

DUNEDIN SCHOOL

Delivers unique education to individuals

**STANDARDS, QUALITY
and
IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

2020-2021

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INTRODUCTION

2020-2021: A Second Disrupted School Year

Every year, the staff at Dunedin carry out whole-school evaluation activities to determine what we think we are doing well, and to establish where we need to make changes and improvements.

In an ordinary year, we would include this evaluation in an annual report on our activities and achievements for the whole session, September to June, and also highlight the areas we have prioritised for improvement during the following session.

However, as we all know, since March 2020, nothing has been ordinary, and over the past session, we continued to adapt and do things differently as the Coronavirus pandemic rumbled on. This culminated in a second lockdown and whole-school closure in January 2021, with pupils and staff unable to return to Dunedin until March.

Whilst we thought that the first lockdown would be a once-only event, we had learned a lot from it, and we were much better prepared – if no less devastated – going into the second lockdown.

During this second period of closure, in line with national priorities, the focus was very much on using IT to enable pupils to access the curriculum and make progress in their learning, and on allowing senior pupils, in particular, to continue to work towards qualifications, which had to be assessed in an entirely different way.

In addition, staff continued to manage the business of the school from home as best as they could. We worked towards fulfilling as many of the action points on the previous session's "recovery" plan, though not everything has been achievable in the circumstances, and many routine activities, such as whole-school evaluation, had to be delayed. This has had a knock-on effect on many things, including publication of this report.

You will find that this report is less detailed than in the past, because the pandemic, and the restrictions which go along with it, have prevented us from doing many of the things we would normally do in the past. During session 2020-2021 our priorities have been focussed on:

- Following all public health guidance to ensure the school was as safe a learning environment as possible, at the start and end of the year, when in-school learning was allowed
- Maintaining our delivery of education during the second lockdown
- Pupils' wellbeing when they were learning from home
- Preparing senior phase pupils for, and delivering, the alternative certification model so that they were not disadvantaged and could achieve the National Qualifications they were working towards
- Finding ways to continue to manage the school when the team was forced to work from home
- Finding ways to stay connected with families during the lockdown and when they could not come in to school, including reporting to them on progress
- Gradually re-introducing activities and events which enrich the curriculum as soon as we were safely able to do so

Working from home was undoubtedly challenging, but teaching in school when physical distancing, wearing masks and restrictions on movement were all in place has also been difficult. However, we

INTRODUCTION

2020-2021: A Second Disrupted School Year (contd.)

have had tremendous support from our families and the Governors, and we are truly grateful to have managed the situation without a single case of in-school Covid, and to have continued to provide all pupils with an education. Our pupils should be extremely proud, too, that they have managed such a difficult set of circumstances so well, and – to look for a silver lining – developed so many skills along the way

You will find a summary of what evaluation we did manage during the session later in the report, along with the priorities we have identified as part of our ongoing recovery and improvement plan for session 2021-2022.

First, though, we have included information on the progress we made with the recovery priorities we set for ourselves in 2020.

We have also included a brief summary of other activities and achievements which we managed, despite the challenges, during session 2020-2021. We hope this will be a reminder of what being at Dunedin is really all about, and a celebration of what our young people do, even when things are difficult.

We are still not at a point where we can reinstate all the experiences and activities we used to offer, but continue to look forward to the time when we can. They enrich the curriculum and help pupils to develop many important skills and qualities, and this is more important than ever.

We hope you find this report useful. However, if you have any questions about any of the contents, please, as always, get in touch with us.

THE SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Dunedin is a small, independent school situated in Cameron Toll in Edinburgh. We can enrol up to 21 pupils, who might come to us at any stage in their secondary school career, and from anywhere across Edinburgh and the Lothians. Pupils may be placed with us privately, by parents/carers, or by a local authority.

We often refer to ourselves as a “second chance” school. Not everyone thrives in a mainstream setting, and Dunedin offers a very nurturing and supportive alternative for young people who, for a variety of reasons, have usually spent a significant period of time out of education.

Despite our size, we offer a broad curriculum, and pupils can work towards formal qualifications, where appropriate, as well as develop skills for learning, life and work through various extra-curricular trips and activities which are organised throughout the year.

Our first priority, however, is the emotional wellbeing of our pupils, and we try to remove as many of the barriers to learning they may have previously experienced as we possibly can. Our approach is gentle, and more informal and flexible than is possible in most mainstream settings. By this means, we encourage pupils to re-engage with education, and to feel a sense of belonging in a school where they are valued for who they are, and where they are supported to realise their potential.

