



# Moray Education

## Self-evaluation 2020-2021

---

*Improving Outcomes...for Moray's children and young people*



**Buckie Panorama**



**Strathisla Children's Centre**



**Kinloss Primary School**



**Speyside High School**

# Table of Contents

Item	Page
Our Moray Context	3
Our Improvement Journey	4
Our Service and Structure	6
Leading through change: Covid-19	8
Our Moray Education Priorities	13
Improving Outcomes for all	14
Curriculum	16
Learning, Teaching and Assessment	17
Supporting all Learners	18
Leadership	19
Self-evaluation for self-improvement	20
Commendations	21
Next Steps	22



Logie  
Elgin High  
Millbank Hythehill West End  
Milne's High  
Lhanbryde  
Elgin Academy  
St Thomas  
Portgordon Glenlivet Newmill  
Greenwards  
Lossiemoth High  
Knockando  
Cullen  
Crangiellachie  
Findochty  
Rothiemay  
Burghead  
Morrisblack  
Seafield  
Dallas  
Bishopmill  
Tomintoul  
Palmuir  
Dyke  
Cluny  
Aberlour  
Kinloss  
Portessie  
St Gerardine  
Mosstodloch  
Hoppman  
Applegrove  
Alves  
St Peter's  
St Sylvester's  
Botriphnie  
Crossroads  
East End  
Portgordon  
Linkwood  
Rother

**Moray Schools**

Buckie Community High  
Forres Academy  
Keith Grammar  
Speyside High

Moray has attainment gaps in the upper deciles, specifically decile 7 where 25% of our cohort resides. 9.8% of pupils are registered for free school meals (FSM). Approximately 57% of the population live in the 5 main towns of Elgin, Forres, Buckie, Lossiemouth and Keith. Population estimates suggested that two thirds of the Moray population are of working age, one fifth are aged under 16 years and the remaining one fifth are of pensionable age.

As an improving authority, Moray Education's core aim is to raise attainment across our schools in order to improve outcomes for all Moray's children and young people, ensuring progression to positive and sustained school leaver destinations.



# Our Improvement Journey

Session 2020/2021 was a year unlike any other, with Covid-19 ever-present in our Education system, requiring our school communities to continue to operate within a climate of Covid-19 risk assessment and mitigations. As such, the year started with uncertainty of what may arise, following lockdown in Term 4, session 2019/2020.

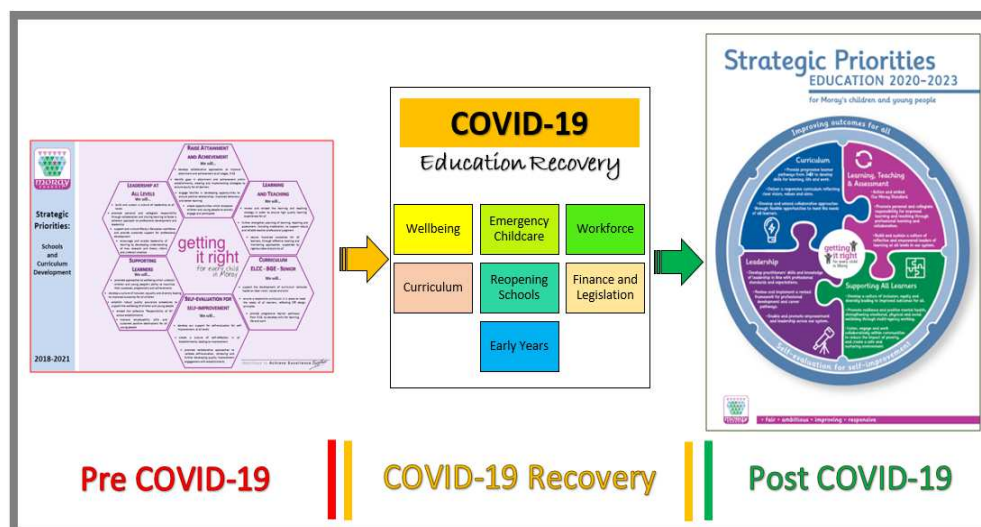
## Linkwood Primary School and Nursery; opened January 2021



Nonetheless, we remained positive and during session 2020/2021 as we continued our expansion of Early Learning and Childcare with the opening of three new Nursery stand-alone buildings: Cullen, Keith and Pilmuir. We also progressed to completion of two new school buildings: Linkwood Primary School and Nursery, and Lossiemouth High School and Community campus, including a swimming pool and leisure facilities.

In order to ensure we continued to raise standards and improve outcomes for all children and young people whilst dealing with the continued impact of Covid-19, we developed a COVID Education Recovery Plan which was made up of 7 workstreams, each led by a central officer across the Education, Communities and Organisational Development section.

Following consultation during 2019/20, the strategic priorities for 2020-2023 were developed and were progressed during the session, initially alongside the Covid-19 Recovery Plan. Extensive consultation on the new plan was undertaken by the wider central team, the strategy group and our Trade Union partners. Each area within the new strategic plan is led by central officers and actions developed and completed through working groups as appropriate.

