



DUNBAR GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Dunbar Grammar is a caring community where you can RISE to be your best
RESPECT INCLUSION SUPPORT EFFORT



Dunbar Grammar School Standards and Quality Report

2021-22





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Context of the school

Dunbar Grammar School is a co-educational, non-denominational school situated in rural East Lothian approximately 25 miles from the centre of Edinburgh. The school has an increasing roll, currently at 1080. The school has excellent facilities for students and the local community.

We pride ourselves on being a caring community where all young people can RISE to be their best and our core values of Respect, Inclusion, Support and Effort permeate our school community.

Session 2021/22 has continued to bring challenges to all schools as we navigate our way through the pandemic. The whole DGS community have endeavoured to provide continuous care, support, challenge, opportunities and experiences and we have really embraced being able to resume important activities and events as mitigations were removed.



How good is our leadership and our approach to improvement?

1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

- *Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation*
- *Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data*
- *Ensuring impact on learners' successes and achievements*

How are we doing?

- We designed our School Improvement Plan (SIP) to have three clear priority areas which were easily understood by all stakeholders;
Priority 1 - Excellence and equity in teaching and learning, to raise attainment and achievement for all.
Priority 2 - Develop our positive and inclusive learning community
Priority 3 - Increased future opportunities for all
- This year we have been able to return to classroom observations. This has been predominately faculty based. We have an established methodology for collating data from classroom observations. This has allowed us to better understand the learner experience across the school.
- In some Faculty areas, observation recording and action planning is robust and leads to measurable outcomes (changes and adaptations to courses, altered approaches to learning and teaching and staff professional development)
- We carried out an S1 VSE which included classroom observations and student focus groups. This data was used by both the teaching and learning and curriculum groups to better understand the learning experience for our S1 students.
- In August we launched a shared classroom experience programme which most/majority of teachers participated in. This is the start of a journey for our teachers to create a more collaborative learning culture.
- We have had a Learning and Teaching focus at in-service events which received positive feedback from almost all staff. Teachers have been using the approaches they learned in their lessons.
- We have a small but highly committed Parent Council (DGSC) they have been actively involved in the review and development of the School Improvement Plan. This group continued to meet via Google Meet but will move back to in-person next session.
- Students are involved in recruitment of all permanent members of staff. This is an important dimension of recruitment for us. It means that the voice the students

How do we know?

School Processes/input

- Robust approaches to assessment moderation in the Senior Phase.
- Whilst working with mitigations in place, Subject/Faculty approaches to self-evaluation and quality assurance have been important. PTCs working in trios have facilitated this.
- S6 Student leadership team have been highly effective and have worked well with the parent council (strong feedback)

Perceptual

- Extensive feedback from students, staff and parents/carers from regular questionnaires
- Staff feedback events at in-service events and throughout the year allow views to be gauged and any actions to be taken

is reflected and we recruit staff with values which align with the school community.

- Almost all staff understand the need to be outward and forward-looking in their evaluation and improvement activities. Many staff work collaboratively with teachers in other schools and authorities to expand their experience and expertise.
- We are highly consultative – We create lots of opportunities for staff, parents/carers and students to share views

What are we going to do next?

- Align our 2022/23 improvement priorities with ELC – Curriculum, Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion and Leadership of Learning
- Increase the rigour in our self-evaluation calendar which will allow a more comprehensive approach and a clear purpose for every self-evaluation activity undertaken. This will include increased data analysis, shared classroom experiences and validated self-evaluation.
- Roll out an agreed approach to classroom shared classroom experience led by the Learning and Teaching Group. Staff will work in pairs and peer observations will take place once a term. Planned SLT discussion at various points throughout the year to review the impact of this
- Enhance our capacity to utilise data to understand the impact of our interventions and inform future self-evaluation and on-going improvement

From the evaluation of our evidence we feel that the quality of Leadership of Change is - *Good*

1.3 Leadership of Change

- *Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community*
- *Strategic planning for continuous improvement*
- *Implementing improvement and change*

How are we doing?

