

Public Document Pack



EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE THURSDAY, 2 MARCH 2023

A MEETING of the EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE will be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER -
BLENDED on THURSDAY, 2 MARCH 2023 at 10.00 am.

All Attendees, including members of the public, should note that the public business in this meeting will be livestreamed and video recorded and that recording will be available thereafter for public view for 180 days.

J. J. WILKINSON,
Clerk to the Council,

20 February 2023

BUSINESS		
1.	Welcome and Introductions	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
3.	Order of Business	2 mins
4.	Declarations of Interest	2 mins
5.	Minute (Pages 3 - 6) Note the Minute of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 for signature by the Chair. (Copy attached.)	2 mins
6.	HMIe Reports Consider reports on the following schools:	
	(a) 10 a.m. Berwickshire High School (Copy reports attached.)	(Pages 7 - 28) 30 mins
	(b) 10.45 a.m. Hawick High School (Copy reports to follow.)	30 mins
	(c) 11.30 a.m. Glendinning Terrace Primary School	(Pages 29 - 30 mins)

	(Copy reports attached.)	42)	
	(d) 12.15 p.m. Fountainhall Primary School (Copy reports attached.)	(Pages 43 - 64)	30 mins
7.	Any Other Items Previously Circulated		
8.	Any Other Items Which The Chair Decides Are Urgent		
9.	Date of Next Meeting The next meeting is to be held on Thursday, 18 May 2023 at 10 a.m.		2 mins

NOTES

1. **Timings given above are only indicative and not intended to inhibit Members' discussions.**
2. **Members are reminded that, if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business coming before the meeting, that interest should be declared prior to commencement of discussion on that item. Such declaration will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.**

Membership of Committee:- Councillors L. Douglas (Chair), J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, A. Orr, N. Richards, E. Robson, S. Scott, F. Sinclair and A. Smart.

Religious Representatives:- A. Hood and M. Docherty

Teacher Representatives:- N. York and C. Clements

Parent Representatives :- Vacant

Pupil Representatives:- Lewis Campbell and Georgia Scott.

Berwickshire High School:-

Local Members – Councillors J. Anderson, J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, A. Orr, D. Moffat, M. Rowley

Headteacher – Bruce Robertson

Parent Council Representative – Douglas Archibald

Senior Lead Officer – Christian Robertson

Hawick High School:-

Local Members – Councillors J. Cox, S. Marshall, W. McAteer, C. Ramage, N. Richards. A. Smart,

Headteacher – Vicky Porteous

Parent Council Representative – Johnny Short

Senior Lead Officer – Catherine Thomson

Glendinning Terrace Primary School, Galashiels:-

Local Members – Councillors E. Jardine, N. MacKinnon, F. Sinclair, H. Steel

Headteacher – Nicki McCall

Parent Council Representative – Donna Macrae

Senior Lead Officer – Gillian McKenzie

Fountainhall Primary School:-

Local Members – Councillors E. Jardine, N. MacKinnon, F. Sinclair, H. Steel

Headteacher – Susan Anderson

Parent Council Representative – Kathleen Lofthouse

Quality Improvement Officer – James Bewsey

Please direct any enquiries to Fiona Henderson Tel: 01835 826502

E-mail: fhenderson@scotborders.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE held in Council Chamber and via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 10 November 2022 at 10:00am

Present: - Councillors L. Douglas (Chair), J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, A. Orr, N. Richards, E. Robson, S. Scott, F. Sinclair; A. Hood, M. Docherty (Religious Representatives); N. York, C. Clements, (Teacher Representatives); B. Birchall, G. Scott (Pupil Representatives),
Apologies:- Councillor A. Smart.
In Attendance: - Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Equity and Inclusion Lead Officer, Senior Lead Officers – Education (C. Brown and C. Robertson), Clerk to the Council, Trainee Democratic Services Officer.

1. **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chair varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

2. **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which included members of the Sub-Committee and those watching via the Live Stream, and outlined how the meeting would be conducted.

3. **EDUCATION BACKGROUND BRIEFING**

The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning gave a presentation covering the following areas:

- Fulfilling our potential
- Priorities
- Education provision
- Organisational structure
- Legislation
- Policies and framework and measures
- SBC response to national agenda

The Chair thanked the Director for the presentation and praised the hard work of the teams in Education. In response to a question regarding digital transformation and the impact this had had so far on closing the Attainment Gap, the Director advised that, although there was as yet no data driven explicit link, the rollout of digital learning had had a positive impact on engagement and skill levels and had provided a level playing field for all learners. It was noted that where there were identified issues with Wi-Fi connectivity in schools, work was currently underway to address this. Any specific issues with wi-fi, pupils leaving iPads at home or not charging them, needed to be reported to the Head teacher and the Director.

DECISION

NOTED the update

4. **ATTAINMENT RESULTS 2021/22**

- 4.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, the purpose of which was to inform the Education Sub Committee of the progress schools were making in the Broad General Education for P1 to P7 and Senior Phase S4–6 Scottish Qualifications Examinations for session 2021-22. The report explained that the 2020/21 pandemic had contributed to a reduction in the number of primary pupils achieving the expected levels in literacy and numeracy; however pupils in the Scottish Borders were achieving around

the national average. Data from 2021/22 showed an increase of between 1.4 and 2.3 percentage points on the previous year had been achieved in all elements of P1, P4, P7 literacy and numeracy.

- 4.2 For the Senior Phase, pupils had sat 13,000 exams across the Borders in May 2022, which remained in line with the previous years. Overall pass rates for S4-6 learners also remained in line with 2019. Of the 1318 appeals submitted, 366 had resulted in upgrades and 1 downgrade. This year, entries onto Foundation Apprenticeship courses were the highest ever for Borders young people. Scottish Borders remained in line with other comparators with 95.49% of young people achieving a positive and sustained destination for session 2020-21. A number of next steps for both the Education Service and Schools were listed.
- 4.3 In response to a number of questions, it was confirmed that with regard to adult learners, there was some family learning in Primary/High Schools which linked into adult literacy and numeracy. Some adult learners did attend schools and a specific response on this would be sought from the Community Learning and Development team. In terms of results trends, a close eye was kept on these to see what changes/interventions were required. However, teachers were striving to support all young people to reach their potential no matter what that level was, whether academic or vocational.

DECISION

AGREED to note progress that schools had made in maintaining standards of attainment in the Broad General Education and Senior Phase in terms of attainment and the identified areas for improvement since the pandemic.

5. **STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2021/22 AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022/23**
There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, the purpose of which was to inform the Education Sub Committee of the progress made by the Education Service and schools during 2021-22 and to note the improvement priorities for session 2022-23. The 2021/22 Standards and Quality Report provided a high level summary of the performance of schools in line with the Education Service Improvement Plan and acknowledged the ongoing challenges faced by schools as a result of COVID-19. It also highlighted a number of successes and achievements across all sectors. The Improvement Plan provided a statement of objectives for academic session 2022-23 (Appendix B). This Plan had a strong focus on raising attainment for all and accelerating progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap. There were 3 key aims: everyone was attaining, everyone was achieving and everyone was having a good experience. The inclusion of Inspire Learning as a key driver for improvement in schools was noted, along with the #oneteam approach being used to drive attainment. While it was a statutory duty to submit the Improvement Plan to Scottish Government, no feedback had been received on this to date, although the Plan was shared with the local team. In response to questions, it was advised that for those pupils – including refugees – where English was not their first language, good results had been achieved. With regard to new guidance issued to Head Teachers on Inclusion, it was explained that this related to the practical application of the existing policy, and was in response to national concern regarding distress in children, likely as a result of Covid and the changes to the delivery of schooling over the previous two years. The importance of providing a hybrid model of reliable digital and face to face learning was discussed. The rural location of pupils and the availability of courses posed challenges in accessing a broad range of subjects. Digital learning helped pupils to access courses provided at other schools while in-person lessons were still needed for some subjects. The difficulty in recruiting teachers for maths/physics was a national issue and the Department was taking positive steps to “grow our own” with the University of the Highlands and Islands.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the ‘Standards & Quality Report 2021-22’ and the ‘Education Improvement Plan 2022-23’.

6. **EQUITY STRATEGY, CLOSING THE GAP**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, the purpose of which was to inform the Education Sub Committee of the development of the Education Equity Strategy 2021 - 2026. The Education Equity Strategy was developed in session 2021-22 with the vision of increasing excellence, accelerating progress and embedding equity in schools to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people. The Strategy set out the short, medium and long term outcomes and roles and responsibilities of education staff and partners to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty. Following the refresh of the Scottish Attainment Challenge in March 2022, local authorities were required to submit stretch aims which were shared annually with the Scottish Government as part of statutory plans and reports. Scottish Borders Council's stretch aims were included in the Education Improvement Plan 2022-23. Funding was received in the form of annual government grants through the Attainment Scotland Fund each financial year until end of year 2025-26; Pupil Equity Funding, Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding and Strategic Equity Funding. The Chair thanked the team for their excellent work. There followed a brief discussion on the frequent use of acronyms and an agreement that a glossary would be produced in future and the Strategy reviewed before publication. The Attainment Fund was specifically linked to deprivation and could not be used elsewhere. In response to a comment on the effect of the cost of living crisis on household energy bills, it was confirmed that advice around the cost of charging iPads and conserving battery life had been sent to parents and that charging hubs were available on campus throughout the school day.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to approve the Education Equity Strategy; and**
- (b) to include a glossary of acronyms with future reports.**

MEMBER

Councillor Hamilton left the meeting.

