

---

**Please find attached the Reports in respect of Item No.  
6 (b) on the agenda for the above meeting**

	(b) <b>10.45 a.m. Hawick High School</b>  (Copy reports herewith.)	(Pages 3 - 20)	30 mins
--	--	-------------------	---------

This page is intentionally left blank



---

## **PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT – SCHOOLS (HAWICK HIGH SCHOOL)**

**Report by Director – Education & Lifelong Learning**

---

### **Education Sub-Committee**

**2 March 2023**

---

#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report proposes that the Committee considers His Majesty’s Inspector of Education (HMIE) Reports for Hawick High School and the continuous scrutiny and support provided by the Quality Improvement Team within Scottish Borders Council.**
- 1.2 Summary of the main points of the Report.
- a) Initial inspection of Hawick High School by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in February noted areas of strength and areas for improvement with particular reference to planning for continuous improvement, improving curriculum pathways and low levels of attainment and achievement for young people.
  - b) Follow-up visit by HMIE in January 2022 reported key areas of improvement under the leadership and direction of the Headteacher. The Report confirmed that HMIE would not undertake a further visit, but would ask the Local Authority to review and report on continued progress.
  - c) After a period of monitoring and support by the Quality Improvement Team, a review took place in January 2023 to validate progress made and to report back to HMIE and Education Scotland.
  - d) The team recognised significant additional progress and improvement made by the Headteacher and staff.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 I recommend that the Committee approves the Local Authority and Education Scotland’s recommendation that Hawick High School can be fully signed off as a school of concern following intensive periods of improvement.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education**

His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) are part of Education Scotland, a National body who carry out scrutiny activities in all schools and settings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all inspection activity ceased, so there has been a time delay in the scrutiny activities carried out. This has allowed time for the school to lead the areas of improvement identified and to ensure measurable impact of these.

#### **3.2 Scottish Borders Council Quality Improvement Framework**

- a) The Education (Scotland) Act 2016, The Standard's in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 (amended to include the National Improvement Framework) place direct responsibility on Local Authorities to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided by the schools managed by it.
- b) The Quality Improvement Team has a relentless focus on supporting and challenging continuous improvement in schools and settings to ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people.

### **4 REPORT EVIDENCE FROM HMIE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY**

#### **4.1 Hawick High School – Initial Inspection**

- a) The initial Inspection Report by HMIE was published on 31 March 2020 with a number of strengths identified and clear recommendations for improvement across all 4 quality indicators which were inspected.
- b) The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:
  - i. The Headteacher provides strong and effective leadership of change to drive improvement. She has a purposeful approach to raising expectations and standards. The priorities identified for improvement are beginning to take forward key aspects of the work of the school.
  - ii. The commitment to provide all Teachers with opportunities to be leaders of learning through collaborative working and professional learning. This is beginning to improve the learning experiences of young people.
  - iii. The highly skilled staff in the Enhanced Provision who work effectively as a team to ensure that all young people make very good progress. Very positive relationships create a strong sense of belonging, which supports young people to feel safe, cared for and valued.
- c) The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Headteacher and a representative from Scottish Borders Council:
  - i. A clear strategic overview is now needed of the range of work taking forward improvements. Staff should continue to work collaboratively to progress a more joined-up approach with clear timescales for activities and an appropriate pace of change.
  - ii. Build on existing effective practice and enthusiasm of staff to continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school.

- iii. All staff need to recognise their role in providing support for all young people. Staff should continue to develop approaches to supporting all young people, including those who are facing significant challenges in their lives, to attain and achieve. This should lead to all young people feeling welcome, valued and included in the life of the school.
- iv. Further work is needed to improve the curriculum so that young people can make better progress in their learning.
- v. Improve the attainment of young people. Work is needed to ensure that more young people leave Hawick High School with appropriate qualifications.

#### 4.2 **Hawick High School – Follow-Up Visit**

A second visit by HMIE to Hawick High school noted significant improvements in all areas, with the second Report being published on 8 February 2022. This Report noted the very positive impact of the Headteacher's leadership and the significant progress made by the staff team. The Inspectorate asked Scottish Borders Council Officers to report progress within one year of the second visit.

