



Standards and Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP)

Session 2014 - 15



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

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THE SCHOOL AND ITS CONTEXT

Bridge of Don Academy is a six year comprehensive school serving the Bridge of Don area north of the river Don. It has a capacity for 799 learners and a current roll of 572 with an upward trend. As of the 2015 census 140 learners had additional support needs. In September 2015, 30 (5.2%) learners were registered for free school meals which is significantly below the national average of 15.5%. We have increasingly effective links with our associated primaries which include Balmedie School (Aberdeenshire). Approximately 200 learners are in our catchment but live in Aberdeenshire. The school attracts a considerable number of out of zone placing requests meaning that our SIMD profile varies. Attendance is just above the national picture and exclusions have decreased in the last five years: a reflection of our inclusive approaches to supporting learning and positive behaviour. The school's values – our BODA Bs - *Be Respectful, Be honest, Be caring, Be Your Best* - were developed in 2010 with parents, pupils and staff and are highlighted and regularly promoted. We plan to review these in session 2015 – 16 with all staff, parents/carers and learners to ensure that we continue to focus on practical ways these values will ensure all learners leave school attaining and achieving their best.

In October 2014 a local authority Validated Self Evaluation visit took place. Officers from Aberdeen City Council, a peer Head Teacher, members of SMT, teaching staff, pupils and parents all contributed to a review of the school's attainment, achievements and progress with our improvement plan. The outcomes and targets are detailed in this paper.



SCHOOL AIMS AND VISION STATEMENT

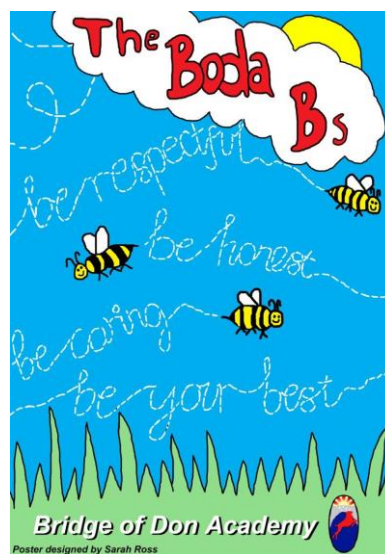
In 2015 – 2016 we will revisit our aims and values.

We want young people to:

- Be Caring
- Be Honest
- Be Respectful
- Your Best

So that they will be:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors and
- Responsible citizens



How do you ensure equality, engagement and inclusion and promote diversity across the school?

Almost all learners report that they feel safe in school and that they are treated fairly and with respect. Inclusive practice is embedded in our aims and values and regular assemblies. An ethos of belonging is also fostered through the house system: assemblies led by house captains encourage learners to be involved in activities in school and the shared leadership of such activities by staff and pupils, particularly in PE, further encourages participation. The school's bi-annual sponsored walk raises money for the school fund to support learning in and out of school for example the school show, and various curricular enrichment activities. We encourage participation in such activities and we actively promote them through the school website, magazine, wall displays and the annual awards ceremony. The school motivation and awards scheme focuses on the achievements and attainment of learners and many of our learners with additional support needs receive awards at the annual awards ceremony. In response to a request from pupils a space in school has been made available for prayer/quiet contemplation and partnership working with the chaplaincy team led to the implementation of a prayer space in school for one week which all learners participated in and evaluated as highly effective.

HOW DO WE CONSULT AND ENGAGE WITH PUPILS AND PARENTS?

The school engages with parents/carers and young people in a wide range of ways to elicit their views on how the school can be improved. This forms part of a calendar of self-evaluation activities.

As part of the VSE in October 2014 groups of young people and parents/carers were spoken to in order to gather their views on the curriculum, learning and teaching and the effectiveness of our approaches to supporting learners.

Other ways we consult with pupils and parents/carers:

Parental Questionnaires are issued at parents' evenings to maximize returns and will focus on areas of work or developments pertinent to that particular year group.

Head Teacher focus groups are a regular feature on consultation with young people and again will focus on areas of work or developments pertinent to the age and stage of the young people but always gather their views on their learning and progress. These views are then shared with staff on the February in-service day prior to establishing our whole school and departmental improvement objectives for the following session.