7. HEALTH AND WELLBEING SURVEY RESULTS

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, the purpose of which was to inform the Education Sub Committee details of the Scottish Borders Health and Wellbeing Census Data Reports for 2022 and the Executive Summary. The Health and Wellbeing Census was carried out in March 2022 by all schools (P5-S6). This was a census directed by Scottish Government and undertaken by 16 of the 32 Local Authorities. Four key areas were identified: Bullying; Caring Responsibilities; Body Image and Loneliness, Stress and Worry. Following consultation with both Elected Members and parents, it had been agreed to remove the sexual health and relationships questions before issuing to our children and young people. Scottish Government had planned to publish the national level analysis in December 2022, however national level statistics would now be published in February 2023. Following the census it was noted that March was not the ideal time in the academic year in which to conduct the survey; November was proposed for any subsequent census and that it should be conducted on a bi-annual basis. In response to questions, it was confirmed that a multi-agency group which included young people was looking at bullying to refresh the policy "Respectful Relationships". The Director confirmed that it was important that incidents of bullying were reported to establish their extent, where they were happening, in what age groups, and what form they took, so negative experiences could be targeted and lessened. Further work was also underway on body image in tandem with Fife Council which already had done some work in this area. In terms of the removal of the sexual health questions, the Director explained that the level of concern expressed by parents on the explicit nature of some of the questions, given the age range of pupils answering and holding the information anonymously, was strong enough that the previous Council had agreed not to ask these questions. Further work would be carried out on the future sourcing and gathering of sexual health data e.g. using national data, the type of support provided by the School Nurse Service, information from Health, etc. Young people's views would also be sought on future questionnaires' contents.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to note that national level statistics would be published in February 2023, which would allow comparison of Scottish Borders data with other Local Authorities and national information;
- (b) the Health and Wellbeing Census would be undertaken on a bi-annual basis, allowing us to track improvement overtime, using the 2022 Census as a baseline; and
- (c) to change the time of year the census was carried out in future from March to November, making this easier for schools to undertake.

8. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chair provided a brief explanation of how the Education Sub-Committee was formed and its remit, which combined the education functions from the Executive Committee and those of the Education Performance Sub-Committee, which had now been disbanded. This had been agreed at Scottish Borders Council's meeting held on 25 August 2022.

9. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Sub-Committee noted the next two meetings would be held on Thursday 2 March 2023 and Thursday 18 May 2023.

Meeting concluded at 12 noon.



PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT – SCHOOLS (BERWICKSHIRE 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 Berwickshire 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 Berwickshire High School by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in March 2019 noted significant concerns in a number of areas, including leadership, safeguarding, learning and teaching, wellbeing and attainment with areas noted for immediate action.
- b) Follow-up visit by HMIE in November 2021 reported significant improvement under the leadership and direction of the new 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 November 2022 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 Berwickshire 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 Berwickshire High School – Initial Inspection

- (a) The initial Inspection Report by HMIE was published on 23 April 2019, with a small number of strengths identified and further 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 Enhanced Provision Department, which is very effective in meeting the needs of young people with severe and complex additional support needs. Highly personalised learning and teaching engages young people successfully and supports them to attain and achieve. The clear shared vision of staff is based on promoting independence, social inclusion, healthy attitudes and positive behaviours.
 - ii. The well-designed school facilities, supported by a striking outdoor setting, offer strong opportunities to develop creative learning activities across the school.
- (c) The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Headteacher and a representative from Scottish Borders Council:
 - i. There is an urgent need to improve leadership at all levels across the school. This includes engaging all young people, parents and staff in reviewing the vision, values and aims with a view of developing a strong identity, with clear attention given to the direction and expectations for Berwickshire High School.
 - ii. Senior leaders should ensure that, as a key priority, there is a whole school focus on creating a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment, which is conducive to high quality learning. This strong focus should include fostering positive relationships across the school and ensuring that there is much greater consistency in the promotion of high expectations at all times with clear boundaries set.

- iii. All staff should develop an agreed shared understanding of what high quality learning, teaching and assessment looks like and ensure they apply these standards consistently across the school at all times. Further development of approaches to tracking and monitoring young people's progress, especially in the broad general education, are needed. This will enable staff to put in place clearer next steps in learning for young people to enable them develop the skills and attributes needed for life and work.
- iv. Staff should develop curriculum pathways, as already agreed, at all stages, including with partners, to promote challenge, provide more flexibility for learners and meet their needs and aspirations. The addition of well-considered vocational pathways is key to enable some young people to succeed. This will take account of national priorities and learner entitlements.
- v. The wellbeing indicators, such as being safe, nurtured, achieving, respected and responsible, need to be embedded in the everyday work of the school. Young people need support to understand their relevance and to use them well, to enable learners to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.
- vi. All staff should continue their work to raise standards of attainment and provide wider opportunities for achievement to improve outcomes for young people. This includes identifying those young people who may miss out, through taking part in few or no wider achievement activities. We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using 4 quality indicator.

4.2 **Berwickshire High School – Follow Up Visit**

A second visit by HMIE to Berwickshire High School noted significant improvements in all areas, with the second Report being published on 18 January 2022. This Report noted the very positive impact of the new Headteacher's leadership and the 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 **Berwickshire High School – Scottish Borders Council Review**

In November 2022, 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 and young people, observed lessons and reviewed all aspects of the school's progress with the initial recommendations of the HMIE Report in 2019. In January 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

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and there is no requirement for a full IIA to be completed in relation to 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 Berwickshire HS January 2023
HMIE Record of Inspection 2019
HMIE Follow Up Letter 2021

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.



Record of Visit Berwickshire High School

Progress Update on behalf of Scottish Borders Council

Over the past 12 months, Scottish Borders Council (SBC) has monitored the progress of Berwickshire High School following the visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMI) in November 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 November 2022. During this visit, the team talked to children and young people, members of the middle and senior leadership teams, teaching and support staff, and parents. They also observed children and young people in their learning.

Area for improvement 1

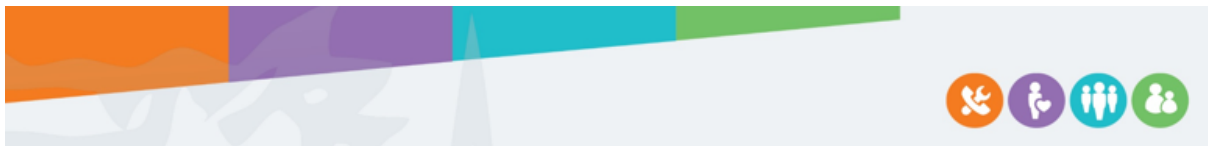
There is an urgent need to improve leadership at all levels across the school. This includes engaging all young people, parents and staff in reviewing the vision, values and aims with a view of developing a strong identity, with clear attention given to the direction and expectations for Berwickshire High 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 Berwickshire High School, reported the following:

The school has made considerable progress in this area for improvement. Young people and staff have been enabled well by all senior leaders to engage in leadership roles and activities across the whole school and within faculties. This includes a 'head team' of young people, prefects, and house captains who are working enthusiastically and responsibly with senior leaders to improve the school. It also includes a student council that is working continuously to encourage and act on young people's views. Senior leaders have strengthened a staff 'extended leadership team', and increased the roles for middle leaders across the school to impact positively on change. Teachers are also demonstrating leadership behaviours more consistently. For example, most teachers now have a more visible presence. They communicate more effectively with young people and their parents, and are more willing to engage in professional learning to develop their classroom practice. Almost all stakeholders spoken to during the visit identified the very positive impact of the headteacher's leadership, and the new, clearer sense of direction and purpose in the school. They value the clarity of this direction and purpose, saying it has helped to build a cohesive learning community that strives continuously to be the best it can be. The refreshed vision, values and aims of the school, developed in partnership with stakeholders, have helped the school to begin to develop its identity. The vision, values, and aims are displayed throughout the school, and teachers, and increasingly young people, use the language of these regularly. A few young people feel the school's revised vision could focus more on how the school plans to meet the needs of all young people. A few parents appreciate how the school emphasises and nurtures a different school value each week. Work on enacting the vision, values and aims is having a very positive, motivating effect on work across the school. However, further work will be required to ensure the vision, values, and aims influence more consistently all aspects of school life, including the school's drive to raise attainment.

Over the past 12 months, there has been a continued focus to develop leadership at all levels. This has included establishing a new mission statement of the school - 'Aim for Best' -



in consultation with key stakeholders. This is helping to create a shared sense of community, purpose and ambition.

There is a coherent approach to school improvement with a clear improvement cycle to evaluate progress. A strategic focus on leadership capacity development, with a particular focus on the middle leadership team, is having a very positive impact across the school. For example, middle leaders are now leading programmes of professional learning workshops for teachers, and are playing an enhanced role in the planning of a newly introduced Supported Self-Evaluation Programme, with follow-up coaching. There is clear alignment between the school and faculty improvement plans.

Communication at all levels has improved significantly, with a regular pattern of leadership team meetings, and systems to share key messages with staff. This is having a positive impact on staff, who feel valued and supported to participate in collaborative improvement.

As well as meeting on a weekly one-to-one basis with middle leaders, members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meet weekly with focus groups of young people, on a rotation, to ensure the voice of all young people is heard. These ensure pupil voice is at the heart of school improvement. The student Head Team attend weekly SLT strategic meetings. The Student Council is also playing an important role. The headteacher has maintained a rolling programme of one-to-one meetings with all staff.