- Mission statement and values agreed in 2018/19 through full stakeholder consultation and permeate the life and work of the school.
- Staff within our school have high expectations of students which is witnessed in classroom observations.
- Leadership actions and practices very much are based around our values – showing care, creating the correct conditions to allow each student and member of staff to succeed.
- We display a strong community spirit. We work with a range of community partners and work hard to forge and maintain positive relationships. This was particularly evident during our activities week which was supported by many community organisations and volunteers.
- Initiatives such as Breakfasts @ DGS and Dinners @ DGS are important to the ethos of our school and provide important nutrition and social activities for students, staff and members of the community. These are only possible because of strong community links and support for local businesses and organisations.
- Middle leadership trio working has been successful. PTCs are able to share ideas and approaches
- SLT have worked as a coordinated and cohesive team. Due to the dynamic and evolving nature of the school year, we have had 2 planning days. One in September to look ahead and one in May to evaluate and plan for next session. This has allowed us to maintain a strategic focus.
- The Leadership team are critically reflective – we have an open door policy and are responsive to feedback. Extensive consultation processes mean we are aware of current issues/concerns and can plan and adapt according to these.
- There is a strong sense of community and have great pride in the achievements of our school community.
- Parents have reported a feeling of disconnect from the school. We now want to have a clear focus on community spirit. We hosted an open doors event in June 2022 which was well attended and received positive feedback from many parents and carers who had previously never been able to enter the school building.
- Following a consultation and discussion with staff and the parent council, it has been agreed that all parent and carer consultations next session will be in-person. This an important part of creating a cohesive sense of community.
- Throughout the year, a focus on student and staff HWB has been important

How do we know?

School Processes/input

- Mission and values evident in displays, communication, assemblies, social media, used extensively in all school documentation and emails.
- The leadership team have worked hard to ensure that staff morale has been maintained despite the challenges. This has included online meetings, staff breakfasts, and physically distanced opportunities to socialise. Clear and regular communication has been recognised as a strength by staff
- Regular communication with students via assemblies and emails. A return to in-person assemblies has been welcomed by all
- Parent and carer information evenings and consultation evenings have taken place online. Attendance rates and feedback has been positive.
- Our students and parents have continued to be involved in recruitment and have participated in online interviews.

Student Achievement/Output

- Community spirit and care was maintained through the time of mitigations through a range of adapted initiatives. For example – online music performances, distanced charity events such as Christmas gunging, S6 Christmas video rather than live panto, Dinners at DGS deliveries.
- As soon as possible we have returned to in-person events to establish a sense of community (including P7 transition, open doors)
- We have continued to celebrate success – Online Awards events and STARS of week
- Our Breakfast club was established this year and has been hugely successful. Around 100 students utilise this each day. This has been made possible through community links
- Recent prefect applications (84 received) reveal that most of these students are engaged in community experiences and volunteering
- 2 groups of students were recognised at the recent Community council awards for their commitment and contribution to the local community.

	<p>Perceptual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 76% of parents and carers who responded to our questionnaire agree that the school vision and values underpin the work and life of our community
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What are we going to do next?

Whole school focus on creating a collaborative culture – teaching and learning priority in SIP.
Opportunities for staff development to be shared and supported.
Improving self-evaluation processes (detailed in 1.1)
Nurturing sense of community and return of important events. Parental feedback indicates a disconnected feeling from school. Focus on BGE students and their families who have not yet had a ‘typical DGS’ experience.

From the evaluation of our evidence we feel that the quality of Leadership of Change is - *Good*

How good is the quality of care and education we offer?

2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

- *Learning and engagement*
- *Quality of teaching*
- *Effective use of assessment*
- *Planning, tracking and monitoring*

How are we doing?