THE AIMS OF THE SCHOOL

- To enable pupils to re-engage with learning and experience a sense of achievement and success
- To create a welcoming, sympathetic environment where pupils and their families feel supported
- To help pupils to develop self-respect, self-confidence and a sense of self-worth
- To respect the individuality of all pupils
- To foster in pupils mutual trust and tolerance of others
- To reintroduce pupils to a holistic educational environment
- To encourage enjoyment in learning
- To provide a broad curriculum which is flexible and can cater for individual needs and interests
- To motivate pupils to aspire to their full potential
- To support pupils to move on from school to a positive destination of their choice

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

Dunedin School has a rigorous child protection policy in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils, and every member of staff must sign a Child Protection Code of Conduct on an annual basis. Guidance within the policy is regularly updated to take account of changing legal and societal landscapes. This ensures that all staff working with the young people at Dunedin School have the knowledge and confidence to deal with a child protection situation, should one arise, and know what action to take if they have any concerns about the welfare of the pupils in our care.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR EDUCATION

Dunedin, like all schools in Scotland, must work towards achieving the Scottish Government's priorities which are set out in **The National Improvement Framework (NIF)**.

The National Improvement Framework was launched in 2016 and is reviewed annually. It is an important document for all schools in Scotland which sets out the Scottish Government's vision to achieve excellence and equity for all learners and to close the attainment gap.

The National Improvement Framework sets out four key priorities that everyone in Scottish education should be working towards:

- improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
- improvement in children's and young people's health and wellbeing
- improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

The Framework also identifies six key drivers of improvement. Progress across all of these is needed to deliver the improvements we want to see for all learners:

- School leadership
- Teacher professionalism
- Parental engagement
- Assessment of children's progress
- School improvement
- Performance information

The National Improvement Framework sits alongside **Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)**, **Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)**, and **Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)**, which are the three supporting pillars of the Scottish education system.

In normal circumstances, Dunedin School's improvement planning is guided by the four key priorities and the six key drivers noted above, as well as Education Scotland's self-evaluation document, **How Good is our School? (4th Edition)**.

However, planning for improvement also - and importantly - takes into account the school's own particular context, and (especially) the needs of our pupils.

Session 2020-2021 has, again, been far from a normal year, but schools are trying to look forward, as advised by the Scottish Government, with planning moving purely from recovery, to recovery, renewal and improvement.

We are currently working towards getting our own whole-school evaluation and improvement planning process back to pre-Covid normality, and this year's report is a first, small step in that direction.

REVIEW OF PROGRESS FOR SESSION 2020-2021

First, here is a review of the progress we made towards our recovery targets in session 2020-2021. The period of school closure during the second national lockdown, and ongoing restrictions, made it more difficult to move forward with some of these targets, and some will be carried forward into session 2021-2022.

School Improvement Priority 1: Parental Engagement		
Link to Recovery Planning Guidelines	Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers	Link to How Good is our School? (4th Edition)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuity of provision under changed circumstances • Supporting student and staff health and wellbeing • Transitions at all levels • Remedying any impact that there has been around the widening of inequalities of outcome experienced by children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy • Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children • Improvement in children's and young people's health and wellbeing • Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people • Parental engagement • School Improvement 	<p>Learning Provision</p> <p><i>2.4: Personalised Support</i></p> <p><i>2.5: Family Learning</i></p> <p><i>2.6: Transitions</i></p> <p><i>2.7: Partnerships</i></p>
<p>Target/Where we want to be (Outcomes focusing on learning, achievement and wellbeing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support parents and carers to actively and meaningfully engage in their children's learning and life at school • To work with parents and carers to reduce potential barriers to engagement • To engage with parents and carers in a regular, supportive, informative and caring manner • To actively engage parents and carers in transitions at all stages of learning 		
<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutors to hold an introductory virtual meeting with new tutee and parents/carer once tutee has been taken on the role • Virtual Parents' Evening to be trialled in March 2021 so parents/carers can talk to subject staff • Google Classroom training to be offered to all parents/carers so they can support their child in their learning outside the classroom • Hold two social virtual coffee mornings for parents/carers this academic year • Dunedin's Transition Coordinator to maintain close contact with parents/carers about their child's transition at all stages • Consider changes to reporting format to encourage 'family learning' • Share proposed priorities with parents/carers as part of SIP process, and seek their input 	<p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review meetings are held during a trial period, and follow up meetings are now held when a new pupil comes on the roll and is assigned a tutor • Virtual parents' evenings held successfully for all pupils • All parents and carers invited to Google Classroom information sessions run by Chris Cartwright and Anis Saleh. These were well attended • Virtual coffee mornings held and well attended • Jen Laing continues as Transitions Co-ordinator and links with both pupils and families via email and phone • The format of the reports has not yet been amended as this requires further discussion by staff • Because of the impact of the pandemic, and delay in whole-school evaluation, SIP priorities were not shared as intended this session, and this action will be carried forward 	
<p>Impact:</p> <p>Responses from family questionnaires demonstrate that parents and carers are positive about their involvement in the life of the school. During the second lockdown, tutors and Rosie were able to maintain excellent contact with parents to check on pupils' and families' wellbeing and on how pupils were coping with learning at home. Online social events have allowed parents and carers to connect with each other and staff. Parents' evenings have successfully been held via Zoom, or by phone if the parent prefers, and have been very well attended.</p>		
<p>Next Steps: Consider how parents and carers can be more involved in the whole-school evaluation and improvement planning process.</p>		