Further opportunities have been created to promote leadership at all levels. These include three newly established Assistant Head of Year positions with a pastoral focus, a digital learning lead, and a support staff member co-leading Beekeeping in senior phase curriculum. Individual staff members have volunteered to take on additional leadership responsibilities, including leading the Student Council, the Equity and Diversity Group, and mentoring Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs).

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

- In a survey conducted in October 2021, completed by almost all teaching and support staff:
 - All staff said the school is well led and managed.
 - Almost all staff said the school's vision and values underpin their work.
 - Almost all staff said that collaborative working across the school is effective in taking forward school improvement.
 - Almost all staff said they have regular opportunities to undertake leadership roles.
 - Almost all staff said they are actively involved in the school's on-going self-evaluation.
- In focus groups as part of the SBC Review Visit, all stakeholders reported continued improvement in this area.
- Weekly student focus groups, carried out as part of the school's continuous self-evaluation programme, evidence that almost all students feel that leadership opportunities are available to them.
- 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.
- The school website, weekly Heads Up bulletin, student Learning Logs, and calendars showing the weekly pattern of meetings now established in school, provide evidence of significant improvements to communication, within and beyond the school.

What are they going to do now?



Continue to strengthen middle and senior leadership capacity, through a focus on high-quality professional learning, self-evaluation and enhanced whole-school leadership opportunities. There will be a particular focus on coaching.

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

Area for improvement 2

Senior leaders should ensure that, as a key priority, there is a whole school focus on creating a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment which is conducive to high quality learning. This strong focus should include fostering positive relationships across the school and ensuring that there is much greater consistency in the promotion of high expectations at all times with clear boundaries set.

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 Berwickshire High School, reported the following:

The school environment now offers a calm and orderly context for young people's learning. Staff are highly visible and approachable, and almost all young people demonstrate maturity, respect and courtesy in classes, social areas, and outside the school. Staff and young people report that the school is a more pleasant and rewarding place to learn and that they feel safer. Overall, relationships between young people and staff are positive. With strong and supportive leadership from the headteacher, all senior leaders are working effectively with young people and staff to set clear expectations for learning and behaviour. These actions are having a positive effect on the ethos of the school. Staff are promoting positive behaviour more effectively, using praise regularly in classes and recognising young people's successes and contributions to the life of the school. Awards celebrating young people's success are displayed attractively in social areas. Senior leaders, teachers and support staff report a significant reduction in the number of incidents requiring intervention by senior leaders. The curriculum is now providing a wider range of experiences and pathways for young people. This is helping to increase their motivation to learn by being more responsive to their needs. In the small sample of lessons observed, young people's learning experiences were wellstructured and purposeful. Teachers should continue to develop strategies to engage actively all learners, for example, through improved questioning techniques. Within the school's broad strategies to develop high-quality learning and teaching, teachers should ensure that they provide work at suitable levels of challenge to meet the needs of all young people.

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

The learning environment within Berwickshire High School is calm and safe. The updated vision, values and aims set clear expectations and identify respect and safety explicitly. There are clear procedures in place for moving around the school, which are adhered to consistently across the school. There are also clear systems and procedures in place to help ensure high standards of behaviour across the school. Young people demonstrate polite behaviours in corridors and are well behaved and courteous in classes. Professional learning initiatives, such as weekly reading and discussion groups focusing on teaching positive behaviour, are having a tangible impact across the school.

Most young people report they feel safe in school and feel their views are listened to. A renewed assemblies programme, focusing on school values, is having a positive impact on culture. Staff report that they feel valued as members of the school community and that Berwickshire High School is a rewarding place to work.



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

In a survey conducted in October 2021, completed by almost all teaching and support staff and a quarter of young people:

- Almost all young people said they feel safe when they are at school.
- Almost all young people said that the school helps them to feel safe.
- Almost all young people said that the school treats them fairly and with respect.
- Almost all young people said that the school helps them understand and respect other people.
- Almost all young people reported that the school deals well with any bullying.
- All staff said that children and young people are encouraged and supported to treat others with respect.
- Almost all staff said that young people are well behaved.

Focus groups and observations carried out as part of the SBC Review Visit in November 2022 validated these statements.

What are they going to do now?

Continue to use the robust self-evaluations systems that are now embedded in the school to monitor and further strengthen ethos across the school. This should include via the Student Council, weekly student focus groups, weekly one-to-one meetings with staff, and surveys with parents.

Continue to use our in-school professional learning programme to respond to needs, as and when required.

Area for improvement 3

All staff should develop an agreed shared understanding of what high quality learning, teaching and assessment looks like and ensure they apply these standards consistently across the school at all times. Further development of approaches to tracking and monitoring young people's progress, especially in the broad general education, are needed. This will enable staff to put in place clearer next steps in learning for young people to enable them develop the skills and attributes needed for life and work.

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 Berwickshire High School, reported the following:

The quality and consistency of learning, teaching and assessment has improved considerably across the school, with teachers demonstrating increased confidence in classrooms. Teachers now have a much improved shared understanding of what high quality learning and teaching looks like. They also demonstrate deeper understanding of how they can enhance their teaching, for example, using a daily review, sharing the aim of the lesson, and sharing how young people can be successful in their learning. Senior leaders and staff have clear plans to continue to improve learning, teaching and assessment, to meet the needs of all young people and to continue to raise attainment. All teachers have been supported well to improve their pedagogy. They have been able to engage in high-quality professional learning, including ongoing work with national partners and the principal teacher of pedagogy. All teachers benefit from regular self-evaluation, frequent lesson visits and observations, ongoing dialogue with peers, detailed lesson-observation feedback, and the use of a well-defined lesson evaluation toolkit. Teachers are increasingly taking part in the school's professional reading group. These initiatives are helping teachers to become more



enthusiastic about learning and teaching, and are improving teachers' confidence in classrooms. Senior leaders and staff have made improvements to tracking and monitoring in the broad general education (BGE), although they plan continued work in this area. Teachers spoke positively of the use of tracking spreadsheets during the second period of school closure. Using the spreadsheets helped them to maintain an overview of young people's progress across all subjects. Teachers also value the use of learning logs as part of the school's ongoing monitoring processes. Moving forwards, it would be beneficial to streamline the format of these learning logs to help all young people and their parents be clear about the expectations of different faculties. Increased dialogue between senior leaders, middle leaders, staff, young people and parents is used well to help young people reflect on their learning, and develop a better understanding of their progress and learning targets. This dialogue is leading to suitably targeted interventions. Improved regular written communication with parents is making them aware of important information, such as assessment dates, and helping them to be more proactive in supporting young people.

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

Improving learning and teaching across the whole school is now the core business of all teachers. This is evidenced in the high quality professional learning, which is on offer for all staff, the rich professional dialogue around pedagogy and the significantly improved experiences in the classroom for young people. There is a shared understanding of 'what excellent looks like' and all staff are encouraged and supported to deliver their best for the young people.

The Principal Teacher of Pedagogy maintains a high profile and there is clear evidence of his impact across the school. A plethora of opportunities are available for all teachers to improve their pedagogy, including: professional reading groups, YouTube bite size tutorials, staff-led workshops, peer review programmes, and coaching sessions. Digital technology has a very high and growing profile in all aspects of the school and its work.

Young people are able to articulate how they learn and use the language of learning with confidence. Assemblies focusing on study skills allow students to take next steps with this understanding of their own learning.

A shared understanding of lesson structure has been developed through the use of a Lesson Evaluation Toolkit, which is used consistently by almost all teachers. An inaugural Pedagogy Conference was held in November 2022, showcasing the school's journey of improvement in learning, teaching and assessment.

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

Whole-school self-evaluation systems, such as newly-introduced Supported Self-evaluation Programme, student focus groups and teacher Professional Learning Plans, indicate that very good progress is being made in this area. Records from an extensive programme of lesson observations evidence significant improvements in the consistency of lesson structure, including the use of 'daily review' to support learning, which now features in almost all lessons. Weekly student focus groups, led by depute headteachers, also provide strong evidence of continued improvements in this area. Parents report that Learning Logs are helping them to better understand their child's progress.

In a survey conducted in October 2021, completed by a quarter of young people, almost all young people said that they were happy with the quality of teaching in the school.



Lesson observations and focus groups with staff and students as part of the SBC Review Visit in November 2022 validated the progress being made in this area.

What are they going to do now?

Continue to focus on pedagogical improvement across the school, with a particular focus on specific classroom practices (such as making thinking visible) and the development of students' independent learning skills. There will be a specific focus on staff coaching. Fully embed the newly developed tracking and monitoring systems.

Area for improvement 4

Staff should develop curriculum pathways, as already agreed, at all stages, including with partners, to promote challenge, provide more flexibility for learners and meet their needs and aspirations. The addition of well-considered vocational pathways is key to enable some young people to succeed. This will take account of national priorities and learner entitlements.

