DUNEDIN SCHOOL

Delivers unique education to individuals

STANDARDS, QUALITY and IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2024-2025

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our retrospective Standards and Quality Report for session 2024-2025, and our School Improvement Plan for this session, 2025-2026.

The Standards and Quality report is always based on the evaluation activities we carry out throughout the session, which normally involves staff, pupils, our families, and other professionals who work with us. However, last session was exceptional in that the school was inspected by HMIE in January 2025, which means that there was an additional layer of review and evaluation. Inspectors carried out what is known as a short visit inspection, meaning they focused attention on two key areas of the school's work – learning, teaching and assessment, and raising attainment and achievement. The inspection, and the feedback we received from the inspectors, has been very useful in helping us to evaluate what we do and how we do it, and you will find a summary of the inspection findings later in this document.

We will also share with you the progress we feel we have made towards the improvement targets we set ourselves in summer 2024 and summarise the priorities we will be working on during the current session.

As always, this report gives us a welcome opportunity, too, to highlight and celebrate our pupils' achievements, and to remind you of the different activities and experiences we have enjoyed with them over the past academic year.

Session 2024-2025 was, once again, characterised by having a high percentage of pupils in the senior phase (S4-S6) which resulted in many pupils working towards qualifications, and several planning their transition on from school. Some pupils had joined us very late on in their school career and therefore had had a limited time with us. We are hugely admiring of what they achieved in such a short space of time, not just in terms of qualifications, but (as importantly) in terms of developing confidence, building friendships and generally just contributing to the life of the school and leaving their mark on us.

We were also delighted to welcome 6 new pupils, who joined us at the start of the session (all in S3 or S2) and we are looking forward to seeing them flourish and grow.

We also continued to plan for and deliver a varied range of extra-curricular activities, and experimented with a new model and structure for activities on Tuesdays and Fridays. As always, we are keen to provide these activities as they allow pupils to challenge themselves, and help them develop a whole range of important skills and qualities.

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

Warmest Regards

Staff at Dunedin

Dunedin School
Liberton Bank House
5 Nether Liberton Lane
Edinburgh, EH16 5TY

Tel. 0131 672 2638

staff@dunedin.edin.sch.uk

www.dunedinschool.org

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 families may have made a placing request to their local authority.

The school is managed collegiately by a small team of subject specialist teachers and non-teaching staff.

At Dunedin, we know only too well that not everyone thrives in a mainstream setting. Our aim is to provide a 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 is the 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 may be 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 encouraged and supported to realise their ambitions and aspirations.

THE AIMS OF THE SCHOOL

- To create a welcoming, supportive environment for pupils and their families
- To enable pupils to re-engage with learning and experience achievement
- To improve opportunities and positive outcomes for our pupils
- To encourage enjoyment in learning
- To provide a broad curriculum which is sufficiently flexible to cater for individual needs and interests
- To encourage respect for oneself and for others
- To encourage self-confidence and a sense of self-worth
- To foster in pupils mutual trust and tolerance of others
- To encourage aspiration and ambition
- To support pupils to move on from school to a positive and sustainable 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. Our policy is informed by the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - Updated 2023. Staff undertake annual training, organised by our child protection lead and deputy, who also work closely with a member of the Board of Governors who has responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding.

If you have any questions about child protection and safeguarding, please get in touch. We have a dedicated email for child protection enquiries or concerns (cp@dunedin.edin.sch.uk). Alternatively, please phone the school to speak with a member of staff at any time.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

All teachers at Dunedin have responsibility for their own subject area, and for organising and attending subject-specific professional learning. Whenever possible, we engage in professional dialogue within 'clusters' of teachers, locally or nationally, who teach the same subject as us. This enables us to share good practice and keep up to date with any subject developments. Within school, we take part in verification and moderation events, and every teacher is supported by their Professional Review and Development (PRD) group. These groups meet throughout the year so each teacher can discuss their professional self-evaluation, ask for guidance with any concerns, and celebrate achievements. Every member of staff takes part in career-long professional learning to ensure that our standards and practice are continually improving.

HOW WE EVALUATE OURSELVES

The school's evaluation process involves every member of staff. The annual whole-school evaluation normally takes place in May, using **How Good is our School? (4th Edition),** a document provided by Education Scotland and designed to support self-evaluation and school improvement across Scotland.

In addition, staff, pupils, parents, partners and other professionals are asked to complete questionnaires where they can indicate what they believe are the strengths of the school and where they think we could make improvements.

Planning for improvement also - and importantly - considers the school's own particular context, and (especially) the needs of our pupils. Staff engage in ongoing reflective discussion - often on a daily basis - to share ideas about what our young people need, and how we can best support them. Our aim is always to be responsive to changing needs, and to reflect this, we may adapt our priorities throughout a session in order to best support needs and challenges.

