



## North Berwick High School Standards and Quality Report 2019 - 2020



### Context of the school

North Berwick High School is a six-year non-denominational, co-educational, comprehensive school. The catchment area includes five cluster primary schools in North Berwick, Dirleton, Gullane, Aberlady and Athelstaneford. The school also attracts a number of placing requests from outwith the catchment area. The school roll at September 2019 was 973, with 4.7 % of these pupils having a Free School Meal entitlement. As at September 2019, there were 67.1 FTE teaching staff and 13.29 FTE support staff. This roll is predicted to increase to 1200 by 2025, with a £7.3 million extension to the school due to proceed in September 2019. HMI carried out a full inspection of the school from 24-28 February 2020.

### How good is our leadership and approach to improvement? What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

#### QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

Our staff use self-evaluation well to inform improvement. This includes using the results of thorough analysis of data, focused faculty reviews and well-planned agreed learning and teaching observations. Strong evaluative activities are leading to improvements in learning and teaching. Collegiate work using 'How Good Is Our School? (4th edition)' supports staff to provide accurate evaluations of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Our robust faculty review process, which we have developed over the past three years, is key to planning for continuous improvement. Its emphasis on learning structure and goals is supporting teachers and middle leaders to be more evaluative with regard to learning and teaching and is supporting improvement.

Our school planning links well into priorities identified in the NIF and local authority plans. The SIP is clearly set out, with three key development priorities. These priorities reflect the improvement analysis from effective engagement with staff, pupils, partners and parents. Faculty improvement plans are clear and link well with the SIP. Pupils participate well in improvement work through completion of pupil surveys and from commenting in focus groups on their classroom experiences.

Increasingly, we seek the views of young people to inform planning for improvement. At whole-school level, their views are sought on our three key priority areas of learning and teaching, curriculum and equity, through recently-introduced pupil strategy groups and the Pupil Council. The Parent Council participates in discussions on identifying school priorities for improvement and this gives it an input to shaping the work of the school. Parent Council members assist with teacher interviews. This session, parents were directly involved in the quality assurance process, by observing a year group for the day, in partnership with the head teacher.

#### Future Developments

- Track SIP strategic actions more closely, through the use of action plans which include agreed dates for completion.
- Continue to develop collaborative approaches to self-evaluation with our two partner schools in East Lothian's self-improving schools trio (Knox Academy and Ross High School).

### QI 1.3 Leadership of Change

The HMI report highlighted leadership as a strength of the school:

*The headteacher is a highly effective leader who is well respected by young people, staff, parents and partners. Her leadership is characterised by openness and trust, promoting empowerment in a supportive ethos. The senior leadership team provides clear direction and extensive opportunities for staff to work well together. The quality of leadership at all levels is strong with staff using effective research activities to support increasingly creative learning and teaching.*

Leadership and distributed leadership are a strength across the school, with the leadership team often asked to share their successful practice across the local authority. Our values are hugely important: staff and pupils understand and model very well our agreed values of curiosity, diligence, kindness and belonging. Our pupils fully understand the meaning of our motto, 'Aim Higher', aspiring to achieve their best.

The strong collegiate work between senior leaders, middle leaders and non-promoted staff ensures a clear flow of intelligence across the school. This supports senior leaders and staff to lead the ongoing development of effective learning and teaching. Middle leaders are supported and empowered to be confident leaders and are encouraged to be innovative and creative. They lead their teams very well, supporting and challenging their staff well. They take overall responsibility for a variety of faculty-led initiatives to improve the quality of learning and teaching. Middle leaders meet with the headteacher individually to set professional goals and overcome staffing challenges. They value and appreciate the effective challenge and support they get from this. Classroom teachers are supported well to improve their skills or teaching qualifications through, for example, working with the SQA or through achieving Master level credits from educational projects. Staff appreciate opportunities to gain temporary promoted posts, which help them to be better ready to take on more permanent promoted positions.

The faculty review process is explicitly linked to the PRD and to GTCS Standards. The leadership and empowerment of every member of staff to make a significant contribution to the holistic development of all young people is a strong feature of our work.