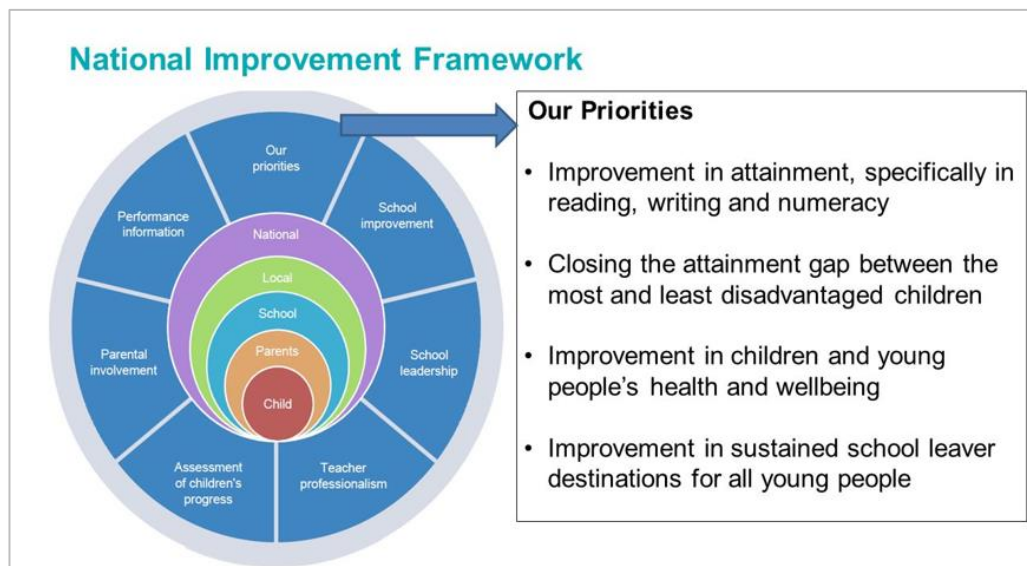




The Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably had an impact on the lives of all children, young people and families across Moray. We now begin to see the longer-term impact including reports from schools and establishments of wellbeing and mental health concerns. This self-evaluation review therefore extends more widely than the limited scope of our National Improvement Framework plan and includes:

- Progress made over the last year
- The impact of Covid-19 on children, young people and families in Moray
- How service requirements will need to adapt and be flexible to deliver improved outcomes for all

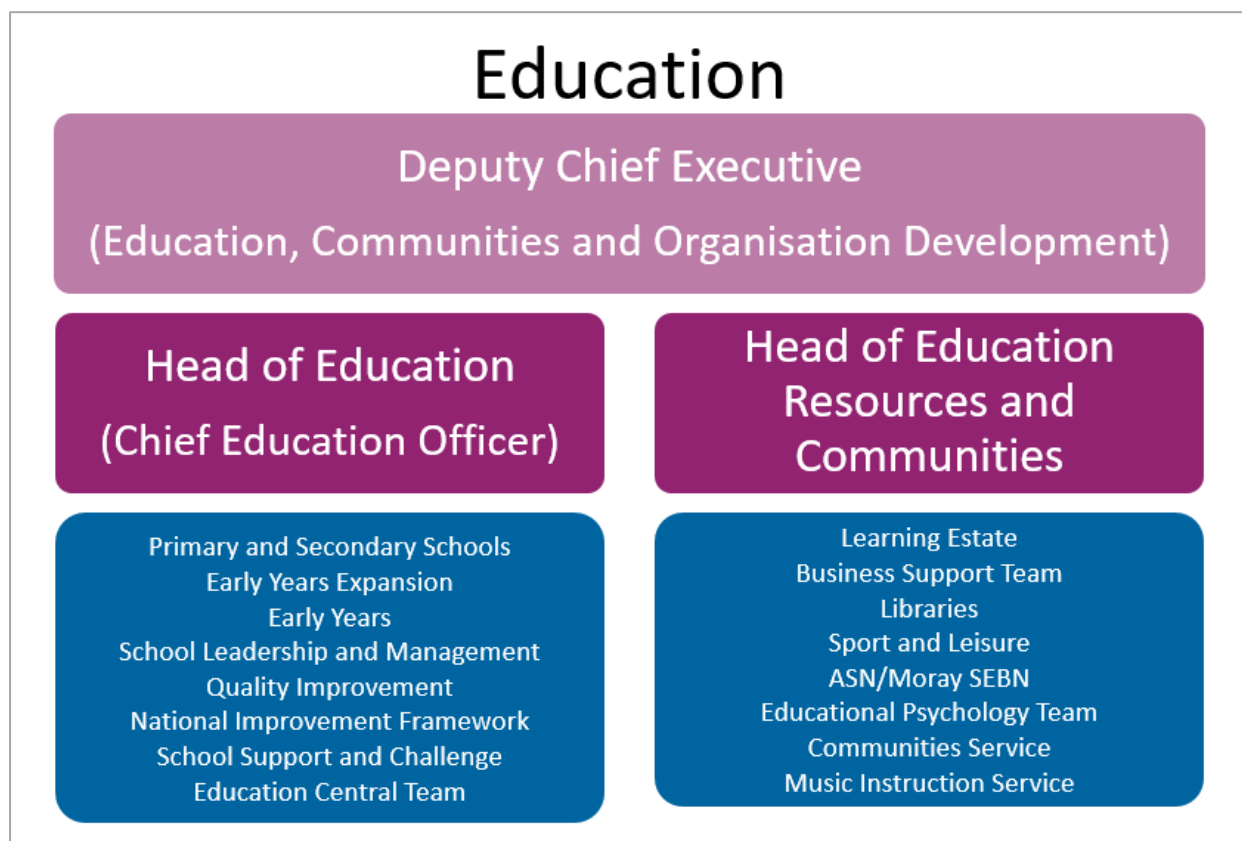
The Education Strategic Plan reflects the four National Improvement Framework priorities and the accompanying document outlines our National Improvement Framework Plan and Education Service plan. In Moray, through the National Improvement Framework drivers our aims are:



All School Improvement Plans and agreed Working Time Agreements continue to reflect the key priorities outlined above, with increased focus on recovery and renewal as we learn to live with Covid-19. We recognise the importance of partnership working across our schools and establishments, where everyone has a role to play. Learners remain at the centre of all that we do where the role of wider partners is not underestimated in ensuring the best outcomes for all children, young people and families.

# Our Service and Structure

Moray Education sits within the wider Education, Communities and Organisational Development section of the Moray Council. Furthermore, Education governance is overseen by two Heads of Service reporting directly to the Deputy Chief Executive. Children's Social Work Services are currently transitioning to the Moray Integrated Joint Board (IJB) with an interim Head of Service leading this work.



Within Moray Education, a number of Service Managers and team members lead aspects of Service delivery overseen by the respective Head of Service: Head of Education (Chief Education Officer) and Head of Education Resources and Communities. These include:

Education	Education Resources and Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years Service Manager</li> <li>• Senior Project Manager – ELC Expansion</li> <li>• Quality Improvement Managers</li> <li>• Head Teachers</li> <li>• Quality Improvement Officers</li> <li>• Primary Advisor</li> <li>• ELC Continuous Improvement Officers</li> <li>• Principal Teacher – Early Years</li> <li>• Nursery Managers</li> <li>• Early Years Teachers</li> <li>• Early Years Officers</li> <li>• Childminder Development Officer</li> <li>• Learning Technologists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal Educational Psychologist</li> <li>• Educational Psychology Team</li> <li>• Business Support Team Manager</li> <li>• Business Support Team</li> <li>• Principal Teacher - Music Instruction</li> <li>• Senior Project Manager – Learning Estate</li> <li>• Sport and Leisure Manager</li> <li>• Principal Librarian</li> <li>• HT SEBN</li> <li>• ESO ASN (2)</li> <li>• Principal Teacher – EAL</li> <li>• Principal Teacher – SES</li> <li>• Community Service Manager/Team</li> </ul>



The core Education department overseen by the Head of Education (Chief Education Officer) has undergone a considerable period of change with the structure now moving to a period of stability. At the end of session 2020/2021, a number of vacancies existed with recruitment to take place at the start of the new session. This has led to significant workload, pressure and the re-prioritisation of work-plans in order to achieve service improvement.