#### 4.3 **Hawick High School – Scottish Borders Council Review**

- a) In January 2023, a team of Officers from Scottish Borders Council visited the school to validate the improvements made and to quality assure the progress made over the last 12 months. The team met with staff, business partners and young people, observed lessons and reviewed all aspects of the schools progress with the initial recommendations of the HMIE Report in 2020.
- b) In February 2023, the Chief Officer, the Quality Improvement Manager and the Headteacher met with the Head of Scrutiny for HMIE to give their report. Following a lengthy professional discussion, HMIE endorsed the Local Authority's report and agreed to a final sign off from HMIE.

## 5 **IMPLICATIONS**

### 5.1 **Financial**

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

### 5.2 **Risk and Mitigations**

The report fully describes all the elements of risk that have been identified in relation to this project and no specific additional concerns need to be addressed.

### 5.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and there is no requirement for a full IIA to be completed in relation this this report.

### 5.4 **Sustainable Development Goals**

There is no impact/difference to sustainable development goals.

### 5.5 **Rural Proofing**

Not applicable.

## 5.6 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

## 5.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made to the Scheme of Delegation which need to be made following the recommendations of this report.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Director (Finance & Corporate Governance), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received will be incorporated into the final report.

### **Approved by**

**Lesley Munro**

**Director – Education & Lifelong Learning**

### **Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Christian Robertson	Quality Improvement Manager 01835 824000

### **Background Papers:**

SBC Follow Through Report Hawick HS January 2023

HMIE Record of Inspection 2020

HMIE Follow Up Letter 2022

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Christian Robertson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at: Christian Robertson, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA, 01835 824000, [carobertson@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:carobertson@scotborders.gov.uk).



# Hawick High School

## Scoping Document for Review Visit

Over the past 12 months, Scottish Borders Council (SBC) has monitored the progress of Hawick High School following the visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMI) in January 2021. This has included regular visits to the school by members of the Quality Improvement team, an in-depth Attainment Analysis meeting following the publication of 2022 attainment data, and a formal Review Visit in January 2023. During this visit, the team talked to children and young people, members of the middle and senior leadership teams, teaching and support staff, partners and parents. They also observed children and young people in their learning.

### Area for improvement 1

A clear strategic overview is now needed of the range of work taking forward improvements. Staff should continue to work collaboratively to progress a more joined-up approach with clear timescales for activities and an appropriate pace of change.

#### How is the school doing? (What has improved since the last inspection?)

The HMI Summary of Visit letter, based on the November 2021 visit to Hawick High School, reported the following:

'Senior and middle leaders are developing a more coherent approach to school improvement. Senior leaders have developed an improvement planning cycle to help them measure how much progress is being made in each area identified for improvement. Staff improvement teams have been re-established where teachers are working together to address improvement priorities. There are emerging signs of improvement but the impact is not yet clear. Senior leaders are involving middle leaders more in decision making in the school which has the potential to support strategic leadership moving forward. Senior leaders recognise that parents and young people need to be more fully involved in this process.'

Over the past 12 months, there has been a continued focus to develop leadership at all levels. There is coherent approach to school improvement. The school have developed an improvement planning cycle to enable them to measure how much progress is being made in each area identified for improvement. There is clear alignment between the SIP/FIP and work of the School Improvement Teams. These staff improvement teams are led by middle leaders, are well established and demonstrate teachers and staff are working together to address improvement priorities and lead professional learning. This is having a positive impact on staff, who feel valued and supported to participate in collaborative improvement.

Middle leaders are more strategic in their approach to whole school improvement and this is having a positive impact across the school

Members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meet regularly with focus groups of young people to ensure the voice of all young people is heard. These ensure pupil voice is at the heart of school improvement. The Student Forum is beginning to play an important role in this/

Further opportunities have been created to promote leadership at all levels. These include a newly established PT Wider Achievement and Employability Officer positions.