We offer a high-quality CLPL programme which supports professional development and is appreciated by staff. Senior leaders use PRD sessions well to enable staff to feel comfortable in being challenged and questioned about their professional learning, and confident in discussing the decisions and next steps. Practitioner enquiry is integral to developing teachers' professional learning. This session, we have worked with Edinburgh University tutors on Professional Learning as Critical Enquiry (PLaCE) which has had a profound impact on how we see ourselves as learners. There has been a real shift in approach from 'enquiry as project' to 'enquiry as stance'. This initiative is developing our collaborative school-wide approach to improving learning and teaching, while capacity building at all levels. Teachers appreciate the opportunities to focus deeply on an aspect of learning and teaching, observing the developing success of a few learners. They enjoy leading and supporting staff in mixed subject groups, participating in meaningful discussions and sharing effective strategies to support learner success. Teachers involved in the project are now focussing on a detailed analysis of how they can meet selected young people's learning needs.

Professional learning is supported well through the addition of recommended and directed reading information, inspiring research articles and video talks, shared regularly by senior leaders and peers. Each faculty benefits from well-planned strategy days to shape their focus on how they will take forward enquiry-based learning. This is completed in conjunction with effective faculty reviews. In addition, classroom teachers have opportunities to lead the development of new coursework and this is providing them with additional responsibilities to help prepare them for middle leadership roles. Most faculties have a useful digital platform for sharing information and all have the use of a learning and teaching HUB, both of which further support the wide sharing of educational research.

Opportunities for pupil leadership continue to grow, e.g. Youth Philanthropy Initiative, Pupil Council, Erasmus project, Model United Nations, Eco Group, Fair Trade Club, LGBT Club, Charities Committee, Pupil Wellbeing Committee, House Leadership Teams, Sports and Inclusion Ambassadors.

### **Future Developments**

- Continue to develop whole school role and remits of middle leaders to enhance leadership of change and improvement.
- Enhance pupil participation in school improvement and the experience of learning
- Make effective use of a Looking Outwards database: keep it updated; ensure learning is shared with colleagues; seek out further opportunities for staff to engage in professional learning activities beyond school.

## **How good is the quality of the care and provision we offer?**

### **QI 2.2 Curriculum**

Throughout the session, we have reviewed the curriculum as well as planning for the change to the common school day, in line with other schools in the authority. The curriculum rationale is clear and continues to be developed and refreshed. The present curriculum supports our vision and values of producing learners who demonstrate well the skills and attributes of the four capacities.

Senior and middle leaders have carried out reviews of S1 and S2 courses and have identified some common areas for focus across subject areas. We are developing a shared plan for how these focus areas can be taught in a consistent way across faculties. The planning of this work is now also supporting our development of interdisciplinary learning. Learners across the BGE have experiences of outdoor learning in the outdoor classroom as well as through learning experiences beyond the school. We achieved the bronze Rights Respecting Schools Award in February, and we are at an early stage of using the UN 'Sustainable Development Goals' to raise young people's awareness of learning for sustainability.

Plans for developing literacy across the curriculum are progressing well across the BGE, aided by the development of a literacy tracking tool, which is used effectively in almost all departments. Our young people benefit from a wide variety of literary events, and the school library is used effectively to support young people to research their learning, and also to access texts.

In the Senior Phase, pupils are offered a free choice of courses and we run a combined senior phase from S4 to S6, with all courses available to all learners. Some senior pupils take up college options as part of their learning pathway and we have increased the range of courses and diversity of learning pathways for young people moving through the senior phase. This has offered greater choice beyond NQs, in line with the needs, interests and aspirations of our young people. The increasing number of vocational pathways being developed for the senior phase enhances choice for young people. Young people are given good advice to support them in making informed choices about appropriate courses to meet their needs. They talk with guidance staff and class teachers through both personal and social education (PSE) and careers interviews with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) staff. School staff have a very strong relationship with the SDS Careers Advisers and the Work Coach. All work well together to develop knowledge and understanding of Career Management Skills (CMS) and more general employability.

## Future Developments

- Restructure and plan the curriculum model for each stage of recovery.
- Review curriculum in line with our new curriculum rationale, in preparation for the full return to school.
- Develop numeracy as a responsibility for all, through whole-school CLPL.
- Build on the positive start to the introduction of the Skills Framework.
- Achieve Rights Respecting Schools Award, silver level.
- Ensure that every young person has easy access to the relevant information on careers education and is supported with decision-making; make use of Labour Market Information and the Regional Skills Assessment when developing the future curriculum offer.

## QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

The HMI report highlighted an aspect of this QI as a strength of the school:

*The developing range of well-informed and innovative approaches to learning and teaching and assessment are supporting young people at all stages to take responsibility for their own learning.*

The ethos and ambition of the NBHS community is underpinned by the school motto: 'Aim Higher'. Our values of curiosity, diligence, kindness and belonging underpin young people's learning experiences. Our pupils talk about how they are demonstrating these values in their learning experiences. The use of visible classroom routines, agreed and established this year, supports ongoing improvements in learning and teaching.

Young people have opportunities to influence what and how they learn, and to evaluate their learning experiences in faculties through learning conversations, questionnaires and focus groups. The results of these findings inform improvement planning at school and faculty level. Planning learning to meet the wide range of needs within a classroom is a feature of learning in most lessons and is particularly well developed in some faculties. Through practitioner enquiry, teachers are developing a deeper understanding of highly effective direct instruction, resulting in improvements to learners' experiences in this respect. The partnership work with the University of Edinburgh on PLaCE has included improvements in approaches to critical literacy, effective feedback, cognitive science in building long-term knowledge, and conducting high-quality learner conversations. Our capacity to continue to improve learners' experiences has been considerably enhanced as a result.

Our pupils have a good awareness of their progress in learning and are being well supported to take responsibility for their own learning in most faculties. We are developing approaches to profiling strengths and next steps in learning in the BGE and enabling pupils to set targets to improve their learning and progress. Young people in the Senior Phase in particular are confident in discussing both their working and target grades. They are very clear about their strengths and next steps in learning and almost all take responsibility for their own learning and progress.

Increasingly, teachers are making effective use of digital technology to share the purpose of learning. Teachers are engaging in various professional learning opportunities to develop their skills in digital technology, particularly with the necessity for remote learning since the closure of the school building. Staff use a variety of digital platforms to provide resources for young people and to give feedback on their work. Digital aids such as visualizers are used to help develop young people's understanding of new ideas. Increasing use is being made of Google Meet for remote lessons.

Teachers are increasingly confident when making their assessment judgements in the BGE. They are

developing their use of a range of assessment evidence to inform their judgements and moderate them against the National Benchmarks. They have worked with colleagues in our associated primary schools to agree shared expectations and standards in literacy and numeracy. All staff have also had opportunities to moderate standards of literacy. In the Senior Phase, staff make very confident assessment judgements based on the expertise provided by the large number of staff who undertake assessment duties for the SQA. Our approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring are developing, with positive impact on outcomes for young people. We are centrally collating monitoring and tracking data from faculties, thus providing a strategic overview of young people's progress. It is used well by staff to inform discussion about the progress of individuals and groups of learners and to plan appropriate learning and targeted interventions, at school, faculty and classroom level.

We provide an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and skills through lunchtime and after school clubs and activities outwith the classroom. Increasingly, there are very good opportunities to experience wider personal achievement, and our pupils can talk confidently about the skills they are developing in these contexts. For example, they have opportunities to lead learning in a range of activities including the Youth Philanthropy Initiative, the eco school group, the health and wellbeing committee and the LGBT club.

### **Future Developments**

- Continue the focus on professional learning through teacher collaboration and inquiry-based approaches.
- Continue to improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment from S1 to S3 with specific focus on developing a more consistent and rigorous approach to moderation of course planning, both in subjects and across faculties.
- Continue to develop planning to ensure learning is meeting the needs of all young people across all subjects; continue to improve the consistency of pace, challenge and progression in learning in the broad general education (BGE) in particular. Provide more opportunities for pupils to be involved in evaluating, planning and leading their own learning in classrooms.
- Focus on developing teachers' skills in using differentiation to ensure that activities are set at the right level and that pupils requiring ASN feel fully included in mainstream classes.
- Continue with planned approaches to using digital technology to support and enrich learners' progress.
- Consider how to ensure that young people experience progression in their personal achievements, and seek ways to accredit these experiences as they progress through the school.

### **QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**

The HMI report highlighted an aspect of this QI as a strength of the school:

*A range of targeted strategies are supporting young people to respond effectively to personal challenges. In particular, young people with support from the school and partners, are creating an open climate to discuss mental health.*

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff which support them to achieve, and from peer-to-peer relationships that support their wellbeing. The new 'GIRFEC at NBHS' document clarifies roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to health and wellbeing. A wide range of support measures are accessible to our young people, some delivered by partners. This includes our Guided Self-Help service, which is positively rated by pupils. Referrals to the specialist mental health agency have reduced. Our Pupil Wellbeing Committee is raising awareness of mental health issues through posters, assemblies and 'I'm here to talk about anything' system. Our young people feel increasingly confident speaking about their emotional wellbeing with a range of staff.