Education Resources and Communities department continues to go through a period of change management and transformation which include:

- A review of Additional Support Needs (ASN)
- Change management in relation to key posts – Leisure, Sport and Library Services
- Establishment of a Learning Estate Team
- Restructure of Communities Service including Community Learning and Development (CLD)

We continue to work on shared priorities with buy-in across the Education, Communities and Organisational Development departments linked with Education. As structural changes continue to be embedded, partnership working will strengthen with clear emerging cross-cutting themes and priorities to lead service improvement. A new governance structure for wider Children's Services is being established and will bring greater cohesiveness and collaboration to achieve improvements within localities.

All of the above provides a clear structure to drive improvements at all levels and staff across Education are fully aware of our aims and strategy. The engagement of all families and communities in committing to improving educational outcomes is vital to ensure improvement.



**Moray Early Learning and Childcare**



## Leading through change: Covid-19

Session 2020/2021 started with a return to school buildings after an initial lockdown from April to June 2020. The Education Recovery Plan was a key driver in the preparation to return to physical re-opening and attendance at our establishments with a high level of mitigations in place to minimise risk associated with Covid-19.

Covid-19 led to lockdown of our Moray schools once more in January to March 2021 on direction of the Scottish Government. This follows from prior lockdown in late March 2020 extending to June 2020. Schools and officers at Headquarters worked together once more in establishing new ways of working across our local authority and schools, using intelligence gathered and lessons learned during the 2020 lockdown to inform 2021 lockdown activities.

Contingency plans were put in place, including planning and quality assurance of Remote Learning and its delivery. Following an initial recovery period from August to December 2020, the further period of lockdown from start of term in January to March 2021 led to re-establishment of Remote Learning and childcare provision for children of critical key workers, identified vulnerable children and Additional Support Needs (ASN) pupils.

On first lockdown in March 2020, the majority of Moray schools provided paper-based resources with most beginning to embrace new digital platforms including Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom. Once established, all schools refined learning and teaching delivery methods, reviewing what was in place and streamlining arrangements for remote learning and teaching.

On lockdown in January 2021, schools were better equipped in terms of established Remote Learning practices based on prior lockdown experience, mixing Remote Learning approaches in order to maximise learners' experiences including live teaching, digital approaches and paper-based books and resources following feedback from previous lockdown surveys from key stakeholder groups.

While considerable requests for live teaching were made initially, based on research available and key guidance issues, a variety of Remote Learning approaches were adopted as a more suitable approach which *included* live learning. Approaches also extended to pre-recorded voiceover PowerPoints, research based activities, flipped learning approaches and activity based learning – including family learning challenges – to name a few approaches embraced. Quality Assurance of Remote Learning offer was well considered by our schools, strengthening learning experiences further following feedback during 2021 lockdown.

Through regular Head Teacher virtual meetings, progress reports, intelligence gathered during previous lockdown, engagement and participation rates, it is noted that considerable progress has been made across our Moray Schools in Remote Learning approaches. In Moray, we further developed Remote Learning and Teaching Guidance Toolkits to support our schools with all schools adopting core online learning platforms in support of Remote Learning. In March 2021, a Remote Learning Survey was completed by all of our schools, exploring similar themes to those in the Remote Learning surveys completed in late May/early June 2020.



## Digital Inclusion: Connecting our children and young people to learning

During session 2020/2021 work continued to progress digital innovation and inclusion for all Moray's children and young people. Our strategy supports the changing attitudes and approaches which are required to ensure ongoing success and innovation in this area.

This is based around 4 essential and interrelated objectives:

- Improve access to and engagement in digital technology for learners
- Develop the digital skills and confidence of teachers
- Empower leaders to drive innovation and investment in digital technology for learning and teaching
- Ensure that digital technology is a central consideration in all areas of curriculum and assessment delivery

The developing Moray Digital Innovation Strategy has 3 main focus areas:

- Digital Inclusion
- Learning and Teaching
- Curriculum

During the period of school closures, Moray Council used funding from the Scottish Government for an additional 1500 laptops for young people. Windows based laptops were selected during the pandemic as a working solution which was required as soon as possible. Fortunately, this could be delivered using the Council's current Infrastructure and technical knowledgebase. Other solutions would present additional barriers to young people being able to access their schoolwork and community in a timely fashion during the period of disruption.

Additionally, we invested further funding and support into the "Always on VPN" project which enabled young people and teaching staff to access the school's network (school drives and systems) from both home and school in a robust and secure manner. This will also support remote learning, pupils who are self-isolating and any potential future lockdown as well as school closure and the recovery phase as well as future digital approaches and developments.

**Applegrove Primary School**



**Pilmuir Primary School**



## New Service Creation: Critical Key Worker Childcare

We are indebted to our staff and volunteers across Moray Education and our wider Council services for their support of the critical key worker and ASN/vulnerability childcare hub provision across all three Phases. Following on from successful Childcare Hub Provision during first lockdown (March to June 2020 – Phase 1), we collaboratively implemented and operated a revised Summer Childcare Hub provision in line with Scottish Government direction and guidance (July to August 2020 Summer break – Phase 2). Later we provided Emergency Childcare on school return for children of key workers where no other childcare was available and both parents are key workers (January 2021 - Phase 3) with support for children and families with identified support needs and vulnerability during second lockdown.

The First Minister announced that from the first day of the new school term in Scotland in January 2021, schools would only reopen for emergency childcare of children of critical key workers, established in each of our schools where demand presented. Online learning started for all other learners in line with school approaches from 11 January 2021 until April 2021. Moray Council Nurseries and all other partner providers only opened to key worker and vulnerable children.

