

PRIORITY 1 Skills Development: (Inquire to Inspire/Play Pedagogy)

One PT completed the ***Inquire to Inspire*** CLPL as part of a network group across the small schools of the Learning Community. Pre-project self-evaluation indicated good practice and confidence in interdisciplinary learning pedagogy. Shortly after the delivery of the professional learning sessions, the PT had an extended period of absence which then impacted on the project-based element being completed during this session, as well as the gathering of baseline data from other teaching staff. However, by the end of the June, the PT articulated sustained levels of confidence, with increased sense of where pedagogical strengths lie, and a clearer vision about how to continue to develop practice and widen learning opportunities across all stages as the programme is cascaded and implemented more widely during 2026/27. The purpose of interdisciplinary learning was agreed by staff as 'opportunities to develop communication skills, creativity, empathy, and the agility to navigate a changing world'.

Many crossovers of impact could be seen from all teachers attending the first Curriculum Improvement Cycle briefing, PTs sharing of their experiences using the Inquire to Inspire model, and through the development of play pedagogy and outdoor learning model (PSR theme). All classes undertook a 'Big Question' approach around Inventors and Innovators of Scotland in January/February 2026 and opportunities for personalisation and choice in learning were greatly extended in conjunction with offers being made through a greater range of types of play, especially dramatic/social, creative, and discovery. Teachers reported positive experiences from taking greater risk and stepping back, as demonstrated also in their development of the role of the adult during play.

Learner feedback about this approach was almost all positive and they were able to describe why they had learned better, had felt more involved, and were proud of their 'product(s)' which showcased their learning to parents and carers. The evidence created by learners included (their own choice of) posters, PowerPoint/GoogleSlides, vlogs, extended pieces of writing, working models, illustrations, and drama sketches. Thereafter, more pupil-led and child-centred opportunities for immersion in discovery about a big question became more frequently used and observed for the remainder of the session, demonstrating a greater willingness and confidence in practitioners to plan and facilitate experiential learning more often, more confidently, and with increasing learning autonomy about the outcome/product being given.

Learner Views – End of year survey

Almost all learners strongly advocate for play; viewing it not as a distraction from work, but as a vital component of childhood experience for both learning and wellbeing. Children consistently highlighted that play helps them develop essential life skills—such as teamwork, problem-solving, creativity, and communication—that cannot easily be learned with a pen and paper. Crucially, pupils recognized play as a support to their mental health and focus through "brain breaks."

Overall, learners widely consider and can clearly articulate that play creates a happy, energized, and balanced school environment. Their views at the end of the session contrasted greatly with their weak identification of play at school other than in the playground at breaks from the beginning of the school year.

SQR Session 2025-2026

80 learners from across the school and partnership school (combined role = 106) gave their views on the skills they had progressed in as a direct result of having had more opportunities to access different play types and resources, as well as increased frequency and duration of play sessions.

PRIORITY 2 Inclusion & Wellbeing: Inclusive Classroom (CIRCLE Framework)

In August 2025, all teaching and support staff attended an introductory session on CIRCLE Framework for Inclusive Classrooms delivered by the Specialist Support Team for the Learning Community.

By May 2026, all teaching staff and head teacher had completed the certificated CLPL module with Open University and Education Scotland on CIRCLE Framework for Inclusive Classroom (Primary). Teachers agree that it has helped create a shared language for inclusive practice and strengthened reflection on their own practice, as well as given them agency to embrace changes to impact positively on pupils, including how the classroom environment is set up, resourced, and even labelled. The leadership of this improvement work was undertaken by Acting Principal Teacher between November 2025 and April 2026.

Environmental audits and the introduction of the CIRCLE Participation Scale have helped identify specific areas for improvement to increase belonging and support development of executive function skills. The CIRCLE approach has helped move towards practice that is inclusive for many and all, rather than focussing exclusively on children with the highest, and often best known, understood and accommodated, profile of needs. Pre- and post-development work surveys indicate that the learning about CIRCLE has successfully shifted practitioner mindsets from a transactional "provision of support" model to a transformative "culture of belonging and empowerment" model, marking a substantial improvement in inclusive values and pedagogical culture within the school.

PRIORITY 3 Equalities: Rights & Anti-racist Curriculum

Another successful **Racial Literacy** transition project for P7s across the Learning Community took place in May. Despite delays in purchasing books, local business funding was given in support of the project, and pupils cited high levels of enjoyment and engagement in the chosen novel and benefitted from interactions with staff from English and MFL departments. There is an emerging appetite for closer literacy partnerships work between Strathaven Academy and primaries, and to continue with the Racial Literacy project. SLIF funding has been applied for to support the purchase of novels for 2026/27.

This improvement priority was not addressed beyond the aspect described above during this session due to complexities of capacity and resource, and the intensive improvement cycles focusing on Play Pedagogy and CIRCLE Framework.