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

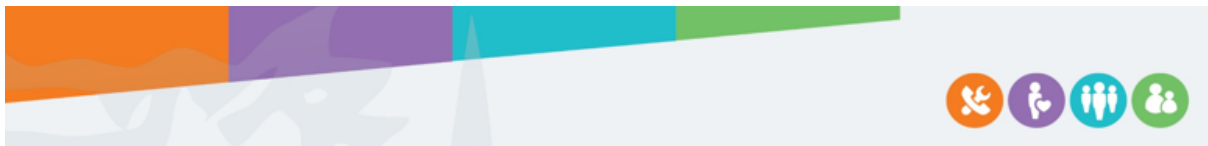
The HMI Summary of Visit letter, based on the November 2021 visit to Berwickshire High School, reported the following:

Staff across the school have engaged effectively in reviewing the curriculum. A 'knowledge curriculum' has been agreed to help staff, learners, parents and partners know what young people are expected to learn in each subject area by the end of the BGE. Teachers take account of a wide range of information from learners to inform the curriculum offer. They also use their knowledge of young people, achievement surveys and 16+ data hub information. A dedicated principal teacher post has been created to lead and co-ordinate partnership work linked to the curriculum. Staff are having supportive learning conversations with young people, to increase understanding of the skills they are developing and potential career opportunities. Work with partners is leading to the development of more flexible pathways to meet the needs of all young people. Partners demonstrate a very good understanding of the needs of particular groups and individuals that they work with. Partners talk positively about the effectiveness of partnership working and note that staff are keen to engage in developing a greater range of opportunities for young people. Staff should proceed with their plans to review course choice in the senior phase, to ensure that curriculum areas provide appropriate pathways for young people to meet their needs and aspirations sufficiently. Senior and middle leaders should continue to develop a robust evidence base with which to evaluate the success of curriculum provision in meeting the needs and aspirations of all young people. In doing this they should ensure that all stakeholders, including young people, can contribute effectively.

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

The curriculum is now providing a wider range of pathways and experiences for young people. The addition of NPAs and new National courses is better meeting the needs of the learners. These include: Drama, Citizenship, Beekeeping, Criminology, Politics and Classics. Plans are well underway to introduce additional courses, including: Dance (level 5), Media (level 5), Exercise & Fitness (level 6), Applications of Maths (level 6) and Refereeing (level 7).

The S3 curriculum has been revised and improved, with a renewed focus on clear learning pathways and relevance to both the senior phase, and skills for life and work. There has



been implementation of improved 1 + 2 languages model, in collaboration with Education Scotland.

In consultation with key stakeholders, there has been a redesign of options in senior phase to support personalisation and choice (this includes the flexibility to choose from a suite of 'long' and 'short' short level 4 and 5 courses). The development of broader range of level 5 courses supports the drive for higher levels of attainment for all students, allows students to engage in new learning pathways, and to develop vocational skills.

Expanded partnership working is supporting the newly designed curriculum. This includes a new partnership with Marchmont House and new curriculum enhancement opportunities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI). The work of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) lead is having a very positive impact on the use of employability partners to support the delivery of the curriculum. This includes strengthened links with college and local businesses and tracking positive destinations. As a result, the contribution of local partners, including Community Learning and Development, in curriculum delivery is much stronger.

There is improved collaborative curriculum design across the cluster, with a particular focus on literacy, numeracy, languages and sciences. While this work is in an early phase, it has the potential to significantly improve the learning experience for all young people.

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

In a survey conducted in October 2021, completed by almost all teaching and support staff, most staff said that they have regular opportunities to help shape the curriculum through discussions with colleagues, parents and partners.

The new senior phase Course Choices form evidence the addition of a considerable number of new qualifications, including NPAs.

Positive leavers destinations data evidences a positive picture compared with the Virtual Comparator over the past three years.

There has been positive feedback from parents about the changes to both the broad general education and senior phase. The evidence for this has come from consultation evenings and the Parent Council.

Focus groups with staff and young people as part of the SBC Review Visit in November 2022 validated the improvements the school continues to make in this area.

What are they going to do now?

Continue to ensure that our curriculum meets the needs of all young people, with a particular focus on ensuring coherent pathways that are appropriately challenging. Continue to introduce new courses to broaden the curriculum offer.

Monitor the impact of curriculum redesign, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy and the partnership with cluster primary schools.



Area for improvement 5

The wellbeing indicators, such as being safe, nurtured, achieving, respected and responsible need to be embedded in the everyday work of the school. Young people need support to understand their relevance, and to use them well to enable learners to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

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 Berwickshire High School, reported the following:

Staff have taken a number of important steps to equip young people with the skills to understand and take action on their wellbeing. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have revised the school's formal wellbeing programme. A few young people spoken to during the visit drew on the structure and vocabulary of the national wellbeing indicators to articulate issues associated with their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. External partners confirmed that young people could describe how features of wellbeing, such as mutual respect and a sense of individual responsibility, were becoming increasingly embedded in their daily experiences. Pastoral staff meet young people on a one-to-one basis twice yearly, providing space for open discussions centred on wellbeing. Staff use the wellbeing web for these discussions, reinforcing young people's awareness of the indicators. The indicators also feature across the work of the health and wellbeing faculty. Staff have invested considerable time in professional learning to enhance their skills relating to young people's wellbeing. This professional learning includes collaboration with national partners. Staff have made progress in identifying how the concept and practice of nurture could have a positive influence on young people's learning and achievement. This indicator has been a clear focus of the local authority's work. The nurture base provides an important resource for young people. Staff's professional learning has also explored the role of nurture across the school's work. In time, this professional learning is likely to have a positive impact on practice.

Over the past 12 months, the school has continued to make strong progress in this area. The school has worked in partnership with Education Scotland to develop and implement a strategic plan, focusing on wellbeing and inclusion.

As a result, the school now offers a calm, safe learning environment. Standards of behaviour across the school are high. The strong focus on student leadership and student voice is having a very positive impact on ethos.

Success is widely celebrated, included through assemblies, House competitions and Praise Postcards. There is improved tracking and communication of this, including with staff and parents.

The improved health and wellbeing curriculum is having a positive impact on student's understanding of wellbeing indicators, including how they can take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

Wellbeing indicators are now tracked using MS Forms, with data analysed and presented at weekly Berwickshire Intervention Group (BIG) meetings. This allows pastoral staff to review, plan and intervene, to support students in a timely manner. Communication with wider staff has also improved significantly.

There have been considerable improvements to Support for Learning, including communication, bespoke professional learning offers, and use of standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy, with a planned programme of follow-up interventions.



In response to student feedback, there are improved opportunities to contact pastoral and support staff when the need arises, for example, to report bullying.

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

Observations and conversations as part of the school’s continuous self-evaluation processes, which include:

- Day-to-day observation and monitoring by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Weekly student focus groups, led by depute headteachers.
- Lesson observations, including via weekly learning walks.
- Feedback from the Student Council and student Head Team.
- Twice-yearly one-to-one meetings that all students now have with their Head of Year.
- One-to-one meetings that the headteacher has throughout the year with all staff.
- Seeking the views of parents, including through weekly parental surgeries and from the Parent Council.

In a survey conducted in October 2021, completed by almost all teaching and support staff and a quarter of young people:

- Almost all young people said they feel safe when they are at school.
- Almost all young people said that the school helps them to feel safe.
- Almost all young people said that the school treats them fairly and with respect.
- Almost all young people said that the school helps them understand and respect other people.
- Almost all young people reported that the school deals well with any bullying.
- All staff said that children and young people are encouraged and supported to treat others with respect.
- Most students said other students treat them fairly and with respect.
- Most students said that the school is helping them to feel confident.
- Almost all students said they enjoy learning at school.

The progress the school continues to make in this area was validated by a series of one-day visits by the SBC Quality Improvement team, and by the SBC Review visit in November 2022.

What are they going to do now?

Continue to gather, interpret and act on data to ensure we are ‘getting it right’ in terms of the wellbeing indicators.

Continue to work closely with Scottish Borders Council to monitor and further improve this area.

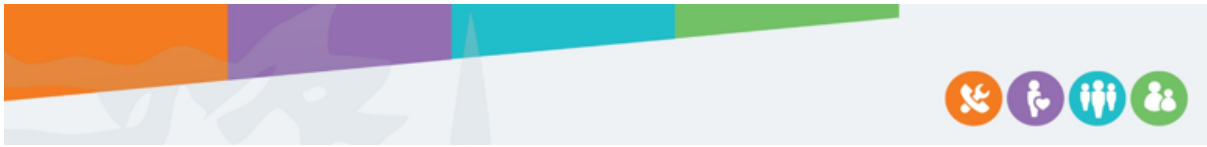
Area for improvement 6

All staff should continue their work to raise standards of attainment and provide wider opportunities for achievement to improve outcomes for young people. This includes identifying those young people who may miss out, through taking part in few or no wider achievement activities.

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 Berwickshire High School, reported the following:

Senior leaders and staff have taken a strategic and well-considered approach to planning for improvements in attainment and achievement. The headteacher



acknowledges that it might take time to demonstrate measurable impact on improved outcomes for all learners, particularly due to the current pandemic. Significant improvements have been made to teachers' professional learning in relation to learning, teaching and assessment. Improvements have also been made to tracking and monitoring young people's progress in learning, developing flexible curriculum pathways, and providing increased options for wider achievement and leadership. All these improvements continue to support a culture of raising attainment while closing the poverty-related gap. Senior leaders and staff are identifying, tracking and monitoring young people's achievements robustly. Staff are increasingly developing ways to recognise and celebrate the achievements of all young people. Further consideration needs to be given to ensuring parity of esteem across the wide variety of achievement. Staff are implementing increasingly the Career Education Standard (CES), and focusing more effectively on young people's employability skills. Staff are also using social media and digital communications to ensure that young people and families are kept informed about career opportunities. Information from tracking and monitoring ensures that there is effective alignment between the needs and aspirations of young people, their skills profile, and available career opportunities. The school has an agreed approach to standardised testing with one of its associated primary schools. This approach is being extended across the cluster to support a clearer understanding of young people's needs and progress and to address any gaps in learning effectively. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to further develop the data analysis skills of all teachers to help them monitor and evaluate the impact of improvement activities.

