been brought together under the Connect programme.

All stakeholders feed into the HMI based survey which informs our reporting. These have been collated for parents and pupils to show positive trends since October 2023.

[HMI and Surveys – Peebles High School \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](https://glowscotland.org.uk)

SBC priority 1: Develop high quality learning, teaching and assessment that leads to improved levels of attainment and achievement for all in our schools and settings.

HMI Area for Improvement 1:

Senior leaders and staff need to improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment in the Broad General Education. They need to develop approaches to ensure that all young people make appropriate progress in their learning.

To improve BGE (S1-3) planning, topic and lesson planning sheets based on Education Scotland Moderation Cycle have been established to better meet learners' needs and broaden assessment evidence. Faculties have been using them since Easter. We will gather evidence of the impact of the planning sheets from August.

The school has been focussing on BGE grading and reporting and have now submitted BGE grades based on more holistic evidence. There is clear evidence of improvement in the HMI surveys.

Moving forward, pupils will benefit from improving levels of appropriate challenge. Clear and more consistent planning for assessment means they will know where they are in their learning. We will see evidence of meeting learners' needs through learning visits and surveys.

Our Lesson Evaluation Tool outlines our expectations in relation to learning, teaching and assessment. This has been updated to reflect the HMI report and is used for all staff and pupil evaluation and learning visits. We have an ongoing programme of learning visits in faculties and by line managers with feedback. There is evidence of improvement from the HMI surveys.

At the May INSET staff self-evaluated against the PHS Lesson Evaluation tool and used the tool to get feedback from BGE classes. This work has provided baseline evidence at whole school level and also means that PTs and teachers can target areas for improvement. Young people have been at the heart of this evaluation process and this will continue annually. We will now use this data to improve the learning, teaching and assessment experience for our young people. As a result of this data, and the HMI report, learning visits and trio coaching groups will focus on the learning context and effective questioning in term 1 of session 2024-25 and appropriate pace and challenge and effective feedback in term 2. We will develop pupil leadership in improving learning, teaching and assessment to build on the engagement with pupils in the annual baseline.

Faculty Curriculum Pathways with information on wider course choice, skills development and industry links have been completed. This has provided a consistent baseline for school and faculty developments. We have begun a more assertive and aspirational coursing process. Pupils are in a better position to attain and achieve more, with more relevant courses as there is a greater uptake in a wider range of courses to better meet the needs of our learners, we have started L5/6 Leadership and School Service in S6 and increased expectation in S5 and S6. We have also set up core subjects in S5. Our next steps are to use the Faculty Curriculum Pathways as a basis for targeted improvements, engage in the SBC Way and establish 1+2 Modern Languages. There is an ongoing debate around course choice at the end of S1 and 6NQs in S4 which will be addressed.

In relation to Attainment and Achievement, we have set up a Quality Assurance calendar, Attainment Reviews and a Whole School Tracking spreadsheet which will allow us to track and monitor progress in S1-6 at a whole school, faculty and individual level. We have a Wider Achievement tracking system that allows us to identify gaps, provide interventions and improve uptake in wider achievement in and out of school. We have written a High Expectations policy with pupils and parents to maintain high expectations and meet needs more consistently, and we have improved the study environments for S5 and S6. We have made significant improvements in literacy and numeracy in S4-6. In S1-3 our data has shown some improvements in Numeracy and Literacy at level 3 and level 4 in S3. The SBC Way will help all schools be more reliable with BGE levels. We have also targeted S3 and S4 young people in the lowest 20% and at risk of not attaining 5 NQs. Improved Curriculum/Support for Learning collaboration to lead to better outcomes for these pupils. We will target interventions to improve attainment and achievement for all learners in S1-3 and S4-6. Our BGE planning sheets will support improved reporting of a level.

SBC priority 2: Develop inclusive practice with a focus on universal and targeted provision in all schools and settings.

HMI Area for Improvement 2:

Staff should develop a clear understanding of how to identify and respond to all young people's individual learning needs.

Pastoral PTs have led the introduction of 36 Ready to Learn Plans (R2L) with parent and pupil input listing the dos and don'ts to best meet the needs of these young people who have a range of barriers to learning. Initial feedback from staff, parents and young people is very positive in terms of better supporting these young people. Pastoral PTs will continue to embed and monitor the R2L plans under guiding principles of AFI 3.

We have set up a Whole-School Tracking sheet as a one stop shop for all ASN info for our pupils. This will be introduced in August 2024 to make it easier for staff to access information on young people and better meet their needs. We will introduce, monitor and evaluate impact of Data Hub in terms of meeting learners' needs.

