

Standards and Quality Report  
Stromness Academy  
October 2015



## The Core Areas of our Practice

This report summarises the strengths of our school, our recent improvements and what needs to improve further. We gather this information throughout the year in a variety of ways so we can make sure our report is as accurate as possible. This report relates to the academic session 2014/2015.

### Our Key Strengths

- The range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences and opportunities including opportunities for leadership for pupils
- Attainment in National Qualifications in S4
- Strong and wide-ranging partnerships which support pupil well-being and development

### Our Improvements Last Session

- The majority of our staff have been involved in the Assessment is for Learning programme promoting professional learning to support improvements in learning and teaching
- Staff have continued to develop and embed the new National Qualifications

### Our Priorities For Improvement for Next Session

- Review and improve our monitoring and tracking of pupil progress and their involvement and engagement in their learning and development at whole school, departmental and individual pupil level
- Review our curriculum including creating a curriculum rationale based on our shared vision
- Develop a systematic, rigorous and collegiate approach to school improvement and self-evaluation
- Build community through working together to create a shared vision and build relationships

## 1. How well do young people learn and achieve?

### 1.1.Improvements in performance

- *Standards of attainment over time*
- *Overall quality of learners' achievement*
- *Impact of the school improvement plan*

### 2.1 Learners' experiences

- *The extent to which learners are motivated and actively involved in their own learning and development*

### 1.1 Improvements in performance

#### Strengths and recent areas of improvement

- Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy is strong and remains higher than the national average. Our pupils attain well in national qualifications at all levels with attainment in S4 being particularly strong. A very high percentage of our leavers proceed to a positive destination and this figure remains higher than the national average.
- Across the school our learners have access to and participate in a very wide range of learning opportunities both in curricular areas and in the wider school context (Personal and Wider Achievement). Pupils are supported with recognising their achievements through Profiling in PSE.
- Several areas from the school improvement plan last year have had a positive impact and led to improvements in our school. These include the Assessment is for Learning programme which has allowed for professional dialogue around learning and teaching and the establishment of a Reporting and Tracking working group.

#### Areas for further development

- We need to ensure greater consistency in attainment at all levels and also ensure all pupils are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment.
- We need to ensure that we are recognising and marking pupils' achievements at whole school level. This includes building on our celebrating success initiative and our new house points system.
- We need to ensure the school improvement plan is manageable and focuses on improving the achievement, attainment and well-being of our learners. We also need to ensure that we continue to gather evidence to support this process and to evaluate impact. We also need to support all staff in engaging with the improvement planning process.

### 2.1 Learners' Experiences

#### Strengths and recent areas of improvement

- Pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning through a range of resources designed to support and develop independent learning skills. These include target booklets and learning logs. Pupils are involved in self-assessment and a range of formative assessment approaches are used in class to actively involve learners. A good start has been made to rewarding pupil success and achievement.

### Areas for further development

- We need to ensure that learners' experiences in the classroom are consistent and that all our learners are motivated and actively involved in their own learning. We must also seek the views of our learners and act on these so that that our learners feel safe, secure and valued.

## **2. How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?**

### **5.1 The Curriculum**

- *The rationale and design of the curriculum*
- *The development of the curriculum*
- *Programmes and courses*
- *Transitions*

### **5.3 Meeting learning needs**

- *Tasks, activities and resources*
- *Identification of learning needs*
- *The roles of teachers and specialist staff*
- *Meeting and implementing the requirements of legislation*

### **5.1 The Curriculum**

#### Strengths and recent areas of improvement

- Our curriculum takes account of local and national advice. Breadth is maintained in the Broad General Education (S1-S3), and in the Senior Phase (S4-S6), pupils are able to access a good range of courses through our partnerships with Orkney College. These include Early Years Childcare, Construction Skills, Rural Skills, Hairdressing, Fashion and Textiles and Energy.
- Our curriculum provides a range of opportunities for all learners. Courses have evolved over time and are reviewed as appropriate.
- There is a flexible approach to what programmes and courses senior pupils are able to access. There are good opportunities for planned interdisciplinary learner experiences. These include "Healthy Me" in S1, "Living Together" with Science, Geography, PE and HE, and also planned learning around Fair Trade, and WWI. New courses were introduced last year including Media, Health and Food Technology and Practical Metalworking.
- Links between our associated primary schools are strong. In particular, pupils enjoy the transition days and feel supported. Our pupil support team works very closely with our associate primaries and as such, the transition experience for our pupils is very positive.
- Our leavers' assemblies for post-16 pupils were valued and appreciated by them. We have very strong links with Skills Development Scotland, Higher and Further Education providers and pupils are well supported during the post-16 transition process.

#### Areas for further development

- We need to work together to create a rationale for our curriculum in light of local and national expectations, priorities and needs.

- We need to ensure as our new courses develop that we have rigorous approaches to internal verification procedures and that we continue to review and evaluate our curriculum in terms of its structure in line with the principles of Curriculum for Excellence and the needs of all our pupils.
- We need to ensure we are able to offer a wide range of levels of study in S5/6 to ensure progression for pupils is available at all stages.
- We need to review and evaluate our curricular transition links with our associate primaries to support us in building effectively on prior learning, and ensure data and information from primaries is used to support the monitoring and tracking process in S1.

### **5.3 Meeting learning needs**

#### **Strengths and recent areas of improvement**

- Learning activities are matched to the needs of individual learners in class.
- We have continued to make good progress with embedding our staged intervention process for all pupils. This enables us to identify pupils who would benefit from additional support, and a very effective group intervention programme is provided specifically for literacy and numeracy.
- We have very good partnerships with a range of agencies through our Extended Schools Support Team. These partnerships are well established.
- We are making good progress with ensuring that the requirements of new national legislation around GIRFEC are implemented.

#### **Areas for further development**

- We need to ensure that we are consistently supporting all pupils in matching individual needs both in terms of support, and in terms of challenge.
- We need to ensure that our staged intervention programme is used effectively across all departments to support the needs of all pupils.

## **3. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?**

### **5.9 Improvements through self-evaluation**

- *Commitment to self-evaluation*
- *Management of self-evaluation*
- *School improvement*

### **5.9 Improvements through self-evaluation**

#### **Strengths and Recent Areas of Improvement**

- Staff regularly review their courses to identify and inform areas for improvement. In some departments feedback on courses from pupils is also used to inform this process.
- Last year a large number of staff participated in the Assessment is for Learning programme which has supported and promoted reflection on learning and teaching. This has been achieved through peer observations and discussions around learning and teaching which have led to changes in practice. In some departments, formal lesson observations were carried out which impacted on pupils' learner experiences.

### Areas for further development

- We need to ensure that we have effective systems in place to gather evidence to inform our school improvement and self-evaluation process.
- We need to work to ensure that we review evidence gathered to inform our self-evaluation, that we evaluate our progress with school improvement actions and that this process is manageable and focuses on continuing improvements to learning and teaching and the achievements of all learners.
- We also need to ensure that we can show clear evidence of improvement based on our actions as part of our self-evaluation and ensure that all areas of our improvement plan are evaluated in terms of impact.