Since this visit, there has been considerable improvement in this area, with particular gains in S4 and S6. These have come about as result of senior leaders taking a rigorous, strategic approach to planning for improvement in the attainment and achievement for all young people.

Approaches to data gathering and interventions planning have been reviewed and now provide robust and reliable evidence for improvement. There is annual Insight training for all staff and there has been development of an improved whole-school tracking system. Young people are attaining more qualifications at SCQF levels 4-6 and are attaining well in literacy and numeracy.

Analysis and discussion of tracking data with class teachers and faculty leaders is much stronger. Every faculty has a clear plan for raising attainment at faculty level. Plans are discussed and reviewed with the Senior Leadership Team each term. This includes at annual Attainment and Improvement Review meetings. There is improved sharing of attainment data with pastoral staff.

A newly appointed Principal Teacher of Raising Attainment and Curriculum Enhancement is focusing on raising attainment for the lowest attainment students in S4-6. The school has continued to develop its positive relationship with Borders College, which is allowing students to attain more widely. There is improved summative and formative assessment across all year groups. Improved systems to track and celebrate wider achievement are also having a very positive impact.

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

2022 Insight data analysis. High-level messages include:

- The complimentary tariff points for the lowest attaining 20% of S4 students are significantly above the Virtual Comparator.
- Positive five-year trends for the middle 60% and highest 20% of S4 students.



- The attainment of S4 students being level with or above the Virtual Comparator for five of the six SIMD deciles that comprise the school profile.
- The complimentary tariff points for the middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of S6 students being significantly above the Virtual Comparator, and showing positive five-year trends.
- 90% of S4 students attained 5+ level 4 qualifications (the Virtual Comparator is 80%).
- 60% of S5 students attained 5+ level 5 qualifications (the Virtual Comparator is 53%).
- 49% of S6 students attained 1+ level 7 qualification (the Virtual Comparator is 45%).

The whole-school wider achievement tracker and weekly Heads Up newsletter evidence that the school has a much fuller picture of achievements across the school community.

An in-depth Attainment Analysis meeting, which included a team of senior education leaders from Scottish Borders Council, and the SBC Review Visit in November 2022, validated the significant improvements that have been made in this area.

What are they going to do now?

Continue to monitor attainment at planned points in the school year. This will include in partnership with Scottish Borders Council's Quality Improvement team and national Insight advisors.

This page is intentionally left blank

23 April 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Berwickshire 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 enhanced provision department, which is very effective in meeting the needs of young people with severe and complex additional support needs. Highly personalised learning and teaching engages young people successfully and supports them to attain and achieve. The clear shared vision of staff is based on promoting independence, social inclusion, healthy attitudes and positive behaviours.
- The well-designed school facilities, supported by a striking outdoor setting, offer strong opportunities to develop creative learning activities across the school.

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

- There is an urgent need to improve leadership at all levels across the school. This includes engaging all young people, parents and staff in reviewing the vision, values and aims with a view of developing a strong identity, with clear attention given to the direction and expectations for Berwickshire High School.
- Senior leaders should ensure that, as a key priority, there is a whole school focus on creating a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment which is conducive to high quality learning. This strong focus should include fostering positive relationships across the school and ensuring that there is much greater consistency in the promotion of high expectations at all times with clear boundaries set.
- All staff should develop an agreed shared understanding of what high quality learning, teaching and assessment looks like and ensure they apply these standards consistently across the school at all times. Further development of approaches to tracking and monitoring young people's progress, especially in the broad general education, are needed. This will enable staff to put in place clearer next steps in learning for young people to enable them develop the skills and attributes needed for life and work.
- Staff should develop curriculum pathways, as already agreed, at all stages, including with partners, to promote challenge, provide more flexibility for learners and meet their needs and aspirations. The addition of well-considered vocational pathways is key to enable some young people to succeed. This will take account of national priorities and learner entitlements.
- The wellbeing indicators, such as being safe, nurtured, achieving, respected and responsible need to be embedded in the everyday work of the school. Young people need

support to understand their relevance, and to use them well to enable learners to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

- All staff should continue their work to raise standards of attainment and provide wider opportunities for achievement to improve outcomes for young people. This includes identifying those young people who may miss out, through taking part in few or no wider achievement activities.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#). 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 Berwickshire High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	unsatisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
Raising attainment and achievement	weak
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	weak
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

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

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/scottish-borders/5647339>

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 a year 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.

Aileen Monaghan
HM Inspector

18 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) 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 Berwickshire High School, we said that we would engage further with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to Berwickshire 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

The onset of COVID-19 occurred at a time of complex challenge for the school. This challenge included the school preparing for a further inspection, with an acting headteacher, and only one of the school's three substantive depute headteachers in post. A permanent headteacher was appointed in August 2020.

Pastoral staff and administration staff maintained a high level of contact with young people over the periods of school closure. The enhanced provision unit remained open, as did the school, which acted as a 'hub'. These areas provided necessary support for specific groups of young people, including the children of key workers. Staff and young people made good use of digital devices to maintain contact with one another and to continue learning, teaching and assessment. Young people and staff developed effective digital skills, which they continue to use to enhance learning and teaching. Senior leaders and staff engaged in considerable planning to prepare for the safe return to school of young people and staff after the second period of school closure.

The current school improvement plan identifies clearly the actions that senior leaders and staff are taking to support recovery. Each action point on the plan links specifically to closing identified gaps in learning and rebuilding young people's resilience and progress. Staff continue to implement strategies to encourage young people to re-engage fully with their learning. These strategies include, for example, providing phased-return programmes for young people whose anxiety continues to be a barrier to their return to school.

At the time of our visit, the headteacher reported there had been a few cases of COVID-19 amongst young people in recent weeks, and some staff absence.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

Senior leaders have supported young people and staff to engage in leadership roles and activities in faculties and across the school. This includes a 'head team' of young people,

prefects, and house captains who are working enthusiastically and responsibly with senior leaders to improve the school. It also includes a student council that is working continuously to encourage and act on young people's views. Senior leaders have strengthened a staff 'extended leadership team', and increased the roles for middle leaders across the school to impact positively on change. Teachers are also demonstrating leadership behaviours more consistently. For example, most teachers now have a more visible presence. They communicate more effectively with young people and their parents, and are more willing to engage in professional learning to develop their classroom practice.

Almost all stakeholders spoken to during the visit identified the very positive impact of the headteacher's leadership, and the new, clearer sense of direction and purpose in the school. They describe how the clarity of this direction and purpose has helped to build an aspirational learning community. The refreshed vision, values and aims of the school, developed in partnership with stakeholders, have helped the school to establish a more cohesive identity. The school environment now provides a calm and orderly context for learning. Almost all young people demonstrate maturity, respect and courtesy in classes, social areas, and the school grounds. Overall, relationships amongst young people and between young people and staff are positive.

Improvements in the curriculum are providing a wider range of experiences and pathways for young people, and helping to motivate young people's learning. Staff are working well with partners to develop flexible pathways to meet the needs of all young people. The quality and consistency of learning, teaching and assessment have improved considerably. In the sample of observed lessons during the visit, all learning experiences were well structured and purposeful. Within the school's broad strategies to develop high-quality learning and teaching, teachers should ensure that they provide suitably challenging work to meet the needs of all young people. They should also develop strategies to engage actively all learners, for example, through improved questioning techniques. Teachers have a much improved, shared understanding of what high quality learning and teaching looks like by engaging in high-quality professional learning.

Senior leaders and staff have made improvements to tracking and monitoring in the broad general education (BGE), although continued work is required in this area to ensure increased rigour and consistency across the school. Teachers value the use of learning logs as part of the school's ongoing monitoring processes. Staff, young people and parents are engaging more regularly in dialogue to help young people reflect on their learning and develop a better understanding of their progress and learning targets. This dialogue is beginning to lead to more suitably targeted interventions.

Staff continue to help young people understand and improve their wellbeing. This includes young people having regular discussions with pastoral staff. During the visit, a few young people were able to articulate well issues associated with their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing in relation to the national wellbeing indicators. Staff have made clear progress in identifying how the concept and practice of nurture can influence young people's learning and achievement positively. The nurture base provides an important resource to support individual young people.

Senior leaders and staff have taken a strategic and well-considered approach to planning for improvements in attainment and achievement. They have also taken appropriate action to meet all areas of improvement required in relation to safeguarding.

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 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. Otherwise, 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.