The parent council is a very effective consultative body which is used effectively to give feedback on progress with improvement objectives but also has its own improvement agenda.

The school magazine and website give the wider parent forum information but also invites feedback.

HOW WELL DO OUR CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN AND ACHIEVE?

1.1 Improvements in performance

2.1 Learners' experiences

Existing strengths:

We have a positive ethos. Almost all learners are well-behaved, enjoy school and benefit from mutually respectful relationships with staff was confirmed during the Education Authority's Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) process in October 2014.

Almost all learners are enthusiastic participants in their learning and can talk well about their learning. Learners contribute well to the school and its wider community. Our S6 leadership team effectively supports the school and wider community. For example, a number of seniors peer support in lessons in school and at a local primary; a group of seniors work as buddies supporting vulnerable younger pupils and school events are well supported by senior guides and hosts. All learners in S1 and S2 have benefitted from leadership days to develop their skills which progress into the opportunity to undertake the Higher Leadership course in the senior phase. Young people's achievements in sporting, cultural and citizenship are celebrated through the school magazine, website and wall of fame. Our audit of participation in wider achievement opportunities in and beyond school indicated that whilst some learners participate in many extra activities that support their development of skills and qualities it also confirmed that we must continue to provide opportunities for all learners to participate in wider achievement opportunities such as our S1 and S2 leadership days and plan further for achievement opportunities for specific groups of learners who are at risk of missing out as well as increase accreditation for achievements. Our staff audit of Health and Wellbeing across the curriculum has given us a clear idea of areas for further work: we will now seek the views of parents/carers and learners on future developments and priorities particularly around internet safety and levels of confidence and resilience amongst our learners.

Leaver destinations continue to show an upward trend with figures equal to or better than VC, Aberdeen City and the National average for two consecutive years. The percentage of learners who leave school having achieved level 4+ literacy and numeracy has been above our VC for the last three years. We are also closing the attainment gap in terms of literacy and numeracy. The percentage of leavers from the most and least deprived who achieved level 4 literacy and numeracy has increased over the last five years and the gap between the two has decreased. There are signs that our Improvement plan activities are beginning to have a positive impact on attainment and closing the gap with our VC for example:

S4 – in 2015 the percentage of learners achieving 5+ National 5 passes has gone from 31% to 43%. The percentage of those achieving at 5+ National 4 passes has gone from 64.91% to 76.58%. In 2015 there was a positive significant RV in National 5 Chemistry, English, Hospitality Practical Cookery, Mathematics, Modern Studies and PE. In Chemistry, Practical Cookery and PE there has been a strong, positive pattern of attainment over the last two years.

S5 - the percentage of learners (based on S4 roll) achieving 1+ at SCQF 6 has gone from 39.83% to 52.73%; 3+ from 22.88% to 31.82% and 5+ from 11.86% to 17.27%. In 2015 there was a positive significant RV in Higher Biology, Computing Science, Mathematics, Music, PE and Physics. In the Mathematics and Computing Science there have been positive patterns of attainment over the last five years.

S6 – In 2015 there was strong attainment in Higher Graphic Communication, Higher History and Higher Media Studies. There was also strong attainment in Advanced Higher Mathematics.

The VSE in October 2014 as well as the school's own self-evaluation procedures identified subjects for targeted Raising Attainment Plans (RAPs): Art and Design, Business, Engineering Science, Modern Studies, Geography and Graphic Communication. These have had a positive impact in terms of improving A-C pass rates, RV and Mean Band. RAPs will remain in place in Graphic Communication and Engineering Science and there will be an additional RAP for Design and Manufacture for 2015 – 16. Attainment in all other subjects will continue to be monitored through our regular self-evaluation calendar and analysis of attainment data.

Our improvement activities, for example our Raising Attainment Plans and our efforts to improve learning and teaching are beginning to impact on attainment as can be seen in the improvements in key measures and in targeted subjects. The quality of learning and teaching is good in most lessons and very good in some lessons.