- The learning environment in our school is built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high-quality learning outcomes.
- Google classroom is widely used. The whole G-suite range is used to support teaching and learning. This has been especially important when students have been having to self-isolate and they have still been able to access work and resources.
- Through classroom observations we can see that our students are motivated and engaged with their learning.
- Teachers plan a range of activities and experiences for students including active learning in the majority of lessons. However, approaches to differentiation and student choice is variable across the school and is an area for improvement.
- Faculties and subjects track student attainment using a variety of approaches. Moving forward, we aim to encourage more sharing of practice between PTCs to ensure that the most effective practice is used in all areas of the school.
- BGE Attainment to report to parents and carers via Progress and Achievement reports. Parental feedback and internal QA reveal that approaches to both moderation and feedback is variable across the school and is an area to address next session.
- A whole school focus on developing Teaching and Learning led by working group. This has included the introduction of an approach to shared classroom experience. Teachers were encouraged to carry out reciprocal classroom visits. Following 2 years of mitigations and reduced interactions with colleagues, a gentle roll out of this was important.
- The teaching and learning group have been developing an approach for shared classroom experience in session 2022/23 and staff have been consulted in the development of the approach.
- In-service activities focused on teaching and learning and sharing practice were very well received and staff have asked for an increase in opportunities next

How do we know?

School Processes/input

- Staff have a very good understanding of learner needs. Our Pupil Support Team share extensive information on the learning needs of young people and work hard to support teachers in meeting those needs.
- Our links with ASG Primaries are extremely strong and we share extensive transition attainment, learning and pastoral information to ensure young people are well supported as they move into S1.
- Our Pupil Support faculty has three support bases which support students in their learning in different ways. The introduction of a bespoke and supported S1/2 class has received positive feedback from parents/carers and students.

Student Achievement/Output

Through data collected from classroom observations (predominately BGE) we can conclude

- In almost all observed lessons, students were engaged with the learning and there was a positive classroom ethos.
- In most lessons the purpose of the learning was clear to students and teacher explanations were clear
- In the majority of lessons students had the opportunity to work independently or in groups, there was the opportunity for active learning and feedback was offered

Perceptual

- Positive feedback from almost all staff around the learning and teaching focus at in-service
- 91% of parents and carers who responded to our SIP survey said that their young person enjoys coming to DGS

session.

- Online parents evenings were successful. A full evaluation and consultation was carried out and it was agreed to resume in-person events next session

- 99% of parents and carers who responded to our SIP survey said that young person enjoys learning at Dunbar Grammar

What are we going to do next?

- Create regular opportunities for engaging in collaborative professional learning
- Engage staff in shared classroom experiences and use the peer observation feedback template to facilitate reflection and sharing of good practice.
- Evaluate learners experience through: VSE led by the teaching and learning working group and regular themed SLT learning walks around the school.
- Building upon parent and carer feedback to address some BGE reporting issues which have been identified (mainly pertaining to the clarity and detail of the first report)

From the evaluation of our evidence we feel that the quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment is - Good

How good are we at improving outcomes for all our learners?

3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

- *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*
- *Attainment over time*
- *Overall quality of learners' achievement*
- *Equity for all learners*

How are we doing?

- We pride ourselves of having a robust understanding of senior phase attainment data and analyse this throughout the year. This allows identification of students at risk of not passing individual or multiple courses and appropriate interventions to be made.
- Transition into S4/S5/S6 through the coursing process is robust with almost all students being coursed at appropriate levels. Despite the challenges of mitigations, we have continued to include parents and carers in the coursing process through digital interviews.
- Our senior phase is bespoke and unique, allowing students to access a considerable range of courses across a 3 year period and maximise their attainment.
- We are continually seeking to improve and enhance in choices and options in senior phase. (New alternative pathway for L5 maths introduced for next session – coursing uptake has been strong). This ensures that students are appropriately coursed and achieve the most appropriate suite of qualifications.
- S3 student feedback has been positive with regards to the curriculum changes we introduced this year. This was designed to support our students after a disrupted S1 and S2. Students have indicated that they prefer the new format with increased personalisation and choice. S3 experience has been a positive change in terms of classroom experience and readiness of students to embark on National courses in S4.
- Throughout the year teachers have been focussed on preparing senior phase students for their first examination experience. This has included increased focus on retrieval practice and past paper use in class and at home. Study support throughout the year has been well attended in most subject areas.
- Easter revision was also well attended and was an important support for students following a disrupted year through student and staff absence. 81% of those who attended had missed time in school due to covid and 25% of those who attended have an additional support need. This was an important support to allow students to be as prepared as possible for SQA examinations. This was supplemented by

How do we know?

