

"Working together to inspire learning and achievement in
Highland Communities"



Kinlochbervie High School

Standards and Quality Report

September 2009



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VISION AND LEADERSHIP

September 2009

Dear Parents

I am pleased to be able to report on 2008-09, another busy and successful school year. We have had clear improvement priorities that we have been working on over the past year. This report uses a standard format issued to all Highland schools. It provides you with an update on the progress we have made with them and the difference they have made to your child's learning experiences in the school.

Throughout 2008 much work was done to ensure all pupils, staff and parents were able to become involved in the formulation of the vision statement for the school. Here is the final statement agreed by all last December.

Kinlochbervie High School is an inclusive community. Excellence in education, the welfare, security and happiness of all pupils and staff are our priorities.

Kinlochbervie High School endeavours to take the needs of the individual into account. We aim to provide pupils and staff with the skills, experiences and qualifications they need to give them choices in their progression through life.

I am very pleased with this statement. It gives all of us a clear view of what we want from Kinlochbervie High School

The SQA results this summer were generally excellent. There were many outstanding individual and subject performances. There were some disappointments but we will review these and work to reduce them.

Following another round of consultations with pupils, parents and staff minor changes were made to the new S3-6 curriculum for last session. I believe this helped to further improve pupils' experiences in the classroom. Now the transition years are finished, this session sees all pupils in S3-6 fully involved in this unique and innovative system.

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Once again Scottish education is undergoing major changes. Under the banner of *A Curriculum for Excellence* there will be significant changes over the next few years to ensure we provide an education that will equip our children with the skills necessary to lead a successful life in the 21st century.

A major part in our drive towards A Curriculum for Excellence is our involvement in the Highland Literacy Project. This work will involve most departments in the school and should result in a coherent approach to literacy skills across the school, with the added benefit of improved collaborative learning.

Overall, we are confident that the school continues to have the capacity to deliver a quality educational experience for our pupils and we will continue to work tirelessly to ensure we meet the individual needs of all our pupils.

Yours faithfully

Dr Ian Smith
Rector

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AIMS

The aims of Kinlochbervie High School

Our aim is to provide a meaningful and effective education for all our pupils. We seek to achieve this by;

- developing in our pupils a sense of responsibility for their own learning
- striving for the highest possible academic achievement
- providing a wide range of experience both within and outwith the curriculum
- developing our pupils as responsible individuals who are confident, tolerant and caring.

Central to this is a strong partnership between staff, pupils, parents and the wider community; all working together in pursuit of the above aims.

A review of these aims started some time ago. This work is continuing and now we have an agreed vision statement, further consultation with pupils, parents and staff will take place.

PROGRESS WITH OUR IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2008 / 2009 Improvement Projects

Project 1 Title: Vision, Aims and Ethos (Fairness)

We said we intended to:

- develop a shared vision for the school
- develop a new set of aims for the school
- give pupils a greater awareness of the issues surrounding the individual needs and difficulties
- give pupils a greater understanding of the issues relating to fairness and an improved perception of fairness in the school.

Here is the difference we made:

By consulting all pupils, staff and parents, individually and through formal bodies such as the Parent and Pupil Councils, a shared vision for the school was developed. Little progress was then made on reviewing the school aims.

Early last session whole school and part school assemblies were used to raise awareness of the issues arising from pupils with additional needs and to discuss fairness and its perception. This work was continued with key pupils in the Pupil Council and also every opportunity was taken to discuss and explain these issues with individuals and small groups of pupils. By the time the Quality Improvement Officers visited the school in November, all pupils interviewed reported that they were very happy with fairness and the Quality Assurance Report stated "Learners report that they are treated with equality, fairness and respect".

Project 2 Title: Highland Literacy Project (HLP) and A Curriculum for Excellence (ACE)

We said we intended to:

- improve literacy skills across the curriculum
- have a whole school approach to literacy
- continue preparations towards the implementation of ACE including making progress with embedding inter-disciplinary projects into the S1/2 curriculum.

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Project 2 (continued)

Here is the difference we made:

Teachers were involved in several HLP in-service training days to raise awareness of their role in literacy across the curriculum and to give them tools to use in their classes. Unfortunately the first main training day was of very poor quality. After complaints and discussions with literacy officers, improvements were made for subsequent training days, but the project had received a massive setback. It was only towards the end of the session that staff were able to begin work within this project.

Preparations continued towards the implementation of ACE although because the school has always taken an ACE-type approach, pupils may not have noticed their impact.

Despite the difficulties within HLP, inter-disciplinary projects did take place throughout the session and all were thought to be successful – in the new session staff will ensure that projects are always linked to the new ACE Learning Outcomes to allow a more rigorous evaluation of success. Also, staff began to look at ways that such projects could move from being ad-hoc to embedded.

Project 3 Title: Achievement and Learning & Teaching

We said we intended to:

- improve the sharing of good practice
- improve motivation in those pupils where this is lowest
- increase the level of active learning.

Here is the difference we made:

The success of informal methods of sharing good practice was recognised by QIO in their November 2009 QA report. Work started on more formal methods. In June, teachers agreed to increase the number of times they will meet after school and during these extra sessions, we will trial a variety of methods before deciding on the most suitable ways to regularly share good practice.

The new S3-6 curriculum allowed more pupils to take more of their subjects of choice, thus increasing their motivation. Also, Support for Learning was able to target particular pupils to ensure an increased level of engagement in the learning process.

Planning was begun to increase the level of active learning in session 2009/10.

SUCCESSSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Attainment in National Assessments

In the national assessments at the end of S2 the targets we set ourselves for maths and for reading were met and exceeded respectively. The target for writing was just missed.

The SQA results were very good overall. There were numerous excellent individual performances with many pupils achieving A passes.