REVIEW OF PROGRESS FOR SESSION 2020-2021 (contd.)

School Improvement Priority 2: Improving Independent Learning Skills/Contingency for Learning at Home		
Link to Recovery Planning Guidelines	Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers	Link to How Good is our School? (4th Edition)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuity of provision under changed circumstances • Identifying gaps in learning • What can be done to remedy any impact that there has been around the widening of inequalities of outcome experienced by children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children • Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people • Parental Engagement 	<p>Learning Provision 2.3: <i>Learning, teaching and assessment</i> 2.4: <i>Personalised support</i></p>
<p>Target/Where we want to be (Outcomes focusing on learning, achievement and wellbeing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils have the skills and confidence to engage in learning whether in school or at home • All pupils know how to access and download work at home and in class through Google Classroom • Individual barriers to independence in learning are identified, and support is in place to reduce these • There is a shared expectation that pupils can and should continue to learn at home in the event of closure • Pupils and staff have confidence that there will be a seamless move from working at school to working at home • Staff are able to measure and track engagement when pupils are working at home 		
<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit pupils' level of confidence in using Classroom, and other features within the Google suite and provide support • Audit pupils' access to appropriate IT equipment, broadband and space to work outside of school • Identify individual barriers to independent learning and plan support • Explore appropriate assistive technology to improve independent learning skills • Create a straightforward mechanism for monitoring engagement if pupils are working at home • Consider ways to provide an engaging curriculum for BGE pupils working from home, not wholly reliant on IT • Provide necessary ongoing training, support and guidance for remote learning - for staff, pupils and parents • Agree a timetable if pupils are learning at home to help pupils plan and organise their own time 	<p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support offered to pupils who needed it and all pupils can access and use the Google Classroom suite • Audit of technological barriers to learning at home carried out, logged and shared with staff • Audit of individual barriers to learning carried out, logged and shared with staff • Ongoing staff training delivered during 2nd lockdown • Training and information sessions offered to parents/carers • Individual pupil timetables for second lockdown agreed • Method to track pupil engagement developed and implemented • Separate working group set up to look at BGE curriculum during 2nd lockdown 	
<p>Impact:</p> <p>As a result of continued restrictions, the focus was largely on ensuring pupils had the skills and ability to learn independently during periods of school closure, and in school when physical distancing has been necessary. All pupils had the technology, knew how to use Google Classroom, and work was timetabled to ensure pupils could access a wide curriculum. Pupils have continued to make use of technology and GC in school. Tracking high-level engagement was trialled during the second lockdown and proved useful. The barriers preventing engagement with learning at home were identified and documented, and staff tried a number of strategies to support pupils. However, we could not remove the ultimate barrier of being away from school. Not all subjects can easily be delivered in the event of whole-school closure, but all staff continued to teach, adapting lessons to deliver what was possible, and all staff have increased their knowledge and use of technology to support more flexible learning. We now have a process in place to support pupils to continue working if they are forced to isolate.</p>		
<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt plans according to Scottish Government Guidance • Regularly review and update the barriers to learning and technology needs documents • Continue discussions around strategies/technology to engage and include pupils with support needs (learning or otherwise) that prevent them from learning independently and trial new initiatives • Contact Call Scotland to arrange professional learning for staff • Consider timetabling a regular "drill" to familiarise pupils with procedures in the event of school closure • Teachers continue to research ways in which their subject might be delivered in the event of increased restrictions, and share good practice 		

REVIEW OF PROGRESS FOR SESSION 2020-2021 (contd.)