### How do we know? (What is the evidence of improvement?)

- All teaching staff are members of an Improvement team and work collaboratively to drive forward school improvements
- Improvement Team Action plans summaries link with and drive forward the SIP.
- PTs are leading the ELT meetings which are more regular and focussed on whole school strategic improvement.
- Minutes from weekly Extended Leadership Team meetings, and samples of faculty Improvement Reports and Improvement Plans, evidence the focus on continued leadership development at this level, and the alignment of school priorities to those of teams within the school.
- Many PTs now have and agreed whole school remit e.g.: CPL, whole school mentoring programme, house system, duty rota.
- PTs representative attend and contribute to SLT meetings on a rotational basis
- Staff take on whole school responsibilities; student forum, leading assemblies, mental health and wellbeing award, mentoring NQTs, positive behaviour group, Diversity group,
- Student Forum established with focus on whole school issues and starting to feed into the work of the School Improvement Teams
- Student views are gathered on a number of issues regularly throughout the year.
- In focus groups as part of the SBC Review Visit, all stakeholders reported continued improvement in this area.

### What are we going to do now?

Continue to strengthen middle and senior leadership capacity, through professional learning, self-evaluation and whole-school leadership opportunities.

Continue to broaden the range of leadership opportunities that are available to all staff and students in the school, and to evaluate their impact.

Continue to find creative ways to engage parents in contributing to school improvement

### Area for improvement 2

Build on existing effective practice and enthusiasm of staff to continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school

### How is the school doing? (What has improved since the last inspection?)

The HMI Summary of Visit letter, based on the November 2021 visit to Hawick High School, reported the following:

‘Across the school there is more consistency in the structure of lessons and in the quality of learning and teaching experiences for young people. Staff are developing new skills, using a wider range of assessments and are working together better to ensure national standards are applied when marking young people’s work. A team of teachers are working together well to improve further the quality of learning and teaching across the school.’

Over the past 12 months, there have continued to be considerable improvements in this area.



Improving learning and teaching remains a core focus for improvement. This is evidenced in the high quality professional learning, which is on offer for all staff, the professional dialogue around pedagogy and improved experiences in the classroom for young people. There is a shared understanding of 'what excellent looks like' and all staff are developing their pedagogy using a clear cycle for learning based on the redefined Lesson Evaluation Framework. This gives a more structured approach to lessons and sets out our expectations. Formative assessment strategies are now a more prominent feature of lessons and this is supporting learners to understand where they are in their learning and what they need to do to improve.

A range of opportunities, led by the Improvement Teams, are available for all teachers to improve their pedagogy, including: professional reading groups, staff-led workshops, peer review programmes, and coaching sessions. Digital technology has a very high profile in all aspects of the school and its work and this is evidence by the school achieving the Digital Schools Award in June 2022

#### How do we know? (What is the evidence of improvement?)

- Most learners continue to be clear on what they are learning using the HHS dashboard
- Majority of Learners are clearer on how to demonstrate their learning
- Most lessons build on the learning cycle from previous lessons.
- The majority of lessons demonstrate the use of digital technology to enhance the learner experiences.
- Most learners are being challenged and supported in the majority of lessons to make progress in their learning
- Almost all learners are given feedback which helps them to identify their strengths and what they need to improve on. (90.3% now vs 58.3% in October 2019)
- Most lessons now employ more frequent formative assessment strategies (56% to 76% staff data/ 49.5% to 85% learner data)
- Almost all staff have been observed, seen or unseen by a colleague (either PT or member of SLT) and identified an area of the LEF for development following feedback and coaching conversations. This is helping to embed change in their practice
- Most lessons now show knowledge retention and retrieval practice as part of the delivery (75% to 80%)
- Active learning activities are planned and utilised in most lessons (68% to 84%)

#### What are we going to do now?

- Continue to focus on pedagogical improvement across the school, with a particular focus on specific classroom practices
- Continue to drive improvement of learning through School Improvement Team planning and leading the professional learning approach
- Revise and share the SAMR Framework to give examples for reflecting on or evaluating practice using digital technology in lessons.

#### Area for improvement 3

All staff need to recognise their role in providing support for all young people. Staff should continue to develop approaches to supporting all young people, including those who are facing significant challenges in their lives, to attain and achieve. This should lead to all young people feeling welcome, valued and included in the life of the school.