S3 took Intermediate (Int) 1 exams with great success. Most achieved passes at A. Some were even successful at Int 2.

33% of S4 achieved 5 passes at Int 2 or Credit at Standard Grade – this is higher than in the past few years and compares well with the national average. One pupil passed a Higher in S4, a significant achievement.

Continuing the trend in recent years, even fewer exams were failed by S5/6 pupils. Only two Higher exams were failed. 3 of the 8 pupils in S5 achieved 3 or more Highers

School successes this year (session 2008/09)

Once again the school has been involved in a variety of fund raising activities. Last session over £1500 was raised for various charities: we were all involved in Wear it Pink Day, for Children in Need some brave pupils and staff performed in Strictly Come Scottish Dancing with absolutely hilarious results, on Red Nose Day a Slave/Dare auction took place and S1/2 pupils performed at a very successful Burns Supper. The usual Blytheswood boxes were made up – more than 20 were packaged off. The shinty team's sponsored climb of Ben Nevis required weeks of preparation and although the weather tried to dampen the day, over £1500 was raised. A Swishing Night was also held for shinty funds and both events helped fund the team's travel across the Minch and all over the Highlands.

Carrying on from the previous years' successes in competitions, Hamish Armes-Harris won third prize in a national photography competition, Tom Robbins was commended in a writing competition, Rhianne Sutherland and Iain Allison went through to the regional finals of Future Chef, Lorreann Pritchard received a Young Carer award at a London event and after a long wait, the flag made up from Elizabeth Marsham's design (then taken to the North Pole) was presented to the school. Alison MacPherson won her age group prize for designing a book token, then, just at the end of the session, we heard she had won two categories of the national animation competition.

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School successes this year (session 2008/09), continued

Emma Boyd, Alison MacPherson and Sine Jones performed in the Highland Schools Wind Band at concerts in Perth and Inverness then were successful in the auditions for the HSWB for the current session. Chelsey Ross and Emma Adam were two of Highland's 16 winners of the Young Quality Scot Award. Esther Richards was elected to be the Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

Lorreann Pritchard was recorded telling her own short story for BBC Radio Scotland's *Days Like This* programme. Several staff were heard on BBC radio when the *No Going Back* programme contrasted life in our communities before and after the High School opened.

The Panto again played to packed audiences. The summer concert not only had its usual musical performances but also featured two short plays.

In addition to the trips made for sporting activities, pupils travelled far and wide to see musicals at Aberdeen and Glasgow. During Activities Week there were many opportunities for excitement and adventure close to home but also there were trips elsewhere in the Highlands. The furthest travelled pupils went to London on a visit that included a tour of the Houses of Parliament.

A grant for nearly £10,000 was given to the boat club to enhance provision for sailing. In addition to opportunities during Activities Week, sailing took place on many evenings after school. Near the end of the session we heard we were to be awarded £3000 after our bid for funding an oral history project – this money is coming from the Highland 2007 Legacy Fund. Our MacBeath project also received a small sum from this source but most of their £3500 funding has come from the Highland Council's Area Discretionary budget. The school will also be involved in *Defending the Past*, a major project with a budget of £62,000 to be run by the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and the Ministry of Defence investigating the heritage of the Cape Wrath area.

Several former pupils graduated recently. Laura Gates, Richard Mackay, Daniel Lansley and Carol-Ann Cunningham gained upper second-class honours degrees with Yvonne MacInnes achieving a first. (Despite the Rector saying during his annual report at Prizegiving this was the school's first first, that honour went to Stefanie Morrison and Simon Mitchell as long ago as 2005!)

Photographs illustrating many of these successes can be found on the school's extensive web site.

LIFE AND WORK OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Pupils' Voices

Compared with other schools, this school is a lot more flexible with classes. I think that it works in some ways but not in others.

Staff are not consistent when using certain rules e.g. school uniform.

I really like this school. I like most subjects but dislike others. The lunches are excellent!

The school is accommodating and understanding (to a point).

I think the school is a great resource for children to learn.

Small Classes give you a better opportunity to talk to your teacher more and they have more time to spend with each pupil.

The school is good because the pupils are funny and so are the teachers sometimes. I wouldn't want to leave this school.

I like the school though I think lunch time should be a bit earlier.

Certain rules are enforced poorly, but overall the school is very good.

The uniform is itchy.

At the football the S6 should not choose if you play or not play.

The close relationship between pupils and teachers is fantastic.

The "naughty" chair outside the Rector's office is surprisingly comfy.

The school offers a wide range of subjects to accommodate the different interests of pupils. Sometimes the mixed classes have too wide a range of levels in one class.

Some of the classes are boring.

I think the school uniform should only be the top.

I like sailing but you need better showers.

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Pupils' Voices (continued)

I think some teachers could be more helpful. I would like to do longer projects rather than small 1 day homework.

The school is quite good and all the teachers and older pupils are helpful.

Compared to other schools, Kinlochbervie is a very good school, but other schools have more opportunities.

I don't mind this school, it's not the greatest but I still like it.

The school are open to suggestions from pupils. An example of this is the hoodies for school uniform.

Most of the activities are really fun to do so that's the best thing.

Pupil Council

Pupil Council was split into two groupings: S1-3 and S4-6. This was seen as a huge improvement in that it allowed the younger pupils greater opportunities to share their views and raise issues more pertinent to them.

Parent Council

The Parent Council continues to represent all parental views and support the Rector and his staff in their work with pupils.

The Council have been involved and kept informed of the implementation of the new Curriculum and recognise how this will impact on pupils. We see this as a positive move at all stages for all learners regardless of aptitude and abilities. All pupils should experience an appropriate level of challenge to enable each individual to achieve his or her potential.

The Parent Council support the Rector, staff and pupils in their efforts to make our High School one to be proud of.