SfL have improved the process for referrals for dyslexia and literacy profiles referrals. There is positive feedback from staff and a significant reduction in backlog of referrals so teachers

know quicker how to support more young people. SfL will continue to embed and monitor the referrals process and the impact of the literacy profiles under guiding principles of AFI 3.

Our Pupil Equity Funding 2023-24 was used to support a reading programme that trained staff in secondary and primary. There is no evidence of impact around this. Since January 2024, we have planned for PEF to be allocated to our inclusion service which will be called Connect from August 2024 under the leadership of PT Inclusion appointed in January 2024. This service brings together a range of partners and Support for Learning staff to support young people affected by poverty and at risk of exclusion through a bespoke curriculum. We now have clear pathways linked to outcomes for targeted group of pupils who made up 60% of all exclusions 2023-24 in Connect established. We have a rigorous referral process and tracking systems for a wide range of interventions.

We have seen a significant decrease in negative referrals and young people at risk are attaining more and benefiting from improved links between Connect and wider school. The PEF plan provides a robust quality assurance process for Connect. We will embed Connect pathways including widening the offer to include the building of the new school.

We have increased our offer for Enhanced Provision (EP) in mainstream classes. This offer will start in August 2024 and we will embed and review EP offer and impact in relation to outcomes for young people in EP.

We set up a new Behaviour Policy following consultation with pupils and parents in February 2024. The May 2024 school learning, teaching and assessment survey, the March 2024 school behaviour survey and HMI surveys show strengths and improvements in relation to behaviour, respect, bullying and safety. Feedback from staff, parents and pupils that the school is more orderly, calmer and quieter. In February 2024 the Pupil Parliament asked for a clearer definition of school rules and the policy is part of the quality assurance calendar.

As Leadership is an AFI from HMI I have included this in this School Improvement Report (SIR).

HMI Area for Improvement 3 Leadership

The strategic leadership of the school requires improvement.

Senior leaders should monitor and evaluate the work of the school more effectively to identify priorities for improvement.

They then need to evaluate how well these priorities are making a difference to improving outcomes for young people.

This is especially important for the safeguarding of and raising the attainment and achievement of all learners.

In terms of Communication, there are two weekly HT Updates – one to staff and one to parents, pupils and staff. These mean that the community have very regular updates. Regular House Assemblies have improved communication to pupils. There has been effective communication of expectations to staff. The HT worked with staff and parents to introduce a new Communications Policy and this has improved communication between

home and school. The new school Facebook page has improved the image of the school by showcasing the achievements of pupils.

A Leadership Framework is being developed, including setting up Agile Leadership as the vehicle for school improvement. This is providing clarity on SLT remits, PTCs leadership of mini schools, Pastoral whole school leads, the PT SfL role and the role of PTs of Data, Pupil Leadership, Wider Achievement and Learning, Teaching and Assessment. All leaders will create a leadership policy paper to inform the school community of their role and its purpose.

The HMI visit highlighted the fact that the school needed to improve its ability to know its strengths and next steps. To improve Self-evaluation and understanding of HGIOS4, all leaders completed self and team evaluations using 3 key terms of accountability, empowerment and communication. PTCs and SLT completed scoping documents and the HT Leadership Overview shows summary of strengths and next steps of all leaders. PTs Pastoral engaged quickly from January in self-evaluation process with pupils to better understand how they can be more accessible as this was identified in the HMI report. As a result, pupils are positive about their access to the Pastoral teacher.

The HMI surveys over time provide data on improvement, feedback from all members of the community and evidence from young people at the SBC Education Committee in March 2024 show increased faith in the school to progress.

Moving forward, we will provide clarity on the One Peebles unifying Vision, we will see HMI survey data improvements and the improvements identified in the HT Leadership Overview achieved. Clarity around Communication, the Leadership Framework and Self-evaluation will remain a key focus to improve leadership and in turn outcomes for pupils. We will engage with parents, staff and pupils on the impact of, strengths and next steps for leadership of the school to ensure the leadership and management of the school is strong.

Evaluate the following QIs against the six-point scale:

Excellent	this aspect of the school’s work is outstanding, high quality and sector-leading
Very Good	major strengths, very few areas for improvement
Good	important strengths, yet there remain some aspects which require improvement
Satisfactory	the strengths within this just outweigh the weaknesses, basic provision for learners
Weak	important weaknesses, there may be some strength, the important weaknesses, either individually or collectively, are sufficient to diminish learners’ experiences in substantial ways
Unsatisfactory	major weaknesses within which require immediate remedial action

Quality indicator	School self-evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Satisfactory
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment (Including digital)	Satisfactory
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Satisfactory
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement/ Securing children’s progress	Satisfactory

Our capacity for continuous improvement is:

We feel in all QIs above we are in place to achieve Good during session 2024-25 and Very Good by session 2026-27.