School Processes/input

- Online coursing interviews took place to ensure that students and their families were supported through this process.
- Positive uptake in new Senior Phase courses such as Applications of maths (50% of students in S5/6 selecting a L5 Maths course have taken this option)
- Attendance at Grade Boosters and Supported Study was positive. 97% of students found the Easter Revision sessions useful.

Student Achievement/Output

- Data around Literacy and Numeracy indicates that the percentage of young people achieving their expected CfE level is increasing year on year.
- The data for expected levels of Literacy demonstrates an improving landscape across the BGE for all students.
- S3 curriculum change has produced a noticeable change in S3 classes – increased engagement and reduced issues (referrals and duty heads etc.). In literacy based subjects, teachers are reporting that on the whole, S3 students are better placed to write more detailed knowledge

Perceptual

- Positive feedback from parents and carers at Parents Eve regarding the new format of S3
- Positive feedback from staff at the in-service event and in the WTA survey (verbatim comments) regarding the new format of S3.
- 92% of parents and carers who responded to our SIP survey said that they felt the school encourages and supports their young person to achieve their potential.
- S3 Student focus groups have spoken positively about having more ownership and choice over their curriculum.

Grade Booster days for all subjects and open to all students throughout the month of May.

- We have increased banking of N3 units as a safety net approach to support all students achieve a minimum of 5 qualifications in S4
- This year we have been able to resume extra-curricular clubs and this has been accompanied by high student numbers. This is an important part of our school community and wider experience for students.
- We were able to offer Activities week for S1/2/3 and this was hugely successful. This allowed a focus on community spirit and relationship building between staff and students. We adopted a fully inclusive approach to ensure that all young people were able to attend activities without financial barriers.
- Our initial destination data shows a positive trend and our 16+ Hub team work collaboratively with SDS and other agencies to ensure any students who are at risk of not entering appropriate destinations are supported at as early a stage as possible.
- We have continued to have a strong culture of celebrating and recognising achievements both throughout the year and at specific events such as the S3 ceremony, Sports Awards Evening and School Awards Event.

- 97% of parents and carers who responded to our SIP survey said that the school recognises and celebrates a range of achievements.

What are we going to do next?

Continue to develop attainment interventions for the lowest 20% attainment cohort. Build upon the introduction of the data wall but focus on the most at risk students (lowest 20% attaining cohort) in both S3 and S4. Planned points in the year for SLT to collaborate and agree strategies and interventions.


PEF SFL role will focus on supporting students at risk and bank qualifications

Build upon the success of study supports this year (senior study clubs, Easter Revision and Grade Boosters). Subjects to develop approaches to promote and support attendance throughout the year. Also introduction of more junior supported study.

BGE curriculum review group to focus on creating a robust curriculum rationale.

From the evaluation of our evidence we feel that the quality of Raising Attainment and Achievement is - Good

What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

	<p>What is our capacity for continuous improvement?</p> <p>Moving into session 2022/23 we have increased stability in our SLT and staffing. This provides greater continuity for both the student experience but also in planning and driving forward school improvements.</p> <p>Each DHT has a clear, strategic focus and they have taken leadership in their area of the school improvement plan.</p> <p>Effective middle leadership is crucial in a secondary school and each PTC has a focussed remit linked to the SIP.</p> <p>As we move into a year which provides greater stability and certainty, the focus of the DGS Leadership team is to relentlessly drive forward improvements in teaching and learning through a collaborative learning culture. The SLT will move into the next academic year with clear goals and strategic priorities will be revisited on an ongoing basis to evaluate and track progress.</p>
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Overall Grading for Quality Indicators

Quality Indicator	1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	1.3 Leadership of change	2.3 Learning teaching and assessment	3.2 Raising attainment and achievement
Grading	Good	Good	Good	Good