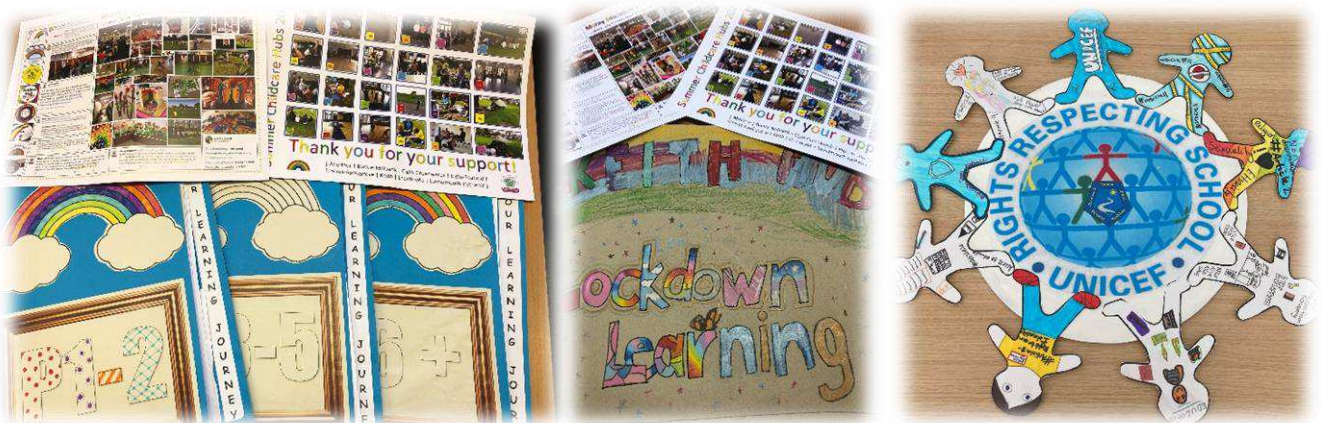
Uptake in January 2021 was considerably higher than previously with all schools available to be opened for critical key worker childcare on a local basis, with 49 of our 53 operational schools offering this support to children and families, whether critical key worker, or those with identified ASN or vulnerability. Across all 3 childcare hub phases, feedback has been very positive on provision planned and delivered. This is captured within our Moray Education Surveys undertaken on Remote Learning during lockdown 1 and our Schools' Survey during lockdown 2.

For Phase 3 hub provision for children and ASN/vulnerability support, 2,752 requests were received and 2,057 were granted. On average, 1,140 children attended each day, notably higher than Phase 1 and 2 hubs with lockdown 2 restrictions different to lockdown 1. Further information is provided below where only S1 and S2 pupils were eligible in secondary:

Average Primary Attendance across January to April 2021 – 975 (16% of overall 2020 Primary Pupil Roll census of 6,943 Primary pupils in Moray)

Average Secondary (S1/S2) Attendance across January to April 2021 – 165 (3% of overall 2020 Secondary Pupil Roll census of 5,171)\*

Average % Key worker Primary: 69%  
Average % Key worker Secondary: 57%  
Average % Vulnerable Primary: 19%  
Average % Vulnerable Secondary: 24%  
Average % ASN Primary: 12%  
Average % ASN Secondary: 19%



## Return to our Schools: March/April 2021

On 2 March 2021 the First Minister updated Parliament on the next phase of return to school building plans dependent on continued suppression of the virus. All children in P4-7 returned to school full-time on 15 March. Secondary schools prioritised in-school learning for senior phase learners to support certification and building upon current arrangements for those subjects where there is a high level of practical activity as well as those learners who are identified for additional support. Schools were also asked to ensure strict compliance with Level 4 restrictions.

From start of term 4 in April 2021, all pupils returned to in-school learning with learning and wellbeing support provided as identified with learners.

## Support and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing support and advice was provided for children, young people and staff recognising the impact of Covid-19 and a further lockdown. In particular, schools were focusing on signs of emerging mental health issues, widening of poverty related and other attainment gaps due to poor engagement or participation during lockdown. Further detail is provided in the Supporting all Learners section below.

## Communication and Collaboration

Communication and collaboration were strengthened throughout session 2020/2021 with regular and continued engagement with leaders through a variety of methods and approaches. In Moray Education, this included:

Communication Method	Impact
Head Teacher and ELC Manager Microsoft Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2-way real time communication and information sharing including immediate responses to emerging issues</li><li>• Agreed Moray approaches for consistency across our schools and establishments</li></ul>
Weekly Head Teacher Virtual Briefings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weekly attendance averaging 95% across the session supported collaboration and clarity on Moray approaches</li><li>• Drop-in sessions scheduled at end of each meeting ensured emerging queries were dealt with timely</li><li>• Capacity building with DHTs attending in place of HT with greater understanding of Moray system and leaders, leading to local collaboration</li><li>• Link officer had visual check-in weekly as a wellbeing support</li><li>• Collaboration increased, with leaders connecting due to sharing practice throughout the session</li></ul>
Weekly Friday briefing – Head Teachers/ELC Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National and local updates and information shared regularly and in a common format</li><li>• Other Council services/departments can contribute and have greater awareness of information being shared regularly</li></ul>
Communication with parents/carers, pupils and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular letters where guidance had changed or key transition point was approaching (e.g. start/end of holiday period or outbreaks) ensured a common message was relayed across our Moray communities</li></ul>
Virtual Meetings – Moray Parent Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Termly meeting with Moray Parent Forum (Parent Council Chairs) ensured clarity and opportunity for wider discussion around mitigations and Moray decisions including Remote Learning and safety</li><li>• FAQs were created to reduce uncertainty and to share more widely with parent bodies. Opportunities to ask questions in real time to reduce uncertainty</li></ul>



The culture of collaboration has been improved, building on virtual methods and encouraging an open communication style across the service. Newly appointed leaders have been able to make connections with colleagues which will grow and develop. This will be further strengthened, building on practice and our response to the pandemic which was flexible and agile. Collaboration with Trade Unions has been further extended over the last year as the pandemic triggered the establishment of weekly meetings between Trade Union representatives and Council departments.