## How is the school doing? (What has improved since the last inspection?)

The HMI Summary of Visit letter, based on the November 2021 visit to Hawick High School, reported the following:

'Staff are continuing to develop positive relationships with young people. This is leading to a calmer, more focused learning environment. Student support staff are helping some young people to feel more included. Staff are undertaking professional learning to understand better the needs of all young people. For example, all staff have participated in learning about nurturing approaches. Senior leaders should continue to monitor the impact of this and other whole school approaches for young people. Staff have the opportunity to use their professional learning to ensure young people's learning experiences are appropriately challenging. However, staff can better meet the needs of all young people by continuing to develop the range of tasks and activities used in classes. There remains a need to ensure all interventions used to support young people with additional support needs are appropriately planned, with targets set and regularly reviewed.

Senior leaders have re-structured the house system which is helping to create a sense of belonging and community within the school. The purpose of the house system is to improve communication, offer a structure for pastoral support and to allow the achievements of young people to be celebrated.'

Over the past 12 months, this area for improvement has continued to develop positively

- IEP (student passport) for young people has been redesigned to ensure it is young person friendly and focussed on SMART targets
- Regular planned reviews of extracted students with staff/parents and agencies to ensure that young people are receiving the appropriate support
- Weekly House meetings are strategically structured; year groups discussed link to school calendar with focus on attendance and attainment progress. Also specific focus on care experienced and those on the CP register.
- More robust procedures and actions have been implemented for attendance and latecoming. Pastoral Support ANAs have daily focus and identify patterns of concern and initiate supports as required.
- We continue to develop our focus on the student voice. 3 HWb/Nurture surveys completed with action points identified and addressed by the Nurture Improvement team. Feedback shared with student forum.
- Student forum surveying students and following up on survey by leading whole school assembly on Bullying.
  
- The House Championship led by the staff Improvement Teams has created a sense of ethos and achievement across the school. Significant progress has been made in establishing protocols for the House Championship with most faculties having ran an event that has awarded House Points, either as an extracurricular event or as part of their curriculum. Most Faculties have a regular celebration of achievement method e.g. social media, positive postcards, and emails home. Almost all staff are awarding House Points on a regular basis. The new House Point Board is updated at the end of each term.
- The House Assembly programme is now well established and has strengthened the role of the DHT House, House Mentors and House Captain.
- We now have Celebration events for both BGE and Senior Phase students.

### How do we know? (What is the evidence of improvement?)

Student health and well-being surveys this session indicate:

- Most (85%) of young people say that they feel welcomed in school.
- Most (80%) of young people say that they feel well supported with their learning. Previously majority.
- Most (85%) of young people say that they have a positive relationship with their teachers.
- Significant improvement (72%) of young people say that they feel safe in school with a higher number of respondents than previously (58%).
- Staff have also been surveyed with most (83%) stating that they have an understanding of the key principles of nurture.
  
- Staff have volunteered to take on the House Mentor role and oversee the House Captain.
- A planned programme of house activities led by the improvement team.
- BGE Celebration event; students in S1-3 given awards based upon attainment and achievement. These awards were inclusive of all young people and represented Bronze, Silver and Gold.
- The School Prizegiving took place in October and reflected actual attainment in SQA exams.

### What are we going to do now?

- Continue with our relentless focus on inclusion and nurture
- Introduce NP 4 language is a vital means of communication
- Deliver SBC sessions on NP1/6 using videos and follow up observations
- Use of Nurture LEF as part of teaching and learning observations.
- Importance of “drip-feed” effect of regular Nurture bulletin and staff training opportunities
- Nurture Improvement Team to work with Student Forum to discuss and identify strategies to further improve the experiences of young people both in and out of the classroom.
  
- Develop a reliable method partners to record wider achievement activities of students that can be accessed by all parents and partners. Consultation with parents and local clubs as to how best to achieve.
- Expand the BGE Celebration event to include parents and mirrors the SP Prize giving
- Continue to develop the Assembly Programme to ensure it is student led.

### Area for improvement 4

Further work is needed to improve the curriculum so that young people can make better progress in their learning.