School Improvement Priority 3: Developing the Staff Team		
Link to Recovery Planning Guidelines	Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers	Link to How Good is our School? (4th Edition)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery • Continuity of provision under changed circumstances • Supporting student and staff health and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy • Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children • Improvement in children's and young people's health and wellbeing • Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people • School leadership • Teacher professionalism • School Improvement 	<p>Leadership and Management <i>1.3: Leadership of change</i> <i>1.4: Leadership and management of staff</i></p>
<p>Target/Where we want to be (Outcomes focusing on learning, achievement and wellbeing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff can fulfil their roles knowing that responsibility and workload has been shared equally • There are clear management procedures that ensure staff can support each other and fulfil their own roles enabling them to access relevant help/support to do their job effectively • The flat management structure is optimised to support the school and clear procedures are in place to support escalation when other approaches are required 		
<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research collegiate working • Discuss potential ways of managing each other when issue is too great for a quiet word, but not severe enough for formal complaint • Collate details of what is involved in management tasks from all staff currently responsible for those tasks • Create document of all tasks necessary for management of school – to enable smooth succession planning, and to ensure fair distribution of tasks • Facilitate discussion of most appropriate, sustainable form of management for Dunedin • Divide out tasks equally, and according to people's strengths and interests 	<p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff had experience of working together in task groups and shared the responsibility of managing the school during a crisis during the 2nd lockdown • New guidelines are in place for managing each other in difficult situations • Details of management tasks have been collated 	
<p>Impact: Some tasks need to be carried forward, so the full impact of changes to how we manage the staff team will only be seen when work is complete. However, there is a clearer picture of what is involved in the various management tasks, and this will help with succession planning and division of responsibilities.</p>		
<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate discussion around the most appropriate form of management for Dunedin • Distribute tasks equally, and according to people's strengths and interests 		

REVIEW OF PROGRESS FOR SESSION 2020-2021 (contd.)

School Improvement Priority 4: Sustainability		
Link to Recovery Planning Guidelines	Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers	Link to How Good is our School? (4th Edition)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery • Continuity of provision under changed circumstances • Supporting student and staff health and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy • Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people • Teacher professionalism • School Improvement 	<p>Leadership and Management <i>1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement</i> <i>1.2 Leadership of Learning</i></p> <p>Learning Provision <i>2.2: Curriculum</i></p> <p>Successes and Achievements <i>3.3: Increasing Creativity and Employability</i></p>
<p>Target/Where we want to be (Outcomes focusing on learning, achievement and wellbeing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff and pupils have a greater understanding of Learning for Sustainability (LfS) and how they can contribute • This understanding has positively changed the way we think and make decisions • The school works towards achieving an Eco Flag award • Learning for Sustainability becomes firmly embedded in our curriculum 		
<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map the 17 sustainability goals with the outcomes/goals of the Eco Flag Award • Plan and carry out a workshop with pupils to introduce them to LfS. • Identify pupils' understanding of sustainability and create base line • Introduce them to the 17 goals through the lens of the Eco Flag initiative • Roll out Eco flag plan and monitor progress • At February In Service deliver presentation on LfS for all staff and how we can progress it within the Dunedin context and community for both education and management of a school • Evaluate Eco flag • Evaluate and identify areas for staff planning at a subject level and a whole school level for next year to help embed LfS in the culture and curriculum of the school • Agree and set targets for 2021-2022 	<p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability goals have been mapped • Workshops with pupils were carried out during the Autumn term • Due to further lockdown and learning from home, few of the other action points have progressed with the exception of a Waste Minimisation audit and plan being drawn up for reduction of single use plastic. • An audit of single use plastic bottles has been carried out and work is being done to try to ensure that all staff and pupils are using reusable water bottles. A video of how to make a wax wrapper has been made and will be on the blog 	
<p>Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils engaged well in the workshop and their current understanding of sustainability was captured as a base line • An eco-committee has been established • Actions for achieving Eco Flag status are in progress 		
<p>Next Steps: Continue work on the Eco School initiative, with appropriate revised target dates</p>		

REVIEW OF PROGRESS FOR SESSION 2020-2021 (contd.)

In addition to the school recovery priorities identified above, staff work on a number of other initiatives throughout the year which we include on a separate improvement action plan. Again, the 2nd national lockdown, and necessary focus on teaching, learning and wellbeing, meant that progress on some of these initiatives was slower than intended, and will continue into next session. This is summarised below:

	Initiative	Action and Progress
1.	Plan and manage implementation and updating GDPR policies. Plan and manage technical changes to meet GDPR	Technical updates complete Server, laptops, desktops, application software and operating systems all updated
2.	Plan and manage updating of Freedom of Information requests	Carried Forward
3.	Plan and manage updating of IT policies	Carried Forward

PROGRESS IN HEALTH AND WELLBEING, LITERACY AND NUMERACY AS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL 2020-2021