Celia McArthur
HM Inspector

This page is intentionally left blank

**PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT – SCHOOLS
(GLENDINNING TERRACE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY
CLASS)**

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 Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) Reports for Glendinning Terrace Primary School and Nursery Class and the Improvement Plan developed by the Headteacher to address the key recommendations.**
- 1.2 Glendinning Terrace Primary School was inspected using a ‘short’ inspection model. This means that only two quality indicators were inspected in both the Early Learning and Childcare setting and the Primary School over a three day period.
- 1.3 The HMIE Report evaluated the Early Years setting and the Primary provision as satisfactory across all quality indicators. The evaluation gradings range from unsatisfactory to excellent, so a grading of satisfactory indicates a basic level of provision. As a result, the school have been asked to prepare a focussed plan for improvement with a particular emphasis on addressing areas highlighted for improvement.
- 1.4 The Quality Improvement Team and Early Years Team will commence a period of intense support and scrutiny to ensure progress is made by the Headteacher and the School.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend that the Committee approves:-

- 2.1 The School Action Plan for Glendinning Terrace Primary School, which addresses areas for improvement as outlined in the HMIE Inspection Report (January 2023).**
- 2.2 The Quality Improvement Team’s plan for scrutiny and support following a ‘satisfactory’ inspection.**

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 Glendinning Terrace Primary School – Initial Inspection

- a) In October 2022, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Glendinning Terrace Primary School and Nursery Class. During the visit, the team talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the Headteacher and staff.
- b) The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:
 - i. Relationships between nursery practitioners, school staff, children, and those in the school community.
 - ii. Children's broader achievements and successes in various events, which enables them to develop various skills and become responsible and caring individuals who make a significant contribution in their community.
 - iii. The approaches Teachers and staff are taking to improve children's attainment in reading, which are making a difference to children's progress at the primary stages.
 - iv. The Headteacher's and Early Years Officer's impact on leadership of and direction of school and nursery improvement.
- c) The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Headteacher and a representative from Scottish Borders Council:
 - i. Continue to build on current approaches for improving how children's progress is assessed, planned and tracked in the nursery to help ensure they achieve.
 - ii. Ensure that all children's needs are met through experiences and activities which provide appropriate pace and challenge and further their learning.
 - iii. Improve further children's attainment, particularly in numeracy and mathematics.
 - iv. Take forward plans to involve children more in making decisions about school life and involve parents more in their children's learning.

- d) The inspection team are confident that the school has capacity to continue to improve and they will make no further visits in connection with this inspection.

4.2 Local Authority Support

In accordance with Scottish Border's Council's Quality Improvement Framework, a Quality Improvement Officer will continue to work alongside the school, offering a high level of support, to ensure continuous improvement. A formal Support Plan will be prepared by the Officer with clear targets for improvement and identification of key roles and responsibilities. A follow-up school review will take place by a team from Scottish Borders Council in October 2023.

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 to 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:**HMIE Inspection Report January 2023****HMIE Summarised Inspection Findings (Nursery Class) January 2023****HMIE Summarised Inspection Findings (Primary School) January 2023**

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.

Summarised inspection findings

Glendinning Terrace Primary School Nursery Class

Scottish Borders Council

24 January 2023

Key contextual information

Glendinning Terrace Nursery Class is situated within the grounds of Glendinning Terrace Primary School. The nursery provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for children aged three to five years. The current roll is 13 and the nursery is registered for 16 children at any one time. Children attend for full days on a term time basis. The nursery has one small playroom with access to an outdoor area. Practitioners also make use of the school playground.

The nursery has had significant staffing challenges within the past two years. The full team has changed. The team consists of an early years officer (EYO), part-time practitioner and recently employed practitioner, modern apprentice and a support for learning assistant. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Positive relationships are evident between practitioners and children. All children settle well into nursery and are happy. They make choices about where they wish to play and a few children lead their own learning with confidence. The majority of children engage well with the resources and experiences which practitioners provide both indoors and outdoors.
- Almost all children spend some time outdoors during the day. Practitioners continue to develop environments both indoors and outdoors. They provide children with a range of resources including natural materials and everyday objects to promote children's creativity. Practitioners should continue to evaluate the quality of the environments and ensure children receive the right level of challenge. In doing so, they need to consider the amount of furniture and resources within the small playroom. At times, the playroom lacks space for children to extend and challenge themselves in their play.
- Children benefit from the caring, nurturing and responsive approach of all practitioners. They are sensitive in their interactions with children and as a result, children feel safe and secure within the nursery. The majority of practitioners use questions and commentary appropriately to support children's learning. The EYO is a good role model for practitioners.
- The EYO and practitioners continue to develop their skills in recording and using observations to plan for children's learning. They record observations and some photographs within children's personal learning journeys. The EYO recognises that further support is required to ensure practitioners focus on significant learning and identify confidently, relevant lines of development for each child. Currently, practitioners are not using learning journeys as a tool to enable children to reflect on and talk about their learning. Moving forward, practitioners need to make sure future approaches to capturing children's learning enables children to be more involved in the process.

- The nursery team reviewed recently and adapted the approach to planning children's learning. Practitioners use developmental overviews and individual trackers to identify the progress children make in their learning. Moving forward, practitioners need to ensure assessment information informs planning appropriate next steps for children's learning.
- Practitioners support children well who require additional help with their learning. They work with partners to plan for and support children's development and learning. They review regularly children's development and learning to make sure strategies used continue to be effective.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Children make good progress in health and wellbeing. Most play well with each other and are developing friendships. They talk about their emotions and how they feel when visiting the cosy area and exploring relevant books. Most children identify how to keep safe, for example, when using tools to carve pumpkins. Almost all develop physical skills during outdoor play as they run, hop, balance and roll tyres in the playground. Children talk about healthy food during snack and mealtimes. Most children are independent. They dress themselves for going outdoors, wash their hands and pour their own milk.
- In early communication and language, children's progress is satisfactory. The majority of children communicate confidently with adults and each other. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. A few require support to engage with stories. The majority of children recognise their name as they self-register. The majority can make marks when playing and are developing their skills in early writing. Children need to develop their awareness of writing for a variety of purposes to help them to communicate their thoughts and ideas.
- Children's progress in early numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. The majority of children count to ten and a few beyond. A few can count one-for-one when playing with equipment. A few recognise numerals. As children play, they use appropriate mathematical language, for example when building with blocks. The majority of children name and recognise basic two-dimensional shapes. Children need to develop their skills further in information handling and when using money in meaningful contexts.
- The majority of children develop their imagination through role-play situations such as the mud kitchen café and house corner. They explore a range of media and are learning about the seasons and the range of birds visiting the garden. Children need to develop skills in using digital technology to support their learning and progress.
- Children are becoming increasingly confident and independent because of their ELC experience. At the same time as practitioners improve and embed their approaches to planning and assessment, they need to continue to develop their skills further to help them judge children's progress overtime.
- Children's achievements are celebrated through praise and encouragement. Practitioners recognise they need to continue to encourage parents to share children's achievements outwith the nursery. Children need to develop their skills in ways which allow them to share

and put forward their views and contribute to the nursery life. They also need to broaden their achievements though having greater involvement with partners and the local community.

- Children are valued and respected within the nursery's inclusive ethos. Small groups and individual children are supported by staff to support equity. Practitioners are beginning to use information gathered about children to help identify and reduce any barriers to children's progress. Children, who have additional support needs, are making progress towards achieving personal goals and targets. The majority are progressing well in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing. Practitioners now need to help more children secure their progress through their learning and interactions.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

This page is intentionally left blank

24 January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2022, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Glendinning Terrace Primary School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

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

- Relationships between nursery practitioners, school staff, children, and those in the school community.
- Children's broader achievements and successes in various events which enables them to develop various skills and become responsible and caring individuals who make a significant contribution in their community.
- The approaches teachers and staff are taking to improve children's attainment in reading which are making a difference to children's progress at the primary stages.
- The headteacher's and early years officer's impact on leadership of and direction of school and nursery improvement.

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

- Continue to build on current approaches for improving how children's progress is assessed, planned and tracked in the nursery to help ensure they achieve.
- Ensure that all children's needs are met through experiences and activities which provide appropriate pace and challenge and further their learning.
- Improve further children's attainment, particularly in numeracy and mathematics.
- Take forward plans to involve children more in making decisions about school life and involve parents more in their children's learning.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) 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 Glendinning Terrace Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Securing children's progress	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#)

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Scottish Borders Council will inform parents/carers about the nursery's and school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its nurseries and schools.

Moira Allan
Managing Inspector

**PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT – SCHOOLS
(FOUNTAINHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS)**
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 Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) Reports for Fountainhall Primary School and Nursery Class and the Improvement Plan developed by the Headteacher to address the key recommendations.**
- 1.2 Fountainhall Primary School was inspected using a ‘full’ inspection model. This means that 4 key quality indicators were inspected in both the Early Learning and Childcare setting and the Primary School over a 5 day period.
- 1.3 The HMIE Report evaluated the Early Years setting and the Primary provision as good across almost all quality indicators, with evaluations of very good in the Nursery for ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion and very good in the Primary stages for learning, teaching and assessment. The evaluation gradings range given by HMIE on school inspections can range from unsatisfactory to excellent, so a grading of very good indicates there are major strengths in this aspect of the school’s work.
- 1.4 The Quality Improvement Team and Early Years Team will continue to work alongside the Headteacher to ensure continued progress towards excellence. The team will ensure that areas of very good practice are shared across the Local Authority.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS
I recommend that the Committee approves:-

- 2.1 **The School Improvement Plan for Fountainhall Primary School which addresses areas for improvement as outlined in the HMIE Inspection Report (January 2023).**
- 2.2 **The Quality Improvement Team’s plan for support and showcasing of the work of Fountainhall Primary School following a strong inspection.**

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 In November 2022, a team of Inspectors from Education Scotland visited Fountainhall Primary School and Nursery Class. During their visit, the team talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the Headteacher and staff.