Priorities for future development:

- BGE – continue to develop staff confidence in recognising what success looks like and so improving assessment of and feedback on young people's progress in their learning.
- Senior phase - continue to improve attainment to bring it into line with our VC in all key measures and maintain the positive trend in 3 year averages and five year trends.
- Achievement - identify the group(s) of learners at risk of missing out and provide appropriate activities and the monitoring and tracking of skills development through achievement.

HOW WELL DO WE SUPPORT OUR CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE TO DEVELOP AND LEARN?

Existing strengths:

Almost all learners engage well with tasks and activities and are being given increasing opportunities to work together effectively in groups. Learners report that they get help with their learning when they need it although some did not feel confident in asking for help. In response we developed posters for each classroom and teaching area. The school has a clear behaviour management policy which has been regularly reviewed and updated in light of feedback from staff and young people. The exclusion rate has declined over the last five years and alternatives to exclusion are used judiciously to support learners and their learning. Learners are well known by the Heads of House who are currently reviewing their PSE programme to ensure that they can maximise the time they spend supporting them to reflect on their progress in their learning and make informed decisions about their future learning and pathways. In addition this is supplemented by other departments where feedback supports and encourages young people to reflect on and take responsibility for their own learning for example in Mathematics. In the senior phase teachers are becoming more skilled at setting appropriately aspirational targets and all learners in S4 – S6 are supported through our assertive mentoring scheme for learners to take more responsibility for their own learning and attainment.

The VSE confirmed the need for further work to ensure appropriate pace, challenge, differentiation and engagement in some lessons. We are working on further improving tasks, activities and resources to ensure they are more closely matched to the varying needs of the learners and we have invested in new technology to ensure sufficient pace and challenge and engagement in school and at home. Almost all learners are making very good progress from their prior attainment in Mathematics, Reading and Science and the school is adding value between the beginning of S1 and then end of S2. Our attainment in S4 is better than MidYIS predictions. Staff have information on the prior attainment of learners when they arrive in school and further work, particularly in literacy and numeracy is taking place to ensure a greater shared understanding of standards and to improve transition and progression from P7 to S1.

Planning to support learners with additional support needs begins early in the transition process and the staff confidential file provides information for all teachers on the individual needs of young people so that appropriate planning for their needs can take place. As they progress through school teachers are consulted about the targets for learners who have IEPs and feedback on their progress is provided to pupils, parents and staff through our Pupil Support Management Group (PSMG) review meetings. Presently there are no learners with a CSP. The PSMG is a highly effective means of working in partnership and keeping the views of the learners at the centre to ensure that access to and review of support is timely and appropriate. Annual analysis of the attainment and achievement of learners with additional support needs indicates that almost all make appropriate progress and some make more progress than might have been predicted based on their prior attainment.

We have reviewed and developed our curriculum rationale around the principles of curriculum design to support learners to be their best as well as our core skills framework to ensure learners develop the key literacy, numeracy and health and well-being skills. Learners follow a broad curriculum in S1 – 2 and following wide consultation, they now have the opportunity to specialise in some curriculum areas in S3. Our core skills framework has been at the heart of planning for learning across the BGE as well as progression to the fourth level Es and Os in S3. Teachers have been using significant aspects of learning to review courses to ensure that learners are well prepared for the senior phase and developing appropriate skills for learning life and work.

The curriculum in the senior phase is built on choices made by young people. We work effectively with partners; Aberdeen College, the City Campus and our consortia schools to ensure learners can gain qualifications in line with their aspirations and plans for life beyond school. We provide a variety of pathways through and beyond the senior phase. Where appropriate each year learners who are at risk of missing out complete SQA courses which result in Personal Achievement Awards and Personal Development Awards. This session some learners will undertake National 5 Life skills Mathematics. This will have a positive impact on the attainment profile of individual learners and support their progression to National 5 Mathematics in S5. We are reviewing the literacy attainment to ensure all learners leave school with appropriate skills and qualifications. We have an effective partnership with the parent council a very active group with a growing membership. They support the school in its self-evaluation procedures and are a valued sounding board for new developments.