These three important areas of **Curriculum for Excellence** link to the following **National Improvement Framework** key priorities:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Improvement in children's and young people's health and wellbeing

The continued disruption faced by all schools has meant that it has been impossible to give these cross-curricular areas the same focus as in the past. The sustained focus during session 2020-2021 was on allowing subject teachers to maintain continuity of education and delivering a positive educational experience in challenging times. Interdisciplinary initiatives were temporarily side-lined given the circumstances and restrictions placed on staff and pupils in all schools. Staff were not asked to focus on literacy or numeracy across the curriculum given their additional workload and the challenging circumstances they were already working under, therefore there is no update on Literacy or Numeracy as the responsibility of all in this report. We hope to be able to implement new initiatives to support Literacy and Numeracy very soon.

However, we recognise the impact the pandemic has had on young people's health and wellbeing, and have worked hard to support our pupils with this – whether learning in school or at home

Here is a summary of some of the ways we have supported wellbeing when pupils were learning from home:

- Tutors remained in regular contact with tutees and families in order to support them
- Timetables were designed so that pupil workload was manageable, and could be adapted to suit the changing needs of pupils and their families
- Many classes were taught via Google Meet, so staff and pupils could see and talk to one another
- Virtual social meetings were organised for pupils so that they could stay in touch with each other, and chat to staff
- Books and art equipment were sent home to pupils
- The school blog continued to celebrate what pupils were achieving at home and to share good news
- A working group was established to consider the BGE curriculum, and wellbeing activities were introduced with less of a focus on use of IT
- Pupils were invited to join "challenges" such as The Great British Birdwatch and "Walk Yellowstone" which encouraged them to get outside where possible
- Pupils joined in with a virtual quiz to celebrate World Book Day

**PROGRESS IN HEALTH AND WELLBEING, LITERACY AND NUMERACY
AS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL
2020-2021
(contd.)**

When we returned to school in March 2021, we reintroduced activities which we knew would support pupil (and staff) wellbeing as soon as we could. For example:

- Resuming horse riding as soon as it was safe to do so
- Resuming outdoor education sessions with the Green Team
- Resuming badminton sessions
- Weekly walks
- Visits from Debbie the Dog
- A fortnight of outdoor activities in June
- A Christmas party, including an outdoor picnic, decorating “Santa’s grotto”, games and a visit from “Santa” himself!
- Celebrating pupils’ birthdays with a cake and card, even when we were not allowed to sing to them!

Please see the school website for more information about these - and other - events and what our pupils achieved.

It is our hope that we can soon resume many more of the interdisciplinary activities and social outings we so enjoyed in the past, and which provide rich opportunities for pupils to develop social, literacy and numeracy skills, as well as other skills for learning, life and work.

ATTAINMENT, WIDER ACHIEVEMENT AND TRANSITION IN THE SENIOR PHASE

Attainment

The number of pupils at Dunedin in the senior phase (S4-S6) fluctuates every year, and sometimes throughout the year. Some of those pupils may not have arrived at the school until S3 or later. Despite this, all pupils can work towards qualifications, at a pace and level which suits them, and are supported to plan their transition from Dunedin.

In session 2020-2021, there were twelve pupils in the senior phase, all of whom were working towards a variety of units and course qualifications, from National 2 to Higher.

The ongoing uncertainty around exams continued to make things difficult. We started the session believing that Higher exams would go ahead as normal, whilst N5s would be assessed in school by staff. However, with the second lockdown, it became clear that no external exams would be possible, and an alternative certification model was put in place for all externally assessed national qualifications.

Despite the challenges of this alternative certification process, between them, our senior phase pupils achieved the following across several subjects:

Course Award	Number Achieved
National 2	1
National 3	8
National 4	13
National 5	26 (Grades A-C)
Higher	1 (Grade A-C)

We are extremely proud of all of our pupils. Every result represents a great deal of hard work and perseverance in a time of unprecedented disruption, ongoing uncertainty and heightened anxiety.

Staff also worked hard to deliver this alternative certification model, with a significant amount of their time in the summer term taken up with moderation activities with other teachers across Scotland, as well as administering and marking National Qualification assessments.

ATTAINMENT, WIDER ACHIEVEMENT AND TRANSITION IN THE SENIOR PHASE (contd.)

Wider Achievement and Transition

Many of the activities we normally organise for senior pupils to help them prepare for transition have simply not been available or possible during this session.

However, we have a very well-established relationship with Skills Development Scotland and Janice O'Brien, our link advisor, returned to school to meet with pupils as soon as she was allowed to do so. She also attended transition meetings for senior phase pupils, along with educational psychologists. These meetings were held successfully on Microsoft Teams.