Improved collaboration has extended to relationships between school leaders and Trade Union representatives at school level as staff teams have worked to develop and implement risk assessments. All briefings related to Scottish Government school recovery guidance were agreed with LNCT joint secretaries which has helped the Education Service respond appropriately and in a timely manner as the pandemic has evolved.

Collaboration has improved across Children and Family Services in Moray with the establishment of Multi-Agency Support Hubs (MASH) processes, involving key partners: Education, Social Work, Health and third sector with support from Police Scotland. This work continues in support of children and young people across Moray in need of care and protection and will continue to develop under the new Moray Children Services Governance Structure which is strengthening planning and support for families across localities. Our Locality Networks continue to use local intelligence to strengthen support for children and families as the impact of the pandemic emerges. The Locality Networks include community groups from each area who are committed to working with council services to respond effectively and appropriately to the emerging needs of children, young people and families in each locality.

In Early Years, work has progressed at pace to ensure the roll-out of the Early Learning and Childcare Expansion of 1140 hours entitlement including a new build programme along with an extensive period of recruitment. A sustainable hourly rate has been developed led by the Financial Sustainability Group using the findings from an IPSOS-MORI survey in order to calculate the rate. As a result, Moray now pays the second highest private provider hourly rate in Scotland. An outline Business Case is currently being completed as part of the Moray Growth Deal to take forward an Early Years' STEM Growth Deal bid.



**St Gerardine Primary School**



**Millbank Primary School**

# Our Moray Education priorities



Our Moray Education priorities are framed in our Moray Education 2020-2023 Strategic Plan with infographic providing summary of our key focus areas, aligned to the NIF, LOIP and Corporate Plan.

As we continue our journey through the pandemic, improving outcomes and raising attainment and achievement for all children and young people in Moray continues to be a key focus to ensure we address the four core NIF priorities. This plan is the fourth evolution of our Moray journey where with pride, our leaders are fully involved in and supportive of our jointly owned service priorities. The infographic illustrates the interconnected and interdependent relationship of our critical priority areas where work on one will rely on and impact upon any one of the others. This is understood by all across our system.

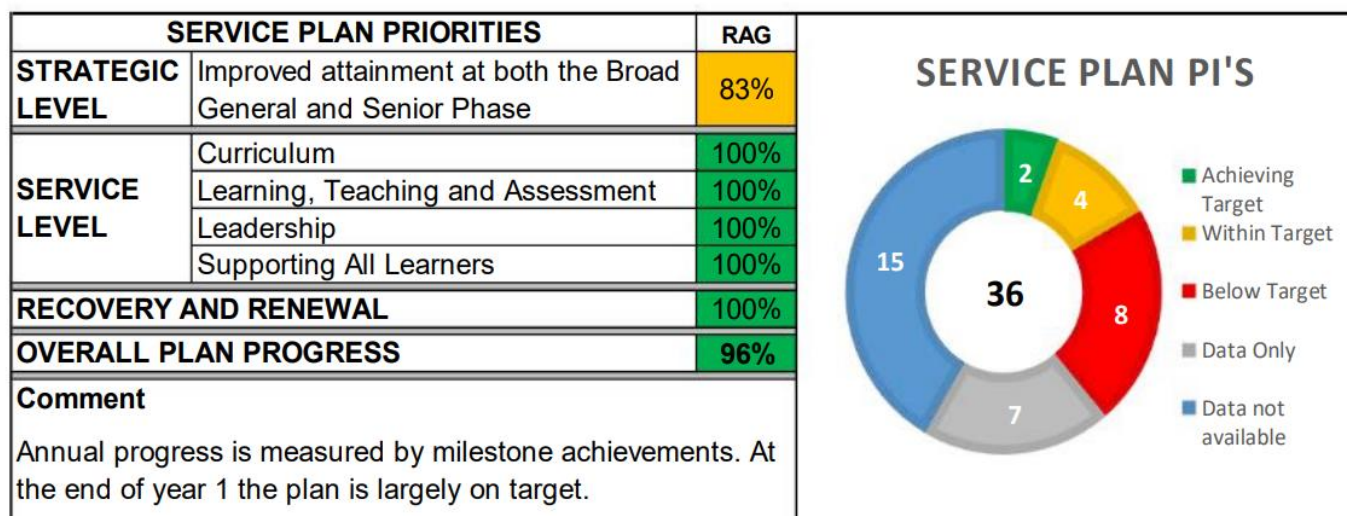
This is further evidenced through the change in narrative from 'the authority' to 'in Moray we...'. All establishments are clear on the improvement drivers which are evidenced through statutory plans. In Moray we have a common approach to guidance and support templates which are used by all for strategic planning, reflective of our Moray Education Strategic Plan 2020-2023. The plan is displayed

across all establishments and learning areas.

All improvement plans are quality assured with Quality Improvement visits providing opportunity for scrutiny, support and challenge of school progress and impact of actions identified. School and service plans are streamlined with focus on four key priority areas with core focus on improving outcomes for all, underpinned by robust self-evaluation for self-improvement.

We continue to work with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor in supporting our schools – particularly those with Pupil Equity Funding – to close poverty related and other identified attainment gaps. This has included virtual support visits and working with central officers to ensure cohesive working.

Across our Education Service Plan priorities at year end (March 2021) and despite disruption to our Education system as a result of Covid-19 as the infographic below illustrates, we remain largely on target with Performance Indicators aligned to our Strategic Plan:



# Improving Outcomes for All

Following the Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) published in August 2020 prepared by Audit Scotland (Accounts Commission) highlighted a number of key messages across Moray Council and in specific regard to educational attainment:

- Relatively low educational attainment is a concern, with services delivered within a schools' estate in the worst condition in Scotland
- Recent attainment initiatives to address this, including a review of school buildings, must be taken forward, with engagement from school leaders and local communities.

All school leaders were fully aware of the need to improve which has continued to be a focus of Head Teacher Strategic Meetings as well as central improvement planning. Prior to the pandemic, a seminar was held with all school middle leaders to share the findings and seek their support in driving improvement at all levels. This, along with other work with leaders at all levels has led to development of current priorities framed within our Education Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and the requirement to review and update key policy documents. As a result, the service has a revised:

- Raising Attainment Strategy and toolkit
- Learning and Teaching Strategy and support materials
- Play Strategy and support package

Although session 2020/2021 was disrupted by the pandemic, Quality Assurance processes continued even although statutory reporting was paused. Locally, the secondary attainment review process continued along with the gathering of indicative Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence level data (ACEL) across our Primary and Secondary schools. School Quality Assurance visits were undertaken remotely with support and challenge through data and views.

