

**Scottish Borders Council  
Education and Lifelong Learning**

**Quality Improvement Framework**



**Kelso High School**

**School Improvement Report  
Session 2014/15**

## The School in Context

Kelso High School is one of nine co-educational secondary schools in the Scottish Borders catering for students aged from 11 – 18. In session 2014/15 the school roll was 585 and there was a full time teaching equivalent of 46 teaching staff with 13 further staff employed in a variety of support roles. Pupils come to Kelso High School from the town of Kelso, the villages of Ednam, Eckford, Heiton, Stichill, Smailholm, Sprouston, Morebattle, Roxburgh and Yetholm and the rural hinterlands. The school enjoys close links with its associated primary schools; Broomlands and Edenside in Kelso; Morebattle, Ednam, Sprouston and Yetholm. Together with Jedburgh Grammar School and its associated primary schools, we make up the Cheviot Learning Community.

The main school building dates from 1939 and is B-listed for its Art Deco style. A further block was added in the sixties and extensions have been added to the main building to accommodate the music department, the support for learning department and, most recently, the department of Faith and Philosophy. There is a separate games hall and dining hall and a multi-use games area outside. Delivering an effective education for the twenty-first century in a building designed for the last century presents challenges, so everyone connected with Kelso was delighted when a bid to the Scottish Futures Trust was successful and support for a new Kelso High School was secured. The new school will be on a new site at Angraflat Road adjacent to Kelso Racecourse. Over session 2014/15, consultation and design work has continued and, though there was a delay in the start of on-site work, we are hopeful that construction will commence in the next few months.

Kelso High School is part of Scottish Borders Council's Devolved School Management scheme. A School Fund exists to support extra-curricular activities. In addition, the school benefits from a charitable trust fund set up by a former pupil as well as generous donations from other individuals and groups. In common with other schools in Scottish Borders Council, Kelso High School was required to make efficiency savings of 2% over the last year, amounting to some £40,000. A further 2% saving will be made in the coming year. Demographics mean that the roll in Kelso High School currently has fallen over recent years, which places additional pressure on school finances.

Kelso High School enjoys a high level of support in the local community and benefits from links to a number of local organisations and businesses.

The introduction of new courses as part of the Scottish Government's Curriculum for Excellence began in S1 in session 2010/11, and has continued each year since then. Session 2013/14 saw the introduction of new National exams in S4 and this session saw the introduction of new Highers for students in S5 and 6. In order to support the delivery of the new qualifications and increase time for teaching within the Senior Phase, the school moved to a 33 period week structure in June 2013. In June 2014, this was further refined with the introduction of an asymmetric week, meaning all secondary schools in Scottish Borders have the same structure for the school week.

Kelso High School was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education in November 2011 as part of the national inspection process. The report arising from this visit was distributed to all parents and can be viewed on the Education Scotland website at [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk) In April 2013, a team from Scottish Borders Council's department of Education and Lifelong Learning made a follow through visit to the school to look at progress against the recommendations made in the original report. A letter outlining their findings was distributed to all parents in June 2013.

## **Summary of consultations with parents and children and young people about our strengths and areas for improvement.**

In the last year, parents and learners had the opportunity to comment on transition from primary to secondary school and the introduction of a revised reporting structure in the Senior Phase. In addition, groups of pupils have been consulted about their experience in classrooms, their views on school dress and specific activities such as Tree of Knowledge. As part of a new approach to curriculum design in the Senior Phase, learners identified their chosen courses in order of priority and this information was used to design a structure which met the needs of the vast majority of learners.

## **EVALUATION OF PROGRESS**

### **Question 1: HOW WELL DO CHILDREN LEARN AND ACHIEVE?**

#### **QI 1.1 Improvements in Performance**

##### **Overall we have evaluated ourselves as very good.**

Overall, our pupils learn well and achieve very well. Levels of attainment are high. In examinations at most levels, Kelso High School performs better or much better than other schools serving young people with similar needs and backgrounds. Pupils engage well in lessons and show confidence in answering questions and giving explanations. At all stages, pupils benefit from our very wide range of sporting and cultural activity. In the senior school, pupils benefit from their participation in the committee system, their roles as buddies to S1 pupils and from their participation in peer education. The School Improvement Plan is focussed on areas of development which will further strengthen achievement and attainment for all.

##### **SIP Actions from Session 2014/15 including impact and evidence.**

Over session 2014/15 we continued to review and refine our Broad General Education S1 – 3:

- We further developed our Skills course and extended the Learning to Learn Course into S2. Feedback from young people and staff indicate that these have increased opportunities for learners to make connections across different areas of their learning and continue to develop a range of skills which support their development as effective independent learners.

We also undertook further development of the Senior phase:

- We further developed our approach to the alignment of the curriculum in S4 and S5 to allow individuals to progress at the appropriate pace and maximises choice. In addition, our new approach to the design of the curriculum in the Senior Phase takes learner choices as the starting point for curriculum design and has significantly increased the number of learners who are able to follow all the courses of their choosing.
- We engaged with the South East Scotland Academies Programme and implemented the new Higher courses in almost all subjects.

##### **Next Steps**

In session 2015/16, we will continue to develop opportunities for learners in the Senior Phase by engaging with the Open University Young Applicants Scheme and implementing the new Advanced Higher. We will also develop joint approaches to the delivery of some areas of the senior curriculum to allow learners to access the widest possible range of courses. In line with the recommendations of the Scottish Government's report on Developing the Young Workforce, we will take into account developments across Scottish Borders which support our learners in partnership with local businesses and employers.