Our learning assistant, Jenny Laing also continued to work with senior pupils in her capacity as Transitions Co-ordinator. Much of her support has had to be delivered online, by email or by phone, and Jen was mostly involved in supporting our one senior phase leaver this year. He successfully secured a place at Edinburgh College, and we wish him every success, particularly as his final two years at Dunedin have been marred by the restrictions imposed by Coronavirus.

One senior pupil also managed to continue working towards the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, and staff – and some eager pupils - were even able to accompany him on a 5K run in the summer term!

We are looking forward to re-instating workplace visits and work experience, visits to college campuses and careers fairs in the future, along with other activities to widen achievement and enrich the experience of our senior phase pupils.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PUPILS' EXPERIENCES AND WIDER ACHIEVEMENT 2020-2021

One of Dunedin School's priorities has always been to encourage pupils to take part in a wide range of activities outwith the classroom. Staff support pupils to engage in activities which they may not have had the opportunity to experience before, or may in the past have been reluctant to engage with. This helps to build pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem, helps to develop important life skills and leads to many personal achievements and individual successes.

These experiences are also vital in delivering aspects of the National Improvement Framework, particularly improvement in children's and young people's health and wellbeing, and developing employability skills.

Extra-curricular activities are open to all pupils. The school is committed to removing the barriers which might prevent pupils from participating, as well as to gently encouraging them so that they develop the confidence to give new activities a go.

The pandemic has, of course, seriously curtailed what we can do, and what we can offer, but during session 2020-2021, we re-introduced and organised activities whenever we could, and when it was safe to do so. We were particularly pleased to reinstate a fortnight of fun, and challenging, outdoor education activities and trips during the summer term.

We were also delighted to receive 5 new hybrid bikes, for which some staff members had applied for funding. The bikes will provide more opportunities for pupils to explore the local environment, and encourage sustainable travel, whilst also learning bike maintenance skills.

Here is a brief summary of some of the activities available to pupils throughout the session:

- A programme of sporting and recreational activities for Tuesday and Friday afternoons, including badminton, tennis, walks, films, and board games
- Walking our regular canine visitor – Debbie the dog
- Working with the Green Team, to learn basic survival skills, plant and wildlife identification, use of tools such as saws and knives, woodland conservation, fire lighting and cooking, as well as exploring the woodland
- A workshop on sustainability
- Pupil council meetings
- Re-introduction of horse riding with Drum Riding for the Disabled to provide experience of working with and riding horses
- A programme of outdoor education, including a visit to Dalkeith Country park, go-karting, a hike in the Pentlands, a trip to Fox Lake for an over-water obstacle course, kayaking and paddle boarding on the Union Canal, archery, and putting at North Berwick and a visit to the beach
- A visit by a professional magician

We hope to get back to organising even more social, cultural and educational trips and events in the near future. In the meantime, more detail can be found on the school website about these and other activities in which our pupils have participated.

SELF-EVALUATION AND CAPACITY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The school's self-evaluation process involves every member of staff. The annual whole-school evaluation usually takes place in May, using the HMIE document *How Good is our School?* (4th Edition) and the **National Improvement Framework** priorities and key drivers.

In normal circumstances, all schools are required to evaluate the following quality indicators from *How Good is our School?* (4th Edition) on an annual basis:

- **1.3 Leadership of Change**
- **2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment**
- **3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion**
- **3.2 Raising attainment and achievement**

Because of the challenging circumstances we find ourselves in, staff took the decision to return to these four quality indicators later in the year, when time permits, and, to make it manageable, we pared down whole-school evaluation during 2020-2021. It also happened later in the year than normal.

We carried out our evaluation through staff and family questionnaires, pupil wellbeing surveys, online discussion and feedback from staff professional review meetings.

We chose to focus on:

- **Delivery of education – both when working from home and in school**
- **Support for pupils' learning**
- **Support for pupil, family and staff wellbeing**
- **Challenges associated with learning from home**
- **Communication between school and home**
- **Building and sustaining a professional staff team**

Our evaluation helped us to identify areas of strength and areas for development in teaching and learning and the care of our pupils as we move in to the next session and continue to focus on recovery, as well as renewal and improvement.

The questionnaires highlighted the following as areas of key strength:

- **Delivery of education and support for pupils' learning – parents felt that our flexibility and understanding enabled most pupils to continue to work well during closure, despite the challenges**
- **A strong and continued focus on supporting pupil wellbeing**
- **Good communication between school and home, and dealing promptly with any issues which arose**
- **Pupils feel that the school is helping them develop confidence and reach their potential**
- **Increased engagement by pupils during the second lockdown**
- **The staff's ability to adapt and move, almost seamlessly, to online teaching**

SELF-EVALUATION AND CAPACITY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (*contd.*)

Comments and suggestions made by staff, parents, and pupils have also helped to inform the School Recovery, Renewal and Improvement Plan for session 2021-2022.