There are strengths in the way we target specific groups of young people to ensure that they are achieving and that they feel well supported, with a number of well-led initiatives which benefit young people. The pupil support team has a close working relationship with the North Berwick Youth Project, including joint planning meetings. This partnership is leading to a range of targeted provision, including the Prince's Trust Achieve group. The recently introduced inclusion ambassadors are planning ways to identify young people's barriers to feeling included and valued across the school, and to address those barriers.

Our young people who access the support Base speak very highly of the work undertaken to support their wellbeing. Support staff have a positive relationship with young people and understand their needs. Young people feel safe and secure, highly nurtured and have a strong sense of attachment to the Base. Our care-experienced young people are well supported by their guidance teachers. Their needs are considered, including the requirement for a coordinated support plan. We are increasingly looking at how we can capitalise on young people's cultural heritage and diverse experiences, in order for this to be reflected more fully in the life and work of the school. We are developing strategies to address anti-stereotyping and to promote gender balance in subject choices. This has been successful in the computing department, for example, where the gender imbalance has been redressed and there is improved uptake amongst girls.

We maintain high levels of attendance and set ambitious targets for improvement. The guidance staff offer customised care, support and guidance to pupils where attendance is an issue. Exclusion rates have decreased over recent years; this academic year, there have been no exclusions.

#### **Future Developments**

- Focus on ensuring positive health and wellbeing for pupils and staff following the COVID-19 outbreak, using relevant nurture and restorative practice recovery strategies.
- Review approaches to tracking and monitoring the progress of pupil wellbeing across the whole school.
- Develop opportunities to explore diversity/equalities across the curriculum; create and implement an NBHS Diversity statement.
- Develop a whole school strategic approach to universal support, including the role of tutor time; staff to take greater accountability for promoting all aspects of wellbeing for young people.
- Extend the use of the wellbeing indicators across all year groups and faculties to support young people to reflect on their progress and development in wellbeing.
- Streamline support plans.
- Review the planning of flexible arrangements such as part-time timetables, involving partner agencies where necessary to ensure young people's needs are met.
- Continue with approaches to ensure rigorous arrangements to monitor period-by-period anomalies.
- Undertake a review of approaches to tackling bullying in line with national guidance 'Respect for All'.
- Enable staff to understand, and successfully counter, unconscious bias when it is impacting on young people's uptake of subjects and opportunities within the class.

### **How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?**

#### **Q.I. 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement**

The HMI report highlighted *Young people's attainment, particularly at S5 and S6* as a strength of the school.

The quality of teaching, tracking and monitoring and learners' experiences in the BGE has a direct impact on the school's headline attainment successes in the senior phase. Each faculty has its own

system for tracking the progress of young people through the BGE and transfers information to the school-wide tracking system. This new whole-school system enables senior leaders to gather and analyse data for all curriculum areas at set times across the year. Attainment data for cohorts of young people in S1, S2 and S3 across all curriculum areas indicates that, overall, attainment is strong at these stages. Senior leaders and staff are now better placed to identify underperformance or any attainment issues in the BGE. The improved systems are helping staff to target support for young people more effectively. This new approach also enables staff to view performance of young people across their subjects in the school and is helping to raise expectations. Increasingly, it will help us to gather attainment data and monitor trends over time.

Young people enjoy participating in an extensive range of well-promoted and inclusive opportunities to develop their skills and personal achievement during lunchtimes and outside of school. Sports and music activities are particularly popular across all year groups. This is improving physical wellbeing and confidence; enhancing team-working skills; and leading to success for individuals and teams in a range of competitions and festivals. Young people from S1 to S3 particularly enjoy Activities Week, which offers them a choice of activities to suit their interests. Overall, young people are gaining in confidence and self-esteem, making new friends and developing their teamwork and communication skills. The Model United Nations conferences, with pupils from all year groups taking part, enable them to develop their confidence, resilience and analytical skills. Young people in S5 and S6 also demonstrate their well-developed leadership abilities and time-management skills across the range of activities.

There are several opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills across the school. These include the Pupil Council, eco and charity committees. Young people also lead several of the clubs such as the drama club, soul band and ukulele orchestra. Other leadership opportunities for senior pupils include serving on the Senior Council, becoming a peer mentor or a Sports Ambassador. We have a wide range of approaches to recognise and celebrate achievement. Increasingly, we are recognising and celebrating wider aspects of achievement in addition to attainment. The increasing use of social media and the summer ceilidh is supporting this.