### How is the school doing? (What has improved since the last inspection?)

The HMI Summary of Visit letter, based on the November 2021 visit to Hawick High School, reported the following:

‘Senior leaders have made improvements to the curriculum, both in school courses and those delivered with partners, including Border College. These are impacting positively on attainment of young people in the senior phase. Staff should ensure all young people are offered courses which build on their previous learning and provide the opportunity to attain the best qualifications possible.

As planned, staff should ensure all young people and parents understand the relevance of vocational courses which offer young people work-related skills.'

Over the past 12 months, this area has continued to develop and improve.

The curriculum continues to provide a growing range of pathways and experiences for young people through the addition of NPAs and new National courses is better meeting the needs of the learners.

The DYW Improvement Team have been working to embed the employability skills and establish sustainable employer links with the local community. They highlight the importance of skill development across the curriculum. Employer partnerships continue to support and develop curriculum innovation and the school have strengthened the curriculum offer by delivering vocational pathways in most subject areas including for those that require additional support to be successful so that all young people leave to a sustained and positive destination.

There is a relentless focus on Post 16 destinations with partners to ensure that every young person is supported into a positive destination.

Strategic group established to move beyond the 14+ Group, to identify emerging trends and to provide a service for young people in Hawick that is tailored specifically to the young people in this school and supporting the most vulnerable Qunitile1 learners. This includes CLD, SDS and DYW Borders in its membership.

The creation of a temporary Curriculum and Partnerships Development Officer post will ensure that a vocational program is in place for session 2023/24 so every young person has experienced work based learning including a textile based vocational programme that will offer students the ability to work with local employers on a regular basis and gain certification. This pathway follows on from the continuing Textile based Projects that we collaborate with Johnstone's of Elgin to deliver in the BGE.

How do we know? (What is the evidence of improvement?)

- The addition of 5 vocational qualifications to the Senior Phase Curriculum. Including Health sector, Employability and Higher Application of Maths.
- Most learners now can identify the learner pathways in a subject area.
- Certification of our Wider Achievement opportunities in S5 & 6 for Mental Health First Aid and Volunteering through Saltire Awards: Green Power Car Project, Textile Showcase Working Group, Drones in Construction, Army STEM Youth Engagement activities and the YPI initiative.
- Our SLDR figure of 96.4% of all our young people have a positive destination, this is 1.2% above the SBC average and 3.2% above the National Scottish average. (Final June 2022 figure).
- 340 students, including our most vulnerable learners, have been given the opportunity to undertake experiences with local employers/ providers that has a focus on developing learners beyond school. 642 people in our school building were trained in CPR by the Scottish Ambulance Service.
- Teachers are more knowledgeable about the subjects that are relevant for specific industries and can give relevant advice, support and guidance to students.
- We have recorded 69 new employer engagements in 2021/22.
- We have delivered 4 employability Programmes for our most vulnerable learners in conjunction with Hawick Flood Protection Programme. This impacted upon 16 young people positively.

### What are we going to do now?

The school will continue to review and develop the curriculum offer to reflect the local context and the needs of the young people.

For Session 23/24 using data from Skills Development Scotland to work with partners to use Local labour market information to identify need

Create and evaluate the new vocational learning programme to meet the needs of all our young people.

Continue to develop the HHS skills and ensure that all partners are knowledge rich in the use of skills based language.

### Area for improvement 5

Improve the attainment of young people. Work is needed to ensure that more young people leave Hawick High School with appropriate qualifications.

### How is the school doing? (What has improved since the last inspection?)

:The HMI Summary of Visit letter, based on the November 2021 visit to Hawick High School, reported the following:

‘Attainment of young people in the senior phase is improving overall with young people achieving more qualifications at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 4 – SCQF level 6. Young people in the senior phase are attaining well in literacy, and there have been improvements in numeracy. Senior and middle leaders are analysing attainment data more effectively to identify strengths and areas for improvement, such as the attainment of young people in S5. Senior and middle leaders should now consider how data is used to support improved attainment for young people in S1 – S3’

Over the past 12 months, this area has continued to develop and improve.

Attainment of young people in the senior phase has significantly improved. Young people are achieving more qualifications at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 4 – SCQF level 6. Young people in the senior phase are also attaining well in literacy and numeracy. The performance of young people living in Quintile 1 continues to improve.