## **QI 2.1 Learner's Experiences**

### **Overall we have evaluated ourselves as good.**

Overall, young people in Kelso High School are well-supported in their learning. Young people have increasing levels of choice. The school has good links with health, police, social work and community learning and development and works with these agencies and others to meet the needs of pupils. Transition from primary is well-supported and strengthened by increased contact between class teachers through curricular transition groups, a programme of peer education involving S5 students and joint working with our Community Learning and Development Youth Worker.

### **SIP Actions from Session 2014/15 including impact and evidence.**

We continued to improve learner's experiences by building on existing successful practice within the school:

- Our programme of collegiate activity focussed on the role of formative assessment in effective teaching and learning and saw all staff working as part of a Teacher Learning Community. Feedback from staff and learners indicates that this has improved consistency of learner's experiences around the school and promoted more variety in approaches to assessment.
- Further development of our Pupil Parliament and House Time along with the increased involvement of young people in the recruitment and selection of school staff have increased opportunities for pupil leadership throughout the school.

### **Next Steps**

Next session we will build on our work to date by continuing to engage with the Teacher Learning Communities Programme and focussing on the role of formative assessment in effective teaching and learning. We will continue to work with our Pupil Parliament and establish a system for recognising and planning personal achievement. We will develop our use of technologies to support learning through piloting the use of iPads and engaging with Glow2.

## **Question 2: HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL SUPPORT CHILDREN TO DEVELOP AND LEARN?**

### **QI 5.1 The Curriculum**

#### **Overall we have evaluated ourselves as good.**

The broad general education in S1-3 has allows staff to make links across subjects, and offers a coherent experience for learners. Good progress has been made in improving the quality of curricular transition in a number of key areas. Learners have access to good support and advice at key decision-making times and are able to make informed choices. Leavers are well-prepared for the next steps in their learning journey.

#### **SIP Actions from Session 2014/15 including impact and evidence.**

Over session 2014/15, the following actions improved the curriculum:

- Opportunities to focus on skills for work, life and learning were consolidated in the broad general education through the further development of the Skills and Learning to Learn courses.
- We maintained an element of choice in the S3 curriculum, promoting personalisation and choice for individual learners and preparing them for the Senior Phase whilst still ensuring that they had a broad experience across all areas of the curriculum.
- Learners in S5 and S6 in session benefitted from new courses in Hospitality and Travel and Tourism as well as the South East Scotland Academies Programme which is run in partnership with further and higher education institutions in the Borders and in Edinburgh.

#### **Next Steps**

Next session we will reflect on the lessons learned from the first year of the new Higher qualifications as we move forward with the implementation of the new Advanced Highers. In addition, we will develop new partnerships with local employers and businesses in order to better meet the needs of learners in relation to skills for work.

### **QI 5.3 Meeting Learning Needs**

**Overall we have evaluated ourselves as good.**

We offer a broad curriculum in S1-3 and have maintained a wide range of choice in the Senior Phase. Pastoral staff and support staff collaborate effectively with staff from partner agencies to meet pupils' needs. Teaching staff are increasingly confident with the use of learning intentions and success criteria to support learning. The understanding of the roles of different staff in meeting learning needs continues to grow. Support for post school transitions is very good. Our approach to meeting the Personal Support Entitlement continues to progress well. The appointment of a Home School Link Worker has increased the support for vulnerable learners and improved attendance.

#### **SIP Actions from Session 2014/15 including impact and evidence.**

The following actions supported improvement in session 2014/15:

- The continued development of House Time has allowed all learners to have reflective learning conversations of increasing quality at key points.
- Our programme of professional learning continued to allow teachers to reflect on different ways of supporting a wide range of needs within the classroom.

#### **Next Steps**

In the coming session we will review our approach to promoting positive behaviour and engage with the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme. We will begin the development of a system for profiling learners.

### **Question 3: HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ITS WORK?**

#### **QI 5.9 Self Evaluation**

**Overall we have evaluated ourselves as good.**

Overall, the quality of self-evaluation is continuing to improve as greater consistency is established. Examination results are analysed carefully to identify opportunities for further improvement and there is a well-established system for monitoring young people's progress in the Senior Phase. The school improvement plan maintains the focus on key aspects of work and there is increasing opportunity for key partners to contribute. Opportunities for teachers to observe each other teaching and spend time in professional dialogue about teaching and learning have continued to increase, as have levels of distributed leadership.

#### **SIP Actions from Session 2014/15 including impact and evidence**

Over the last session we have:

- Created more opportunities for learners to give their views on a range of issues.
- Used the GTCS Professional Standards, as the basis for our professional review meetings.
- Supported the sharing of effective practice in self-evaluation.
- Begun the process of refreshing our school aims and values.

#### **Next Steps**

In the coming year we will continue to seek learner views on a range of issues and conclude the process of reviewing the school aims and values. We will implement a new approach to parental engagement in learning with a revitalised parent council.

#### **Any other continuing improvements which have not be commented upon in the previous sections.**

- We strengthened the school House System by introducing a House Cup Winners' Day to celebrate the achievement of the winning house.
- We completed important preparatory work for the introduction of tracking and monitoring in S1-3.