The school uses its Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) well to support young people access a range of activities such as residential trips. Our PEF plan has clear priorities and strategies in place to support targeted young people to make progress in their learning in the areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Data shows that almost all targeted young people's literacy skills have improved as a result of literacy interventions. In addition, across two years, young people's attendance and aspects of wellbeing across targeted groups have also improved.

The school, working with partner organisations, offers a considerable number of wider achievement opportunities, e.g. Bridges Employability Project, Muirfield Riding Therapy, Prince's Trust Achieve Award, Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award, SCQF Employability Award. Unfortunately, many of our school excursions and residential trips did not happen this year, because of lockdown. Our extra-curricular programme is huge and varied with high pupil engagement.

The HMI report highlighted the following strengths and points of note in attainment:

- *By the end of S3, almost all young people achieved third CfE level in literacy and numeracy from 15/16 to 18/19. Young people's attainment in numeracy at fourth level has been improving since 2016 with almost all achieving this in 18/19. The majority of young people achieved fourth level literacy in 18/19.*
- *The percentage of leavers achieving literacy at SCQF level 5 or better through a unit has improved from 14/15 to 18/19. In 18/19 almost all young people left school having achieved literacy at this level or better. This brings attainment at this level back in line with the virtual comparator (VC) where it had been since 14/15. It had fallen to significantly lower in 17/18. The percentages achieving literacy at SCQF level 5 or better through a course award has improved from 2013-18.*

- *Most young people left school in 17/18 having achieved numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better through a course award. This is the highest attainment recorded by the school at that level in the five-year period.*
- *The percentage of leavers with additional support needs achieving literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better through course awards has been improving from 2013-18 with most achieving literacy at this level in 17/18 and the majority doing so in numeracy.*
- *The average complementary tariff scores of the lowest attaining 20% of leavers improved in 18/19 from the previous year. This brings the attainment of this band of leavers back in line with the VC as it had been from 14/15 to 16/17. It had fallen to significantly much lower in 17/18. The scores of the middle attaining 60% of leavers improved in 18/19 from the previous year and are now significantly higher than the VC. Similarly, the average complementary tariff scores for the highest attaining 20% of leavers also improved in 18/19 from the previous year and are significantly higher than the VC. The scores for this band of learners has been significantly higher or much higher than the VC in four out of five years from 14/15.*
- *From 14/15 to 18/19 a majority of young people have achieved five or more qualifications at SCQF 5C or better. The school reports that a contributory factor to the increase in the percentage of young people achieving qualifications in the latest year is the success of a mentoring programme for targeted groups in the senior phase.*
- *By S5, the percentages of young people achieving qualifications at SCQF 6C or better and 6A or better has decreased from 17/18 to 18/19. This can be partly explained by the high attaining S4 cohort in 16/17 maintaining a strong performance in S5 in 17/18. However, overall the percentages are significantly higher than the VC for those achieving two or more to five or more awards by S5 at SCQF 6C or better or 6A or better in the latest two years. In the latest two years, senior leaders have analysed post prelim data in greater depth and as a result, presentation levels for qualifications are improving.*
- *Young people in S6 choose from an increasing variety of qualifications or awards on offer. When they are not doing courses leading to qualifications they undertake learning which develops attributes and skills further, and will serve them well for life beyond school. The percentages achieving one or more to six or more at SCQF 6C or better in 2018/19 is significantly higher or much higher than the VC. The percentages achieving one or more to four or more at SCQF 6A or better in 2018/19 is significantly higher or much higher than the VC. There is strong attainment at Advanced Higher. The percentage of young people achieving one or more to four or more qualifications at SCQF level 7C or better has been significantly higher or much higher than the VC from 14/15 to 18/19.*

### **Future Developments**

- Restructure and plan the curriculum model for each stage of recovery.
- Review curriculum in line with our new curriculum rationale, in preparation for the full return to school.
- Develop numeracy as a responsibility for all, through whole-school CLPL.
- Improve our monitoring of pupil engagement in extracurricular opportunities.
- Introduce Gold JASS award; this will improve the tracking of pupil achievement through S1 and S2.
- Establish an event to celebrate BGE wider achievement and a whole-school Sports Achievement ceremony.

### **Level**

<b>QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>QI 1.3 Leadership of change</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</b>	<b>very good</b>