### How do we know? (What is the evidence of improvement?)

The school have seen continued improvement in SQA examination results over time with significant progress being made **since 2019**. High level improvements are;

#### **S4 cohort**

- Improved performance at 5+ Awards SCQF level 3 from 64% to 85%. This is now above the virtual comparator. The number of students from Quintile 1 achieving 5 awards at level 3 is above the virtual comparator.
- Improved performance at 5+ Awards SCQF level 4 from 60% to 71%. This is now in line with the VC
- Improved performance at 5+ Awards SCQF level 5 from 32% to 46%. This is now above the VC. The number of students from Quintile 1 achieving 5 awards at level 5 is above the VC.

- Percentage of students, including those from Quintile 1, achieving Literacy at SCQF 5 is above the VC
- Percentage of students, including those from Quintile 1, achieving Numeracy at SCQF 4 is above the VC
- Percentage of students, including those from Quintile 1, achieving Numeracy at SCQF 5 is above the VC
- The average complementary tariff points for S4 students, including those from Quintile 1, is above the VC in nearly all measures.

#### **S5 cohort**

- Improved performance at 1+ Awards SCQF level 6 from 38% to 41.5%. This is above the VC
- Improved performance at 3+ Awards SCQF level 6 from 38% to 43%. This is above the VC
- Improved performance at 5+ Awards SCQF level 6 from 5% to 14%.
- The average complementary tariff points for S5 students is above the virtual comparator for the lowest 20% and middle 60% of the group

#### **S6 cohort**

- Improved performance at 1+ Awards SCQF level 47 from 26% to 30%.
- The average complementary tariff points for S6 students is above the VC for the lowest 20% and middle 60%.

#### **What are we going to do now?**

- Focus on improving the quality of the 5+ qualifications achieved in S4
- Identify and implement strategies to improve attainment in S5, including Christmas Leavers
- Develop the tracking and monitoring in the BGE

8 February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Hawick High School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to Hawick High School. Our engagement helped us learn more about how young people and their families have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support young people's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection. This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

### **Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19**

Parents and young people valued the home learning guidance and technical support offered by staff. Commendably, Scottish Borders Council provided all young people with a digital device prior to lockdown. This meant most young people were confident using digital platforms to support their in school and home learning. Staff benefited from professional learning from school digital leaders and the local authority.

Staff maintained regular contact with, and supported the wellbeing of, young people and families well. They arranged health and wellbeing challenges, pastoral staff carried out regular virtual check-ins and youth workers conducted door step visits. These helped young people and families feel cared for. As a result, positive relationships between support staff and families have developed further. The local authority offered young people additional mental health and wellbeing support through two new mobile apps and access to virtual mental health services. These provided, and continue to provide, young people with effective counselling and emotional wellbeing support.

Staff used an engagement tracker well to identify young people who were struggling with online learning and offered support to get them back on track. Staff used the school website effectively to maintain regular communication with the school community.

Since returning to school, all young people in S1 are receiving extra time in English and mathematics to focus on literacy and numeracy. A few young people are also receiving additional targeted support which is helping them progress further. Staff should continue to extend approaches to monitoring the progress of young people with identified gaps in their learning.

While COVID-19 mitigations remain, staff have offered effective virtual events, including primary transition events, assemblies and parents evenings. This is supporting a continued sense of school community.

## Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The previous inspection took place shortly before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has affected the pace with which senior leaders and staff have been able to address the recommendations from that inspection. However the headteacher and her team have implemented approaches which are beginning to address areas for improvement. Many of these approaches are showing the potential to lead to sustained improvements.

Senior and middle leaders are developing a more coherent approach to school improvement. Senior leaders have developed an improvement planning cycle to help them measure how much progress is being made in each area identified for improvement. Staff improvement teams have been re-established where teachers are working together to address improvement priorities. There are emerging signs of improvement but the impact is not yet clear. Senior leaders are involving middle leaders more in decision making in the school which has the potential to support strategic leadership moving forward. Senior leaders recognise that parents and young people need to be more fully involved in this process.