A brief summary of this session's evaluation can be found below:

Area of Focus	Areas of Strength	Areas for Development
Delivery of teaching and supporting pupils' learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved engagement online during the second lockdown • The use of a reduced timetable, live lessons and Google Classroom helped pupils access learning effectively • Pupils made progress in all subjects • Using Google Classroom made it easy to build up a bank of evidence of learning • Pupils got better at working independently after an initial chat with the teacher • Pupils have become more responsible for their own learning and many pupils developed these skills during lockdown • Staff and (most) pupils have become more adaptable, flexible, better lateral thinkers and problem solvers • Staff and pupils digitally upskilled. Staff are more confident using GC in a way that suits them/their subject. The fact that we do not expect all staff to use it in exactly the same way is a real positive, even if it means pupils sometimes experience their learning in different ways • Staff are able to seamlessly adapt to continue education (in most subjects) if the school needs to close or if a member of staff is self-isolating • Giving a laptop to any pupil who wanted one was of enormous benefit, and helped them develop digital skills • Excellent technical support • Google Classroom was useful for managing not just differentiated resources but individualised resources and timescales. This meant individualised lessons could be planned and posted • Pupil focused approach in all circumstances. • Many BGE pupils achieved far more than expected 	<p>Finding ways to accommodate varying learning styles and keep all pupils engaged</p> <p>Overcoming the barriers to pupils accessing certain subjects such as Maths, HE, CDT etc</p> <p>Ensuring there is a continued focus on providing opportunities for social interaction, wherever pupils are learning</p> <p>Continue to build independent study skills in the classroom so that pupils can support themselves when staff are not available to provide that support</p> <p>Staff workload needs to be managed</p> <p>Re-focus on literacy and numeracy skills so that they do not become an insurmountable barrier to learning independently</p>

SELF-EVALUATION AND CAPACITY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (*contd.*)

Area of Focus	Areas of Strength	Areas for Development
Support for Pupil, Family and Staff Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tutor system again proved to be vital in providing an easy communication between parents/pupils/staff so that they felt informed and able to deal with any issues in accessing classes and dealing with pupil concerns • We could be sensitive to what was going on for families and pupils, and quickly share information • Forming the small working groups for different areas of support and decision making worked well. For example, having a small communications team during the crisis has really helped in making sure parents are regularly kept informed of changes • Google Classroom has improved communication with pupils • Pupils enjoyed the social meet ups • The parent social meetings were a great way to keep in touch, and help parents to keep in touch with each other • Holding YPPMs and parents' evenings online • The use of different types of communication (email, Google Classroom and Meet, Zoom and WhatsApp) helped keep people connected and each type was used for a clearly different purpose (teaching and learning, business, chat) 	<p>Management of staff workload</p> <p>Creative ideas to give staff more support</p> <p>Develop clear, collegiate working processes including emergency contingency plans</p> <p>Improve communication amongst staff team</p> <p>Share responsibility and workloads as much as possible</p>

SELF-EVALUATION AND CAPACITY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (contd.)

Area of Focus	Areas of Strength	Areas for Development
Building and Sustaining a Professional Staff Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent support for online teaching technology • Staff rose to the challenge of working at home and communication remained good despite not being in the same place physically • A commitment to keeping a team in contact with each other • A sharing of skills and resources, and getting everyone working on Google Classroom • School came together to support each other during transition to and from lockdown, including a very successful transition to online meetings • Access to the IT equipment staff needed • Easy to get in touch with people through email or the WhatsApp group if information had to be shared quickly • Trialling a “Virtual Staffroom” to allow staff to get together at the end of the day • Committed Working groups • Having a designated teacher to take on responsibility for being a point of contact each day • We have shown that we can work well together as a team in a time of crisis 	<p>Acknowledging everyone’s contribution to all aspects of running the school</p> <p>Division of whole school management tasks needs attention</p> <p>Return to more frequent face-to-face meetings when restrictions allow</p> <p>Improving communication when there is no access to a staff room</p> <p>Managing class numbers and workload</p> <p>Research best practice in collegiate/flat-line management</p> <p>Better understanding amongst staff about ‘difference’. Difference of approach, and practice can exist without undermining shared aspirations</p> <p>Developing resilience amongst staff and maintaining a culture of respect</p> <p>Succession planning</p> <p>Ensuring good communication so everyone feels included and informed, but not overwhelmed</p>

SCHOOL PRIORITIES FOR 2021-2022

Whole-school evaluation helps us to identify the school's improvement priorities for the next session. As we are still in the midst of the pandemic, planning for session 2021-2022 continues to focus on recovery, but we are also looking forward to renewal and improvement where we can. Because whole-school evaluation was delayed as a result of the pandemic, staff have taken the decision to continue with any priorities identified last year which have not been fully resolved, and to avoid adding anything new unless essential. Our intention is that we will work on these priorities until March 2022, when we will return to a much more thorough evaluation process.

