

Education and Learning Directorate

School/ELC Annual School Improvement Planning

2025-2026

School: Castle Douglas and Dalry partnership

Date: May 2025

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025 – 2026 *(Limit the number of priorities to ensure they are manageable and achievable.)*

School Priority /Improvement Area for Learners	2.3 Learning and teaching and assessment (specifically on quality of teaching and planning, tracking and monitoring).	
Evidence to support decision to prioritise this area (include baseline measures)	Outcomes for Learners/School Community	Key Tasks
<i>Biesta, G. (2010). 1. What is education for? Good education in an age of measurement: ethics, politics, democracy (pp. 11–27). Boulder, C: Paradigm Publishers.</i> Biesta highlights that we are responsible for the development of and achievement of qualifications within our young people. He also postulates that the development of subjectification (development of self) and socialization are also the purposes of education and will be used to set the scene alongside Hgios 4 and the authority priorities of raising attainment both in the senior phase and BGE (ACEL data) for our school improvement plan for the partnership. Attainment is a priority and alongside attainment is the link with learning and teaching and expanding strategies to engage learners (Saricoban et al 2008). We currently have a learning and teaching policy that while known requires expansion and exploration through professional	1 Impact of a refreshed learning and teaching policy will allow a greater focus on how we are teaching and form a discussion point of that engagement with young people and the impact on the day to day learning within the classroom but also on their longer attainment of a level within the BGE and attainment in SQA qualifications. This will also allow greater scrutiny to measure learner walks against agreed priorities and professional learning opportunities for staff. 2 It is important to prioritise reporting to parents to involve them and the pupil in ownership of an intervention beyond the school.	1. The working group led by A. Cathro will through the year engage with research and stakeholder involvement to update and through practitioner enquiry development the L&T policy. This will include intros, use of tracking and assessment, differing use teaching strategies, plenaries, differentiation, questioning techniques and how we report to pupils and parents' progress. (A Cathro / working group by May 2026). 2. Reporting to be revisited by C. Williams and S. Foster to ensure that engagement and next steps are clear for learners and their families. Stakeholder engagement to form basis of expectations around

enquiry to meet the individual needs of subjects. Evidence and engagement with stakeholders will be prioritized to promote change as we triangulate evidence (Education Scotland 2014). We have sought feedback from our stakeholders in all aspects of a pupils experience in school. Tracking datasheets have been created and trialed in 2024/25 following the need to have a whole school tracker for all years. This will ensure that a learner's journey is mapped as they pass through school. Teachers will use these at agreed points through the year 2025/26. Our engagement with learning walks and term three visits suggests that we have work to do to consider how we meet learner's needs and to ensure that all learners understand the objective of the lesson and success criteria. Engagement with focus groups and questionnaires suggests that pupils and parents are happy with the experience of teaching but we need to educate them on the types of experiences and meeting learner needs. Fleshing out the L&T policy will help with that.	3 Teachers need robust use of tracking to improve the impact of interventions to promote improvement	reporting. (Interim progress to staff by Jan 2026. New reporting policy in place by June 2026 at the latest). Trial of tracking Jan 2026. 3. Use of whole school tracking by all staff to use evidence-based judgments individually with subjects but also in the broader sense with a holistic picture of the pupil's attainment across subjects - all teachers have track points across BGE and SNR phase to form interventions. - This forms the embedding stage of the policy. In place from June 2025. - Evaluation of tracking required by Oct 2025. SLT and FH's. - Revisited at Jan 2026 with final evaluation May 2026 Other thoughts and considerations should the SIP be revisited or evaluated within the next academic year. - Homework policy to develop - Parental engagement strategy to develop.
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NIF Priority		NIF Driver		HGIOS?4 / HGIOELC QIs/National Standard Criteria	
1 Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.		1 School leadership 2 Performance information 3 School improvement		2.3	
2 Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people					
Responsible/Lead Person	Time Allocations	Funding – including PEF		Expected Completion Date	
1 A Cathro 2 S Foster & C Williams 3 S foster & C Williams	1 Allocated working group time within the SWTAC calendar 2 Ongoing we have engaged with a number of schools. Time within the working week 3 Within faculty agreed time and meetings within the SWTAC	1 £0 2 £0 3 £0		1 May 2026 2 Interim Jan 2026 / final June 2026 3 Jan 2026 interim / final evaluation May 2026	
Parental and Learner Engagement Opportunities		Linkage to Framework for Inclusion			
1 Inputs from focus groups and questionnaires for all pupils 2 Some Parents have been welcomed into school to learn with their children at agreed events within 2024/25 with more planned for 2025/26 3 All Parents nights will become information sharing and workshops alongside teacher appointments		1 Meeting learners needs within the class with a focus on differentiation 2 Tracking of pupils and interventions with an evaluation on success			