Across the school there is more consistency in the structure of lessons and in the quality of learning and teaching experiences for young people. Staff are developing new skills, using a wider range of assessments and are working together better to ensure national standards are applied when marking young people's work. A team of teachers are working together well to improve further the quality of learning and teaching across the school.

Staff are continuing to develop positive relationships with young people. This is leading to a calmer, more focused learning environment. Student support staff are helping some young people to feel more included. Staff are undertaking professional learning to understand better the needs of all young people. For example, all staff have participated in learning about nurturing approaches. Senior leaders should continue to monitor the impact of this and other whole school approaches for young people. Staff have the opportunity to use their professional learning to ensure young people's learning experiences are appropriately challenging. However, staff can better meet the needs of all young people by continuing to develop the range of tasks and activities used in classes. There remains a need to ensure all interventions used to support young people with additional support needs are appropriately planned, with targets set and regularly reviewed.

Senior leaders have re-structured the house system which is helping to create a sense of belonging and community within the school. The purpose of the house system is to improve communication, offer a structure for pastoral support and to allow the achievements of young people to be celebrated.

Senior leaders and staff have improved their approaches to checking the progress of young people, giving regular assessments and feedback to young people and updating parents on young people's next steps. These enhanced approaches are supporting improvements in attainment in the senior phase. Senior leaders recognise an important next step will be to develop similar approaches for young people in S1 – S3. Senior and middle leaders are also developing how they monitor and address the attendance concerns of a few young people. The challenges of COVID-19 have limited opportunities to assess the impact of this so far.



Attainment of young people in the senior phase is improving overall with young people achieving more qualifications at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 4 – SCQF level 6. Young people in the senior phase are attaining well in literacy, and there have been improvements in numeracy. Senior and middle leaders are analysing attainment data more effectively to identify strengths and areas for improvement, such as the attainment of young people in S5. Senior and middle leaders should now consider how data is used to support improved attainment for young people in S1 – S3.

Senior leaders have made improvements to the curriculum, both in school courses and those delivered with partners, including Border College. These are impacting positively on attainment of young people in the senior phase. Staff should ensure all young people are offered courses which build on their previous learning and provide the opportunity to attain the best qualifications possible. As planned, staff should ensure all young people and parents understand the relevance of vocational courses which offer young people work-related skills.

### What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have also been making progress in taking forward the areas for improvement from the original inspection. We recognise that the school needs some more time to implement fully its priorities for improvement. We have asked Scottish Borders Council to provide us with further information about the school's progress within one year of the publication of this letter. We will work together with local authority officers to agree what will happen next. Should we require another visit to the school, we will inform parents/carers. Scottish Borders Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

Graham Parry  
HM Inspector

This page is intentionally left blank

31 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In January 2020, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Hawick High School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership of change to drive improvement. She has a purposeful approach to raising expectations and standards. The priorities identified for improvement are beginning to take forward key aspects of the work of the school.
- The commitment to provide all teachers with opportunities to be leaders of learning through collaborative working and professional learning. This is beginning to improve the learning experiences of young people.
- The highly skilled staff in the Enhanced Provision who work effectively as a team to ensure that all young people make very good progress. Very positive relationships create a strong sense of belonging, which supports young people to feel safe, cared for and valued.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Scottish Borders Council.

- A clear strategic overview is now needed of the range of work taking forward improvements. Staff should continue to work collaboratively to progress a more joined-up approach with clear timescales for activities and an appropriate pace of change.
- Build on existing effective practice and enthusiasm of staff to continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school.
- All staff need to recognise their role in providing support for all young people. Staff should continue to develop approaches to supporting all young people, including those who are facing significant challenges in their lives, to attain and achieve. This should lead to all young people feeling welcome, valued and included in the life of the school.
- Further work is needed to improve the curriculum so that young people can make better progress in their learning.
- Improve the attainment of young people. Work is needed to ensure that more young people leave Hawick High School with appropriate qualifications.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

## Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Hawick High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
<b>Leadership of change</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Raising attainment and achievement</b>	<b>weak</b>
<b>Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a>	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

<https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=2897>

### What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. We will liaise with Scottish Borders Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 18 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Scottish Borders Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

Carol McDonald  
HM Inspector