From the questionnaires, evaluation of last year's recovery plan, and through whole-school discussion, we have therefore identified the following as our priorities for the period August 2021- March 2022. However, anything and everything we do will continue to be subject to the restrictions imposed on us as a result of the pandemic, and the safety of our pupils and staff will always take precedence.

School Improvement Priority 1:	
Developing the Staff Team	
Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers	Link to How Good is our School (4th Edition)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leadership • Teacher professionalism • School Improvement 	Leadership and Management <i>1.3: Leadership of change</i> <i>1.4: Leadership and management of staff</i>
Target/Outcome/Desired Impact:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff can fulfil their roles knowing that responsibility and workload has been shared proportionately, (reducing stress and some staff being overwhelmed or taken for granted) • Staff are able to opt out of existing roles as well as opt in to new roles • Clear management procedures that ensure staff can support each other and fulfil their own roles enabling them to access relevant help/support to do their job effectively • A clear overview of succession plans can be viewed for key roles • The flat management structure is optimised to support the school and clear procedures are in place to support escalation when other approaches are required 	

SCHOOL PRIORITIES FOR 2021-2022 (contd.)

School Improvement Priority 2:	
Sustainability	
Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers	Link to How Good is our School? (4th Edition)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy • Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people • Teacher professionalism • School Improvement 	<p>Leadership and Management <i>1.3 Self-evaluation for self-improvement</i> <i>1.4 Leadership of Learning</i></p> <p>Learning Provision <i>2.2: Curriculum</i> <i>2.7: Partnerships</i></p> <p>Successes and Achievements <i>3.3: Increasing Creativity and Employability</i></p>
Target/Outcome/Desired Impact:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff and pupils have a greater understanding of Learning for Sustainability (LfS) and how they can positively contribute • This understanding has positively changed the way we think and make decisions • The school works towards achieving an Eco Flag award • Learning for Sustainability becomes firmly embedded in our curriculum and the wider life of the school 	

In addition to these main priorities, staff will carry forward any other actions and tasks which could not be completed as a result of school closure, and respond to any guidance issued by the Scottish Government in relation to the pandemic.

STAFFING AND GOVERNANCE

News and a Vote of Thanks

Staffing

It has continued to be a testing time for staff – as for everyone else – but we are grateful that we had a settled team throughout 2020-2021.

However, at the end of the session, Sam Peck, our Geography teacher, announced her resignation, to allow her to move on to a new life in Perthshire.

Sam worked at Dunedin for over 20 years, and was a calm, reliable and reassuring presence for all of us. Her experience and knowledge were invaluable – not only as a Geography teacher, but as a colleague, as a tutor, in teaching PSE, in managing safeguarding and child protection, acting as SQA co-ordinator and in taking on countless other tasks without fuss or complaint. She was passionate about getting pupils outdoors, and enabled many pupils to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award. It was Sam who dreamed of giving our pupils the opportunity to take part in a residential trip, and Sam who made it happen. These residential trips, once unimaginable, have now become something we look forward to every year, and are Sam's legacy.

One of Sam's favourite quotes was from Alan Turing: *"Sometimes it is the people no one can imagine anything of who do the things no one can imagine."* She believed in every pupil who came to Dunedin, and was determined to help them achieve. She is much missed, but we are glad that she has moved on in such happy circumstances, to take on new, exciting and creative challenges of her own.

We also feel very lucky to have found a teacher to take on Sam's role as Geography and PSE teacher (and Modern Studies too!) and who comes with just as much knowledge, enthusiasm and passion. Cathy Murray successfully interviewed for the post in June 2021, and we are delighted to welcome her to our team.

Governors

As always, we end by acknowledging our hard working and committed Board of Governors. Over the past year, they have supported us to navigate a second school closure, and helped to ensure we reopened safely in March. All the work they do is behind the scenes, and therefore not always visible to those who do not know them. Our Governors combine to provide financial, legal, business and educational knowledge and expertise. Staff are incredibly grateful for their hard work this session. Their continued support for the staff, and of the school's ethos and vision in general, is crucial to the school's success.