Attainment data from 2020 is not directly comparable with that of previous years (and only available for secondary Senior Phase). Historical data shows an overall improvement in the number of children and young people achieving CfE levels. There continues to be local and national evidence to suggest need for a focus on literacy and numeracy and particularly as we emerge from two separate lockdowns and their impact.

As the SQA Examination diet was cancelled for 2020, an alternative model for certification was introduced whereby schools and practitioners were required to work together and gather demonstrated and inferred evidence on candidate performance to determine estimated grades. Following an announcement by the Deputy First Minister in mid-August 2020, candidates were awarded the centre estimated grades determined by practitioners. This model was very different to previous years and practitioners and Senior Phase pupils are to be congratulated on their commitment and contribution to gathering robust evidence. A clear process agreed by all was established for moderation and verification purposes.

Key Performance Improvements are highlighted as follows:

	2018/2019	2019/2020
S4: % pupils attaining level 4 Literacy and Numeracy	78.9%	86.7%
S4: % pupils attaining level 5 Literacy and Numeracy	46.2%	53.6%
Leavers: % pupils attaining level 4 Literacy and Numeracy	84.9%	86.3%
Leavers: % pupils attaining level 4 Numeracy	87.2%	88.3%
Leavers: % achieving 5+ @ SCQF5	61.6%	61.9%
Leavers: % achieving 5+ @ SCQF6	29.5%	34.2%
Proportion of pupils entering Positive Destinations	92.8%	93.1%
% Participation for 16-19 year olds	91.3%	93.5%



Areas for further improvement are identified as follows:

	2018/2019	2019/2020
Leavers: % pupils attaining level 4 Literacy	93.3%	93.0%
Leavers: 1+ @ SCQF4 or better	96.4%	95.2%
Looked After school leavers: 1+ @ SCQF4 or better	76.9%	68.4%
% of pupils gaining 5+ @ SCQF5	61.0%	59.0%
% of pupils gaining 5+ @ SCQF6	32.0%	30.0%
Overall Average Total Tariff	815	800

Due to the pandemic, it is not possible to report accurately on the following measures:

- School Attendance (including LAC)
- School Exclusion rates (including LAC)
- ACEL

Moray data trends evidence a need to understand and address levels of performance in literacy and numeracy, particularly the impact of lockdown, lack of engagement and participation as well as support provided while learning at home. Through our Covid-19 surveys, learner levels of engagement were variable across stages, sectors and establishments as highlighted in the tables below:

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

Primary School Stage	Overall % Engagement (Most or above)	Learner levels of engagement: % of Primary Schools in Moray [45]						Not Applicable
		All	Almost All	Most	Majority	Less than half	Few	
P1	86.7%	20.0%	40.0%	26.7%	8.9%	2.2%	0%	0%
P2	86.5%	17.8%	44.4%	24.4%	11.1%	0%	0%	0%
P3	88.9%	11.1%	51.1%	26.7%	11.1%	0%	0%	0%
P4	86.7%	15.6%	42.2%	28.9%	13.3%	0%	0%	0%
P5	93.4%	15.6%	48.9%	28.9%	6.7%	0%	0%	0%
P6	95.6%	15.6%	42.2%	37.8%	4.4%	0%	0%	0%
P7	93.3%	28.9%	40.0%	24.4%	4.4%	2.2%	0%	0%

Secondary School Stage	Overall % Engagement (Most or above)	Learner levels of engagement: % of Secondary Schools in Moray [8]						Not Applicable
		All	Almost All	Most	Majority	Less than half	Few	
S1	87.5%	0%	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0%	0%	0%
S2	62.5%	0%	25.0%	37.5%	25.0%	12.5%	0%	0%
S3	50.0%	0%	25.0%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0%	0%
S4	75.0%	0%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0%	0%
S5	87.5%	0%	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0%	0%	0%
S6	100%	0%	62.5%	37.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Although schools focused on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing from August 2020 to December 2020, the impact of a further lockdown has most definitely impacted on our Moray children and young people. Further exploration of ACCEL data and recovery requires to be undertaken this session including the use of additional Covid-19 monies. Secondary schools are increasingly using data to inform improvements. However, benefits would be gained from a more rigorous approach and from shared learning across schools of good practice, particularly where tracking and monitoring is embedded in practice leading to evidence-informed interventions.



A key focus for this session was development of progression pathways for Early Years settings. In Primary, work was further undertaken in partnership with Early Years to develop the Play Pedagogy Strategy and approaches. Further work in support of Primary practitioners was undertaken through development of Literacy and English framework and comprehension approaches. In partnership with Education Scotland, input on refreshing Curriculum Rationale supported schools to review current approaches through a lockdown lens.

Primary Schools were encouraged to focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, as well as the development of knowledge and application of skills across curricular areas. This approach ensured that post-lockdown, identified gaps in children's learning could be addressed and enabled staff to

accurately assess where children were in need of further support. Curriculum content extended to wider curriculum areas once staff confidence and learner readiness increased.

In Secondary – with a pending cancellation of the SQA Examination diet 2021 – all schools reviewed curriculum content in line with National advice. The Northern Alliance funded Moray Digital Depute Headteacher working in partnership with e-Sgoil promoted the National e-learning offer, also delivering sessions to learners across the North of Scotland. Work continued to extend the curricular offer for Senior Phase pupils in secondary with virtual approaches opening new opportunities for sharing and accessing courses.

Covid-19 led our schools and nurseries to develop a recovery curriculum using intelligence gathered throughout lockdown and on return to school. This ensured focus on key knowledge and skills required – initially led by literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in ELC and Primary, and wider subject areas in secondary led by National advice – to support all learners across the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. After a period of lockdown, a refocus on vision and values has been advocated across our Moray Education system to ensure a smooth transition to formal learning.

Schools continue to work together and engage with partners to support the delivery of the curriculum which included learner participation in outdoor education, digital learning, access to support services and a broadened curriculum offer. Thirteen Moray schools participated in the Education Scotland National Overview of Practice thematic reviews, a number featuring in final reports published by Education Scotland. To build capacity and share practice across Moray, the learning was shared at weekly Head Teacher briefings with opportunity for further engagement and collaboration across schools.