School Priority /Improvement Area for Learners	3.1 Well-being, inclusion and equality (attendance and a positive school culture are a priority)	
Evidence to support decision to prioritise this area (include baseline measures)	Outcomes for Learners/School Community	Key Tasks
Attendance – This is below the stretch aim sitting at an average of 89.5%. Attendance is also a barrier to attainment with as an example pupils in 4th year sitting national 5 (2023-24 SQA diet) not being successful academically if their attendance is below 90%. When we consider 5th and 6th year pupils the cut off for success at higher is 95%. Those below have a higher chance of failure / fewer qualifications. There are a number of journals that highlight the link that success rates for attainment drops with an absence rate of 10% (Nesta 2022) We have two further principles of nurture as a school to explore. This should continue as the two schools have the lowest exclusion data in the authority within 2024/2025 so our focus on nurture is having a positive effect. The school values at C/D have been completed with Dalry to be included this year. A number of attendance issues are a result of poor mental health and resilience as noted by feedback from pupil support.	1 If pupils are in school then attainment for those pupils will improve. Klein and Sosu 2024 note that a 1% increase in overall absence shows a decrease in tariff points achieved. 2 Nurture training and awareness improves relationships and the ethos of the school which is seen in the low exclusions across the year in both schools. This increased attendance will help subjectification and socialization of the pupils (Biesla 2010)	1 Attendance, continuing to develop the attendance policy considering training and focus. C Williams and A Cook are in the authority training program provided by Education Scotland. - Tracker document produced - Tracker groups identified and contact with families - PTPS working alongside project leaders - Home link worker and Pef teacher also involved in supports and interventions. - Ongoing from April 2025 – Jan 2026 then reviewed 2 Nurture - we are a nurture school and are developing the teacher's capacity to embed this within the life of the school. NP6 - The Importance of Transitions in Young People's Lives' which will link to transitions within their class/department/whole school timetable as well as transition from primary to secondary and from Dalry. - A Cook Feb inset 2026

	3 Values connect a school to its culture, as there is a shared community focus from pupil's teacher and parents. This will positively affect mental health. Patricia Jessiman et al 2022 highlights a positive school culture is associated with positive youth development	- one colleague trained in nurture by May 2026 - Targeted nurture in place for August 2025 - Exploring mindfulness opportunities to work with pupils A.Cook Sept. 2025 3 School culture, promotion of new values to be found in all aspects of school life. - SLT program of assemblies and event to promote the house system. June 2025. - Allocation of all teacher to houses S Foster August 2025 - House competition. - Pupil council to actively support their house. - Captains for the BGE and SNR phase to work to promote House system. PSPT and DHT June 2025 ongoing - Dalry included and consulted within the realigned values. M Acheson Oct 2025 Wellbeing - ensuring our young people's mental health and well-being is supported. The peace advocacy service are going to work with seniors initially on the project. A follow up to this is work around mental health first aid for seniors to support themselves, each other and other pupils. S Foster / PSPT Oct 2025.
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		Other thoughts and considerations should the SIP be revisited or evaluated within the next academic year. - RRSA submission - Respect me award	
NIF Priority		NIF Driver	HGIOS?4 / HGIOELC QIs/National Standard Criteria
Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education. Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing		School leadership Parent / carer engagement and family learning	3.1
Responsible/Lead Person	Time Allocations	Funding – including PEF	Expected Completion Date
1 Attendance A Cook / C Williams 2 A. Cook / identified staff for nurture training 3 S Foster, M Acheson, DHT's and PSPT's	1 Weekly input from the pupil support team and additional training for leads 2 Time set aside for nurture training for all staff at inset / time for two colleagues to be trained 3 Ongoing through the year	1 Pef teacher £5000 / Home link £26000 2 Nurture training approx. £1800 3 £600 (peace advocacy training)	1 Ongoing but completion Jan 2026 2 Feb inset for whole school training / May 2026 for identified staff 3 Various dates detailed above
Parental and Learner Engagement Opportunities		Linkage to Framework for Inclusion	