Priorities for future development:

- Continue to ensure there is appropriate pace, challenge, differentiation and engagement by supporting staff to engage in high quality dialogue about learning and teaching.
- We will evaluate the impact of our assertive mentoring of S4 – 6 through pupil focus groups, staff feedback, engagement with parents, and by analysis of attainment data.

HOW WELL DO WE IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR WORK?

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

Existing strengths:

There is a growing commitment to self-evaluation to secure improvements: staff are committed to and engage well with the wide range of evidence which is gathered through our calendar self-evaluation activities. CLPL is clearly linked to our school improvement priorities e.g. cooperative learning training, understanding autism, ADHD and Assessment is for Learning, understanding standards events and school working groups, Insight. Our current work on peer observation and feedback with a focus on pace, challenge, differentiation and engagement is beginning to improve the quality of professional dialogue on learning and teaching. A wide range of staff willingly take the lead on aspects of school improvement e.g. the student council, higher leadership, numeracy, literacy, health and wellbeing, achievement, citizenship, enterprise, ICT, Motivation and Awards, discipline and extra-curricular activities.

There is a clear calendar of self-evaluation activities. A rigorous analysis of exam results takes place using Insight data and, following discussion, action is taken to bring about improvement. The views of learners, parents and staff are sought, gathered and shared with all staff and positively influence priorities for improvement plans at whole school, faculty and subject level. For example changes to the S3 curriculum were made based on the views of learners and their teachers that their progress was being hindered by a lack of specialisation in S3 in the expressive arts.

Depute Head Teachers (DHTs) meet regularly with their link Principal Teachers (PTs) and provide proportionate support and challenge as they progress with improvement objectives. A number of Raising Attainment Plans (RAPs) in place in 2014 – 15 have resulted in improvements in at least one element of attainment. Collegiate time has a clear focus on engagement with key development objectives and development of courses and programmes. Our focussed twice yearly meetings between all Faculty PTs, the Head Teacher and link DHT are used to analyse and review attainment data, plan improvement objectives and discuss progress with whole school improvement objectives. School working groups are closely linked to the school improvement plan objectives ensuring that almost all staff contribute to school improvement activities. Support staff have regular opportunities to contribute their views through questionnaires and meetings with the HT. As a result they effectively support specific initiatives such as the assertive mentoring scheme and co-operative learning. The parent council is working hard to improve the engagement of parents/carers with the learning of their children as well as to support initiatives such as assertive mentoring and monitoring and tracking. To date they have produced a "How can parents/carers support learning?" booklet and helped draw up a strategy for supporting parents to keep their children safe on line as part of the school's approach to 360 safe.

We place a high importance on developing the leadership skills of young people at all stages through, for example, our programme of leadership days and Higher leadership in the senior phase, the student council, the sports council, buddies, prefect system and head team. The student council and pupil voice activities mean

young people have regular opportunities to contribute towards improving the school for example the curriculum, canteen food and water fountains.

Priorities for future development:

- Evaluate the impact of assertive mentoring on levels of aspiration, confidence and attainment of young people.
- Build a teacher learning community to support, develop and embed co-operative learning strategies to further improve and sustain pace, challenge, differentiation and engagement.

OUR KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR NEXT SESSION

School: Bridge of Don Academy

Local Authority key strategic priorities for improvement:

Priority 1 Accelerate progress to improve learning outcomes for specific underperforming groups – objective 4: to provide an effective CPD Programme including school to school support to improve quality of teaching to address underperformance. Specifically raising attainment through the implementation of learning and teaching policy, pedagogy and practice. Schools will be focusing on specific curriculum area as identified within their audit.

School key strategic priorities for improvement:

Learning and Teaching: to improve pace, challenge, differentiation and engagement to improve attainment.

Universal Support: to ensure appropriate support is in place so young people can reflect on and take more responsibility for their own learning and progress.

Monitoring, tracking and assessment: to continue to develop our approaches to assessment to ensure young people have appropriate and timeous information so they know what progress they are making in their learning and what their next steps are.

Bridge of Don ASG key strategic priorities for improvement:

Ensuring skills progression in literacy and numeracy from P7 to S1 via our ASG literacy and numeracy working groups.