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

- a) The leadership of the headteacher and principal teacher in ensuring that the wellbeing of children is central to the work of all. As a result of their shared vision for the nursery class and school, all staff have a clear focus on supporting all children to achieve their full potential. The strong sense of teamwork results in an inclusive, family ethos.
- b) The very successful approaches to meeting the learning needs of all children in the multi-stage composite class. The skilled Senior Leaders, Teachers and support staff work together closely to provide a nurturing and highly motivating learning environment for children.
- c) Happy, articulate and confident children who are very proud of their nursery class and school. They have increasing ownership of their learning and show respect, empathy and kindness to each other.
- d) High standards in the teaching of literacy across the Nursery Class and School. Children at all stages are making very good progress in this area of learning.

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

4.4 Continue to take forward plans to refresh the unique curriculum offer for learners at Fountainhall, with a focus on developing children's skills for learning, life and work.

- 4.5 Continue to raise attainment in numeracy and mathematics, ensuring that all children are supported and challenged to make the best possible progress.
- 4.6 The inspection team are confident that the school has capacity to continue to improve and they will make no further visits in connection with this inspection.
- 4.7 **Local Authority Support**
In accordance with Scottish Borders Council's Quality Improvement Framework, a Quality Improvement Officer will continue to work alongside the School, offering a low level of support, to ensure continuous improvement.
- 4.8 The School will report progress in their annual Standards and Quality Report.

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 to this report.
- 5.4 **Sustainable Development Goals**
There is no impact/difference to sustainable development goals.
- 5.6 **Rural Proofing**
Not applicable.
- 5.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**
There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.
- 5.8 **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:

HMIE Inspection Report January 2023

HMIE Summarised Inspection Findings (Nursery Class) January 2023

HMIE Summarised Inspection Findings (Primary School) January 2023

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.

Summarised inspection findings

Fountainhall Primary School

Scottish Borders Council

24 January 2023

Key contextual information

Fountainhall Primary School serves the village of Fountainhall and the surrounding rural areas. At the time of the inspection, there were nine children on the school roll, from P2 to P7. Three children had very recently joined the school. Children are taught in one multi-stage composite classroom. The headteacher is the long-standing shared head of Heriot Primary School. In August 2021, she also took on the headship of Stow Primary School, within the same school cluster. The headteacher is ably supported by the principal teacher, who has a significant teaching commitment. The principal teacher also has the remit for day-to-day aspects of school management, including responsibility for the nursery class. There have been extended periods of staff absence in the last year. The school does not receive Pupil Equity Funding.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- Fountainhall Primary is a welcoming and nurturing school where children come first. All staff have very positive relationships with children. As a small, rural school, there is a strong sense of community and family. Staff know children, families and their personal circumstances very well. All staff share the vision of supporting children's confidence, promoting their self-esteem and helping all children to achieve their full potential. Staff are keen to further reinstate links with the local community that had to be paused during the pandemic. They share the vision of the school being at the heart of the small community. They have re-established ways to work again effectively with community partners to enhance children's learning experiences. To raise further the school's profile, the headteacher and principal teacher are refreshing the school website and social media links.
- The experienced and effective headteacher has a sound understanding of the strengths of the school, what is working well currently at Fountainhall, and next steps to take. Her calm and purposeful approach ensures there is a positive ethos of teamwork amongst staff. There are good opportunities for leadership at all levels of the school, with clear remits for senior leaders. The principal teacher deputises for the headteacher and carries out her role with dedication and passion. Her teaching is a model of good practice. Teachers and support staff play an important role in ensuring the smooth running of the school, and in leading change. All staff take on aspects of leadership responsibilities that enhance children's experiences.
- Children are developing their own leaderships skills very well. As trained play leaders, older children ensure that younger ones are happy, safe and active in the playground. Children have a genuine say in improving their school. Through the pupil eco council, they offer helpful suggestions and make important decisions about improving their school and playground. They recently played a key role in refreshing the school values, which are 'happy, confident, respectful young people'. Children say they feel listened to by adults, and that their views count.

- Teachers are dedicated, reflective practitioners and evaluate the success of learning and teaching, including new approaches. For a variety of reasons, there have been fewer opportunities for staff to monitor together the work of the school in the past few years. This includes being unable to collaborate with their peers in cluster schools to moderate the progress and attainment of children. However, the headteacher has reintroduced a calendar of opportunities for moderation, quality assurance and school improvement activities for this academic session. Teachers and support staff appreciate this and are looking forward to more opportunities for professional learning. As planned, senior leaders should re-establish ways to involve the whole school community and key partners once again in school improvement planning processes.
- The school has good processes in place to track learners' progress. The headteacher engages regularly with staff to review assessment data, to check how well children are progressing in their learning. Staff use assessment information well to identify individuals and groups of children who require more support with their learning. Staff are increasing their understanding of how to use the data they gather. As planned, it will be important for staff to develop further their use of data to ensure all children achieve as highly in numeracy and mathematics as possible.
- All staff have a clear understanding of the social and economic context in which children and families live. This includes those children most affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Senior leaders work with partners to ensure that there are no financial barriers to participation to school activities for families. The headteacher identified a need to provide targeted intervention for a few children with gaps in their learning. Despite being ineligible for Pupil Equity Funding, the headteacher has ensured that these children have received the additional support they require. As a result, children are making better progress and feel more confident in their learning.

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- The school's vision, values and aims underpin the warm, inclusive and nurturing relationships that are evident in all interactions between staff and children. All children are friendly and supportive of each other, and notably, of children who have recently joined the school.
- Children are enthusiastic learners who enjoy and participate very well in learning. They adapt to changes in the school's context positively and demonstrate resilience. They work very well individually, in pairs and in groups across different ages. Children can talk confidently about what they are learning and why. Children appreciate that teachers have high expectations for them and encourage them to do their best. Children talk proudly about their achievements and examples of their high-quality work displayed around the school.
- Senior leaders and all staff know children very well as individuals and are committed to accelerating progress and improving outcomes for all. All staff contribute to creating a friendly learning environment which ensures children feel nurtured and enjoy coming to school. Staff worked together very effectively to support learning for children during the periods when they were required to stay at home due to the pandemic. Children have clearly benefitted from this continuity in their learning.
- Teachers plan well-paced lessons and activities that maximise time for teaching and learning. All staff carefully plan motivating and engaging learning experiences that build on and extend children's knowledge and understanding. Senior leaders and teachers have developed very effective approaches to learning and teaching. In particular, teachers' successful approach to teaching literacy is having a very positive impact on children's quality of writing.
- An agreed approach to lesson structure is providing consistency in high-quality learning experiences. Teachers share the purpose of the lessons effectively, make links to prior learning and provide clear explanations. They use questioning very well to check children's understanding and to develop higher order thinking skills. Teachers provide tasks and activities that are appropriately differentiated within the context of the multi-stage composite class. Support staff provide effective support to children in lessons and activities. This is helping to secure improved outcomes for all children. Staff provide children with helpful verbal and written feedback. Children respond positively to this. They use the feedback to help them understand their strengths and set their own targets for next steps in learning.
- The bright and engaging learning environment has been developed well to support the nurturing ethos of the school and the individual wellbeing of children. Play is used effectively to extend younger children's learning. This is enhanced by strong collaborative working with early years practitioners in the nursery class, which also supports children's transition to P1. Overall, teachers make effective use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching.

Within the rural context of the school, children have access to large, well-resourced school grounds. These could be further used to provide more opportunities for children to develop a wider range of skills in outdoor learning.