1 Close working with some target groups and their families is part of the input. 2 All pupils will benefit from nurture training 3 All pupils will be engaged in the house system	1 Meeting learners needs, engaging with all stakeholders to improve attendance and positively affect attainment. 2 All pupils have been allocated their stage
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School Priority /Improvement Area for Learners	3.2 Raising attainment and achievement, with focus on attainment over time and overall quality of learners achievements	
Evidence to support decision to prioritise this area (include baseline measures)	Outcomes for Learners/School Community	Key Tasks
As Biesla 2010 details qualification is one of the purposes of education. The results from 2023 / 24 highlight that raising attainment must be a part of the SIP. This was a poor year for results in both 4th year and 5th year. Our 4th years achieved 30% of the cohort with 5 level 5 awards. Our aim is between 40 and 50%. Our 5th year awards were 10.5%. Again, our aim is for between 15 and 20% We have addressed this within the raising attainment policy developed in 2024 / 25. This is also a priority for pupils and parents as detailed in focus groups and questionnaires. This initial policy was detailing the interventions that facilities could make with further consideration to a more holistic view of raising attainment by involving all stakeholders as we continue this journey by including a review of learning and teaching, tracking and implications for the working time agreement.	1 A continuing focus on raising attainment by linking the development of the learning and teaching policy, attendance, targeted interventions and communication with home and meeting all learners needs. 2 The development of leadership is important to create For instance, a study by Harris and Muijs (2004) found that: “Teacher leadership is associated with improved student learning outcomes, as it fosters a collaborative school culture and shared responsibility for student progress.” This suggests that when teachers are encouraged to take on leadership roles, it can lead to a more effective school environment that benefits student achievement and attainment.	1 Raising attainment policy evaluated with feedback from teachers and relaunched for 2025 / 2026. <u>Our challenge is to ensure that all pupils starting a course must finish that course.</u> This means that they must start at the correct level to avoid level drops using data to inform such as 3rd year exams, assessments though the year and prior attainment for S4 and S5. S Foster Sept 2025 2 Leadership at all levels - Professional learning opportunities for all teachers through in-house program. C Williams ongoing throughout the year 2025 / 2026. - Revamped pupil leadership to include SNRs and BGE. A Cook / C Williams / L Gillies June 2025 onwards. - Leadership of working groups open to all teachers. A Cathro ongoing 2025 / 2026 3 Show my homework launched - Embedded into the school with Launch from June 2025 SLT

	Similarly, promoting leadership among pupils has been linked to enhanced academic performance. A study by Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) concluded that: “Student engagement in leadership activities correlates with higher levels of motivation and academic success.” This implies that when students have opportunities to lead, they become more invested in their education, which can lead to better exam results. Harris, A., & Muijs, D. (2004). Teacher Leadership: Improvement through Empowerment. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 32(1), 11–24. Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2000). The Effects of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Conditions and Student Engagement with School. Journal of Educational Administration, 38(2), 112–129.	- Learning conversations recorded to allow parents to access. Ongoing all teachers from August 2025. - Family learning opportunities using SMHW all teachers ongoing from June 2025 4 Global bridge launched within PSE - Creates evidence beyond grades therefore focusing on the subjectification (development of self) of pupils. - Measurement of personal development. - Creation of meta-skills personal profile - All teachers but particular PSPT within PSE and employability classes by DYW PT Aug 2025 onwards Other thoughts and considerations should the SIP be revisited or evaluated within the next academic year. - CPD library to create - Rationale for the curriculum to be revisited
NIF Priority	NIF Driver	HGIOS?4 / HGIOELC QIs/National Standard Criteria
Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people	School leadership Parent / carer family learning Teacher and practitioner professionalism	3.2

Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people. Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.			
Responsible/Lead Person	Time Allocations	Funding – including PEF	Expected Completion Date
1 S Foster 2 Various members of SLT 3 SLT and all teachers 4 All PT's and class teachers	1 Sept 2025 school meeting input and questionnaires / focus groups 2 Time set aside with SWTAC 3 Ongoing as part of normal teacher duties 4 Ongoing as part of PSE and employability	1 £0 2 £0 3 £6500 4 last year's PEF costs	1 Sept 2025 2 Ongoing throughout 2025 / 2026 3 Jan 2026 4 May 2026
Parental and Learner Engagement Opportunities		Linkage to Framework for Inclusion	
1 SMHW will create opportunities to learn at home for both students and parents / carers. 2 Leadership opportunities for students will be increased. 3 Global bridge skills development creates opportunities for both in discussion regarding destinations.		Development of pupil's skills linked to meta skills. Development to meet the needs of the different stages pupil may be at.	