Following experiences to date, further work will be undertaken to assess the appropriateness of the curriculum offer as well as further opportunities for collaboration and to extend the offer, particularly in the Senior Phase to align with labour market information and post-school destinations.

# Learning, Teaching and Assessment



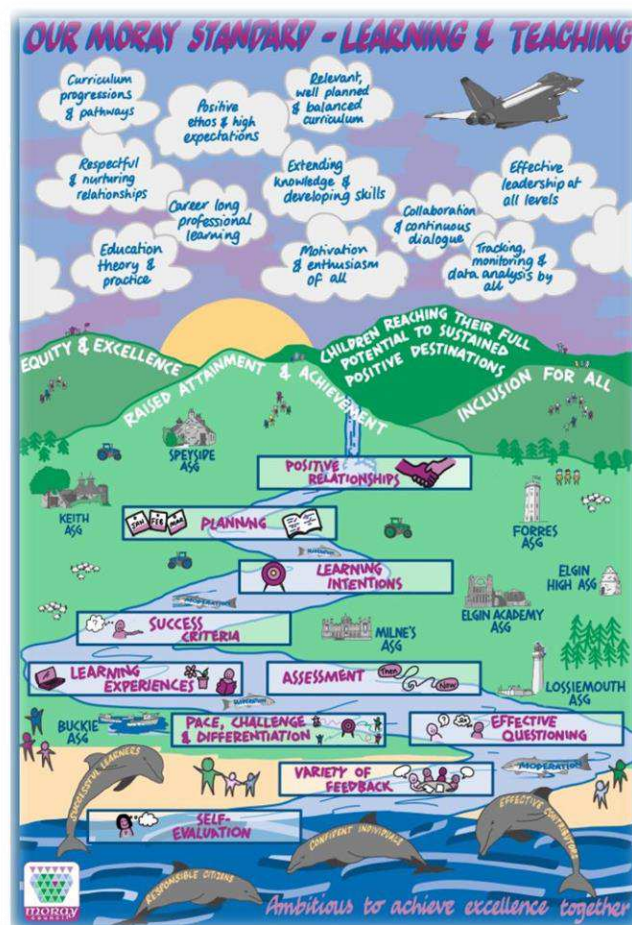
Following the launch of the revised “Our Moray Standard for Learning and Teaching” in early 2020, a range of support resources have been developed and launched including professional learning modules and practitioner support resources for key pedagogical aspects. Planned in-service events to be led by Tom Sherrington were cancelled due to Covid-19. Therefore, as an alternative, four identified support videos and resources were commissioned by Moray Education to strengthen practitioner confidence. Areas identified are those previously highlighted through practitioner surveys as in need of focused development.

Covid-19 led us to develop in January 2021, “Our Moray Standard for Remote Learning and Teaching” along with practitioner toolkit and school self-evaluation planning materials. Our approaches were endorsed by Education Scotland through their review of planning of Remote Learning across all local authorities.

Learning from the first lockdown, critical findings included a range of positive themes emerging including positive feedback on a wide range of Remote Learning activities, research based activities, online learning, paper based learning activities/resources and live learning. Initially a range of learning platforms were evident across our school on first lockdown, with notable adoption of Microsoft Teams across our schools as a core platform for learning, with further use of Google Classroom during second lockdown. Extended approaches to differentiation in planned learning activities to meet the learning needs of a wide range of learners alongside strengthened digital literacy among pupils, staff and parents where appropriate has continued.

Commitment of staff and schools across Moray to plan, deliver, assess and feed back on a wide range of Remote Learning activities is to be applauded. Staff have been empowered to trial new pedagogical approaches and through eliciting learner feedback, continue with those approaches that make the greatest impact on learner achievement and understanding. Practitioners have increased their creativity in assessing learner progress where Covid-19 mitigations in classroom require refocus on formative assessment methodologies and Assessment is for Learning approaches.

In Senior Phase, the model for alternative certification has required teachers across Moray to consider their practice and review approaches to moderation, verification and standardisation of assessment in order to determine provisional estimate grades. As a result, across all subject areas following collaborative working, there is a greater understanding of key assessment processes and standards ensuring learners achieve at appropriate levels.





# Supporting all Learners



Before lockdown schools were committed to supporting all learners. Throughout the session, schools continued to identify how best to support all children and young people, including those identified as vulnerable. All schools were creative in their approaches to developing a culture of inclusion, equity and diversity by keeping in touch with families and engaging with children and young people including those in a rural setting. They continue to develop their approaches based on feedback and making use of digital platforms where appropriate to do so. Effective communication channels and approaches to ensuring wellbeing check-ins with children and families throughout lockdown were appreciated by families and for some, a highlight of a difficult period of time.

As part of the Education Recovery Plan, the Wellbeing Workstream continued to collaborate with all schools and statutory, commissioned and third sector partners within each locality, to ensure the right support was identified and early and timely interventions were put in place for children, young people and their families. Education played a key role in redesigning the Locality Model, including creating the Multi-agency Support Hub (MASH). The primary function of MASH is to support Named Persons and the Team Around the child to identify appropriate and local supports not only for the child, but for the whole family. In order to identify trends in need and support effective resource allocation, senior education representatives attended the Wellbeing Partnership group. This holistic early intervention approach has led to many positive outcomes for a number of families across Moray.

As part of the Transforming Learning programme's ASN review, the Supporting All Learners Strategic group with representation across the wider education service was established with four principal areas. A review of Additional Support Needs, Trauma Informed Practice/Relational Approaches, Workforce Development, Tracking and Monitoring Wellbeing. Further work is underway on key policy revision and development to ensure Moray's children and young people are included, engaged and involved in line with National guidance.

Counselling services were commissioned and as a result, the Exchange offers counselling services from P6 onwards in addition to existing services already procured using Pupil Equity Funding monies by our schools. Furthermore, in partnership with a range of local 3rd sector partners an extended offer of support is available across Moray. Widening this offer enables schools to offer targeted support particularly for those who have found the past year a challenge.

In Moray we remain committed to the Staged Intervention model for those children and young people with identified additional support needs. The increased level of need identified through referral is putting a strain on resources and demand for central support is high. Schools and practitioners report and evidence through reporting mechanisms an increased need in relation to specific behavioural needs with further work now required to support this.