- Teachers use a range of ongoing formative assessments and summative and standardised assessments at key points in the year to monitor children's progress. This informs teachers' identification of appropriate interventions and next steps for individual children.
- At regular intervals across the year, teachers provide helpful reports of children's progress to parents. Children are enthusiastic about capturing their learning through the recently introduced digital platforms. As planned, teachers should continue to develop this digital resource to provide parents with regular updates about children's learning and progress.
- The headteacher discusses children's progress in literacy and numeracy with teachers on a termly basis. This is helping to support teachers' understanding of the national standards and expectations for achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels. Continuing with plans for moderation activities will help to support teachers' judgements about children's learning across the curriculum.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- During the pandemic, staff prioritised delivering learning experiences in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, and health and wellbeing. Teachers were creative in also providing remote learning experiences in other curriculum areas, such as art, science and social studies. Children are continuing to experience their full curriculum entitlement. Staff have developed their own progressive pathways for literacy and English, numeracy and mathematics, and health and wellbeing. These are linked to National Benchmarks. Specialist teachers deliver programmes for music and physical education (PE). Staff have plans in place to now review and develop the progression pathways for all other curriculum areas. This will help them to ensure that planned experiences build on children's prior learning and skills, and support progression for all children.
- Staff should revisit the unique curriculum rationale for Fountainhall and take this forward with the whole school community and the school's partners. Staff successfully ensure a child-led approach to planning themes, topics, and interdisciplinary learning. This gives children ownership and choice in what and how they learn. Children at all stages are motivated by this engaging approach.
- Teachers should continue with plans to develop further approaches to the assessment of children's skills across the curriculum, including learning for sustainability. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to explore the world of work. The restrictions of the pandemic have meant that children have not been able to go on visits, or to receive visitors into school. Staff should make use of local and national guidance to introduce a progression skills framework to ensure children can now develop skills for learning, life, and work.
- The very close working between teachers and early years staff results in highly effective ways to support children as they move from nursery into P1. Children moving to S1 are supported well to make successful transitions. Staff organise a range of different events, including a residential trip, for older children to come together from different rural schools in the cluster.
- Children benefit from two hours of high-quality PE each week, which is delivered by a specialist teacher. Children also participate in the 'daily mile' and attend netball and basketball clubs with their peers in Heriot Primary. This allows children to participate in team sports.
- Children enjoy learning French. They are proud of the diverse multi-national staff team at Fountainhall. They demonstrate real enthusiasm in learning first-hand about the different home countries, cultures and languages of staff. Children participate enthusiastically in local Scots language competitions each year. This provides real-life opportunities for them to celebrate their learning in Scots and to develop the confidence to perform to a large audience.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents welcome the increasing opportunities to be involved in the work of the school following the relaxation of restrictions. They feel that children were very well supported by staff when they were required to learn from home. The Parent Council appreciates the support they receive from parents and the local community, for example, through fund raising activities and community events.
- Overall, parents say their children like being at school and that staff treat children fairly and with respect. They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions or concerns and are confident that staff will take their views into account. For example, teachers adapted the approach to homework, following suggestions from parents. Parents would welcome even more opportunities for their children to join with other local schools, for example to take part in more team sports.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- The headteacher, principal teacher and whole staff team have a clear focus on supporting and improving children's wellbeing. There are warm, nurturing relationships between all staff and children. As a result, all children say that they are treated fairly and with respect. They feel that the school helps them to become confident and to develop strategies to manage their own health and wellbeing. They demonstrate kindness, empathy and appreciation for each other in their daily interactions and in their inclusive and mutually supportive friendships.
- Teachers identified a need for children to develop their resilience when they returned to school following extended periods of remote learning due to COVID-19. Teachers revisited with children a range of strategies that support them to identify their emotions and how to deal with them positively. As a result, children talk confidently about ways they support their own, and their peers' wellbeing, and there is a calm and productive ethos across the school.
- All children say they feel safe in school. They can successfully identify adults in school they can talk to if they are upset or have any concerns. Older children support and play with younger children in the playground as part of their playground leader responsibilities. This helps all children to maintain positive relationships and feel safe and confident. All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety of children.
- In the last two years, staff have focused appropriately on children's mental and emotional wellbeing. Community partners, such as police and fire service officers, enhance children's learning about safety and citizenship. Alongside the review of planning for progression in other curricular areas, staff should continue to develop the programme across all areas of the health and wellbeing curriculum.
- Children embrace the school's values and staff use them well to promote their importance and support children's positive relationships and attitudes to school life. Demonstrating the values is a strong feature of celebrating children's wider achievements. Staff and children celebrate these within weekly assemblies and children who have embodied these values have the opportunity to be named as a 'Fantastic Fountainhaller'. Children respond very positively to these approaches and are very proud of their collective and individual achievements.
- In line with Scottish Borders Council's approaches, the headteacher uses an annual standardised assessment to assess children's wellbeing. She uses this information effectively to identify areas of health and wellbeing for teachers to focus on with all children. Staff should continue to use this information, supplemented with more frequent, informal assessments, to identify any specific gaps in individual children's wellbeing and to provide any necessary targeted support. By P7, children have a good understanding of the wellbeing indicators and how these relate to their own experiences. They identify well the ways that staff and wider

community groups help them to be healthy and active, such as taking part in a range of sports and physical pursuits. They can give specific examples of how children and staff are respectful to each other and how they include other children in their learning and play. Staff should continue to embed the language of wellbeing indicators in daily school life. This will help children to discuss and reflect on their own wellbeing and identify next steps to improve.

- Senior leaders monitor children's attendance closely. Staff are proactive in addressing concerns and work in close partnership with parents to offer support to help children return to school. Levels of attendance are above the national average.
- All staff fulfil their statutory duties effectively. Staff have clear processes in place for identifying children who need extra support or who are experiencing barriers in their learning. Staff use universal and targeted approaches very well to support children's needs. The headteacher makes referrals to partner agencies, where appropriate, and identifies support to help them to make progress. Children with barriers to their learning benefit from targeted support. Pupil support assistants provide very helpful assistance for children who require extra help.
- Children are developing their understanding of equalities through their exploration of children's rights, and through finding out about national and international charities. All children have opportunities to learn about Christianity and other world religions through the programme for religious and moral education. This is helping them develop their understanding and appreciation of different religious and cultural events. A next step is for children to learn more about diversity and different types of discrimination within society.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- At the time of the inspection, the school roll comprised children at P2, P3, P6 and P7 with no children at the P1, P4 or P5 stages. Due to this, children's attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence levels.

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The data presented by the school demonstrates that in June 2022, all children achieved appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and most achieved in numeracy, relative to their age and stage. A few children exceeded national expectations in literacy. For children with additional barriers to learning, the school's evidence demonstrates that they are attaining appropriately for their individual levels of need. Parents feel that their children are supported well by staff. They appreciate the individual encouragement and attention that their children receive. A few parents feel strongly that the school's caring and nurturing approach is helping their children to make better progress.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children are making very good progress in literacy and English.

Reading

- All children have a love of reading and make personal choices about what they like to read. They read aloud with fluency and expression. They benefit from a cosy library area and have access to a good range of reading materials. Staff actively encourage children to read across a range of genres. Children are encouraged to link their reading and writing skills. They are skilled at researching their own personal topics and producing informative and entertaining reports to share with their classmates.

Writing

- Children have regular opportunities to write, including at length, across a range of genres. Their writing is of consistently high quality. They benefit from the literacy rich environment in their class and across the school building. A few children demonstrate particular strength in using sophisticated vocabulary to improve their writing. They enjoy developing ideas together and refining their writing skills. This is often stimulated by stories, learning outdoors, real-life events and through drama. For example, all children achieved very well to write a script and perform a news report, documenting the sinking of the Titanic. All children use appropriate punctuation, structure and increasingly complex vocabulary.

Listening and talking

- Staff plan interesting and exciting themes and discussion points that motivate children to share their ideas and opinions. By P7, children demonstrate ably their debating skills, arguing for and against topical issues. Children engage enthusiastically in discussion about their school, their interests, their achievements and their learning. They listen attentively in class and in groups and build on each other's answers. They are curious and ask pertinent, high-level questions.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- By P7, most children can round numbers to 10,000. They have a good understanding of place value in numbers up to 100,000. Most can add and subtract confidently and given time, can recall multiplication facts. All children demonstrate a good understanding of money for their age and stage. Most can identify simple fractions, decimals and percentages and use this knowledge to solve problems. Children see the relevance of their learning in numeracy and its link to skills for learning, life and work. They can talk about when and where they use numeracy and mathematics in real life, for example helping out at home or on the farm. They need more practice in estimating the lengths and weight of familiar objects.

Shape, position and movement

- By P7, most children can identify the properties of three-dimensional objects. They can confidently calculate the area and perimeter of quadrilaterals. They use compass points correctly. Most would benefit from more practice in working with different types of angles.

Information handling

- By P7, all children can explain confidently how they would organise and carry out a simple survey, record the responses as tally marks on a chart and display the results. They are familiar with pictograms and bar graphs, but less so with pie charts and Venn diagrams.

Attainment over time

- Overall, children are supported to make very good progress in literacy, and good progress in numeracy over time, from their prior levels of attainment. Staff have plans to make improvements to how they track children's attainment in numeracy to match the more detailed records they maintain for literacy.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children develop the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence in a range of ways. This includes through the life and work of the school and through worthwhile local partnerships. Staff have established a successful system that encourages children to share and celebrate regularly their many personal achievements out with school. Staff work closely with the Active Schools Coordinator and community partners to offer children sports clubs and cultural activities. A next step is to support children to have a greater understanding of the skills they are developing through their many achievements.
- Children's attendance last year was above national figures. Staff track children's attendance and participation in out of school activities and take action to ensure that no child misses out.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff have strong focus on social inclusion. They strive to ensure that all children in Fountainhall have equity of opportunity as learners from larger schools. Staff make the most of all opportunities to involve children in a wide range of out of class activities and projects. As a result, children's experiences are enriched and they each have opportunities to achieve success in a variety of ways, including taking on leadership roles.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

24 January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2022, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Fountainhall Primary School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

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

- The leadership of the headteacher and principal teacher in ensuring that the wellbeing of children is central to the work of all. As a result of their shared vision for the nursery class and school, all staff have a clear focus on supporting all children to achieve their full potential. The strong sense of teamwork results in an inclusive, family ethos.
- The very successful approaches to meeting the learning needs of all children in the multi-stage composite class. The skilled senior leaders, teachers and support staff work together closely to provide a nurturing and highly motivating learning environment for children.
- Happy, articulate and confident children who are very proud of their nursery class and school. They have increasing ownership of their learning and show respect, empathy and kindness to each other.
- High standards in the teaching of literacy across the nursery class and school. Children at all stages are making very good progress in this area of learning.

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

- Continue to take forward plans to refresh the unique curriculum offer for learners at Fountainhall, with a focus on developing children's skills for learning, life and work.
- Continue to raise attainment in numeracy and mathematics, ensuring that all children are supported and challenged to make the best possible progress.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) 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 Fountainhall Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary stages	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	very good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	very good
Securing children's progress	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale	

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=2646>

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Scottish Borders Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Lesley A Allan
HM Inspector

This page is intentionally left blank