# Leadership



Leadership of improvement is facilitated by Quality Improvement Managers and Early Years' Service Manager in collaboration with Quality Improvement Officers/Continuous Improvement Officers and Senior Leaders in our schools. There is shared ownership and accountability for improvement which enables the service to benefit from wider expertise across the Moray Education system.

Quality Improvement Officers lead improvement work across the priority areas of our Moray Education Strategic Plan 2020-2023. However, there is now a need for Head Teachers and Managers to drive improvement at pace in identified areas in partnership with central officers. The re-establishment of Working Groups will support leadership of change at all levels as well as a review of governance around the Education Strategic

Plan. This will also further build capacity in our Moray system and ensure best possible outcomes for all Moray's children and young people.

The focus of Strategic meetings align with our Moray Education Strategic Plan themes and will increasingly allow opportunities to share practice and collaborate for improvement. Leadership at all levels has increased during and post-pandemic with practitioners at all levels taking on key roles, whether at classroom/virtual classroom level or on return to establishments. The leadership of support staff in particular has been highlighted as an example of good practice, with notable increase in digital confidence among support staff as well as innovative approaches to supporting learners being embraced.

Throughout the session, recruitment to critical senior posts across our schools has continued ensuring strategic leadership for service delivery has been seamless. The number of people applying for senior posts and the required skill level of candidates has been high resulting in positive appointments. The commitment to professional learning and development has been outstanding over the course of the last session with key focus on digital learning, leadership of learning, management and leadership of change.

The Northern Alliance provides a range of Professional Learning opportunities and networks for staff, identified by all 8 Local authorities forming the Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC). Networking opportunities are considerable at Chief Education Officer and Third Tier level and some of these provide opportunities to share experiences and learn from each other. In addition, there is further support to each RIC from Education Scotland. Engagement is variable across ELC and schools and there is merit in further exploration of the added value of collaboration in this way. The virtual Osiris World Education Summit and resources funded by the Northern Alliance has provided opportunities for staff professional development, with key research supporting practice.



Keith Primary School

# Self-evaluation for self-improvement

There is a common approach to self-evaluation for self-improvement across our Moray schools which now needs to be extended to ELC settings to ensure greater consistency and understanding of standards. Extensive work has been undertaken to provide Moray Health Checks and consistent guidance and approach to improvement planning and performance monitoring. Self-evaluation for self-improvement is encouraged at all levels in our system with practitioners reviewing own classroom practice, middle leaders providing support and challenge to departments on improvement activities for raising attainment, all third tier officers for leading school or service improvement and an emphasis on strategic plan priorities. Although there is a consistent approach, this is not fully embedded in practice across the system or fully understood by all, taking into consideration workload and bureaucracy.

Over the course of March 2021, Central Officers updated colleagues on progress to date with lead role and reflected on achievements to date and next steps identified. Common themes and terminology resulted from this as well as emerging priorities and areas for development for the session ahead:



Changes in the central Education team provide opportunities to revisit support and challenge visits and approaches, to improve consistency in all areas of their work, share learning and collaborate. A more robust induction process and standard documentation will support improvements in this area moving forwards as well as establishing consistency across the department. Covid-19 has evidenced the necessity for clear self-evaluation processes and procedures across all aspects of the Education service delivery. This will be a continued focus across session 2021/2022.



# Commendations

We were delighted to have received the following commendations from the Lord Lieutenants of Banffshire and Moray. These were received to recognise the contribution made by so many people and organisations to help others during the pandemic, found to be outstanding and uplifting by the Lord Lieutenants of Moray and Banffshire. The extraordinary effort, thoughtful innovations, superb cooperation, selfless service and devotion to duty were recognised as magnificent and truly inspirational. It is recognised that countless individuals had volunteered while others had gone above and beyond what was expected of them at their normal place of work:

## October 2020

- Moray School Childcare Hubs
- Education Central Team

## March 2021

- Moray School Staff
- Moray Learning Technologists
- The Head of Education and the Quality Improvement Managers



Lossiemouth High School Art



Moray Young Citizens Awards 2020

# Next Steps

The following areas are identified as next steps on our improvement journey where further detail is framed in our Moray Education Improvement Plan 2021/2022 (incorporating the NIF plan):

Improving Outcomes for all	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to progress our Moray Education Raising Attainment Strategy with particular focus on closing the poverty related and wider attainment gaps</li> <li>Further build collaborative working across the Community Planning Partnership to support all learners</li> <li>Improve data literacy capacity across our system to support improvement in performance</li> <li>Develop a post-Covid Parental Engagement Strategy</li> </ul>	
Curriculum	Learning, Teaching and Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further develop progressive Moray Learner Pathways</li> <li>Develop a responsive BGE Curriculum, particularly in literacy and numeracy</li> <li>Continue to extend collaborative approaches to curriculum delivery</li> <li>Further develop curricular transition approaches</li> <li>Fully implement and embed the Moray Play Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed our Moray Standard with focus on key areas including tracking and monitoring</li> <li>Continue to strengthen approaches to assessment and moderation</li> <li>Support practitioner pedagogical developments in line with revised GTCS standards</li> <li>Continue to promote use of digital approaches to enhance learning and teaching</li> <li>Develop play pedagogy approach – ELC and Primary</li> </ul>
Supporting all Learners	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Supporting all Learners strategy for Moray – contribute to and support ASN review</li> <li>Strengthen Curricular HWB offer across Moray</li> <li>Empower our system to consider children's rights across all aspects of educational delivery</li> <li>Ensure Education fulfil requirements of "The Promise"</li> <li>Review of policy and practice in support of all learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Professional Learning Strategy with full consultation</li> <li>Promote and support implementation of new GTCS Professional Standards</li> <li>Continue to revise the framework for professional development/career pathways</li> <li>Review OECD and other national reviews for emerging themes in support of practitioners</li> </ul>
Self-evaluation for self-improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflecting on the impact of the pandemic, review approaches to supporting the wellbeing of all</li> <li>Review and consolidate implementation of 1140 hours including quality of experience</li> <li>Continue to review approaches to self-evaluation in line with statutory requirements and emerging good practice</li> </ul>	



**Forbes Academy**



**Keith Grammar School**



**Milne's High School**









**Education, Communities and Organisational Development**  
*Moray Education*