Staff discuss emerging ideas from these different evaluations, and use these, along with the **National Improvement Framework** (see below), to identify areas of strength and areas for development in teaching and learning and the care of our pupils. This allows us to set our priorities for improvement, whilst remaining flexible. Our overarching priorities form the basis of our school improvement plan. All members of staff contribute to this plan and work collaboratively to achieve it, and it is evaluated regularly throughout the year. You can find details of the school improvement plan priorities for session 2024-2025, and an outline of our improvement priorities for 2025-2026, later in this report.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR EVALUATION

In addition to the evaluation we undertake above, Dunedin, like all schools in Scotland, must work towards achieving the Scottish Government's improvement 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 as it sets out the Scottish Government's vision to achieve excellence and equity for all learners and to close the attainment gap.

It currently sets out five key priorities that everyone in Scottish education should be working towards:

- 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
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people
- Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy

The Framework also identifies six key drivers of improvement:

- School and early learning and childcare leadership
- Teacher and practitioner professionalism
- Parent/Carer engagement and family learning
- Curriculum and assessment
- School and early learning and childcare 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.

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

HMIE Inspection

In session 2024-2025, our evaluation was enhanced by the HMIE Inspection which took place in January 2025. It has been hugely beneficial to have an objective eye cast over our practice, and to have the Inspectorate validate many of the things we do.

In advance of the inspection, we prepared the self-evaluation documentation required by HMIE which focused particularly on **Learning, Teaching and Assessment,** and **Raising Attainment and Achievement.** We also scrutinised our current approaches to **Safeguarding**.

You will find a summary below of our evaluation against each of these national quality indicators.

Pupils, families, staff and other professionals were also invited to complete questionnaires, and members of the inspection team followed these with small-group discussions with families and pupils. Staff also had opportunities to speak with members of the inspection team during their visit.

The questionnaires completed by our families, and the discussions held between families and the Inspectorate, highlighted the following as areas of strength:

- **Staff develop and sustain extremely positive relationships with young people and their families**
- **Tutors work closely with young people and understand their needs well**
- **All staff are aware of these needs and the strategies which help young people to make progress in their learning**

Additional feedback received throughout the year from families and professionals – both formal and informal - also highlighted the following as strengths:

- **Our flexibility and willingness to adapt what we do to meet the needs of individual pupils**
- **The support offered by our Transitions Co-ordinator to pupils preparing to move on from school**
- **The support and help offered to families at the start of the admissions process**

All pupils were also given an opportunity to complete a questionnaire for the team of inspectors. Positive feedback from them included:

- **Having someone in school to speak to if they are upset or worried about something**
- **Feeling they are treated fairly and with respect**
- **Having opportunities to take part in activities in school beyond the classroom and timetabled day**
- **Having opportunities to influence what and how they learn**
- **Enjoying learning at school and making good progress in subjects**
- **Being encouraged to do the best they can**

Pupils who were planning their next steps highlighted the following positive aspects of school:

- **Feeling able to express their views before or during planning meetings**
- **Getting enough support to move on from school**
- **Becoming more confident**

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

HMIE Inspection (contd.)

Over the course of the 3 days the Inspectors spent with us, they visited classrooms and observed lessons, looked at examples of work, scrutinised data and accompanied pupils and staff on activities.

Inspectors identified the following as strengths:

- Staff in Dunedin School are very successful at re-engaging young people in education. As a result, young people are happy to attend school and are attaining and achieving well
- Staff develop and sustain extremely positive relationships with young people and their families. Tutors work closely with young people and understand their needs well. They ensure that other staff are aware of these needs and the strategies which help young people to make progress in their learning
- The quality of teaching and learning across all classes is very strong. Teachers plan lessons which are appropriate for each young person in the class. Learning activities are relevant, enjoyable and challenging
- Young people make very good progress in their learning from previous levels of attainment. They are also well supported and encouraged to move on to further education, training or employment when they leave school

They also highlighted areas for development, including:

- Developing our approaches to check assessment standards by engaging with colleagues from other schools
- Developing the curriculum to fulfil national entitlements and/or guidance on physical education, modern languages and religious observance

Overall, the Inspectors assessed us as “Very Good” for both **Learning, Teaching and Assessment** and **Raising Attainment and Achievement**. A Very Good outcome equates to point 5 on a 6-point scale and we were delighted and relieved that the Inspectors had recognised what we aim to do, and the incredible progress our pupils make.

The full Inspection Report can be found by following these links:

https://educationinspectorate.gov.scot/media/hc5naw33/dunedin-school-ins-180325.pdf

https://educationinspectorate.gov.scot/media/rjpk1qwu/dunedin-school-sif-180325.pdf

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

In May 2025, we also carried out our more familiar whole-school evaluation against additional quality indicators in **How Good is our School? (4th Edition)** which were not evaluated by the Inspection team**.** These were:

- Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion
- Leadership of Change
- Family Learning

You will find a summary below of our evaluation against these national quality indicators, as well as the indictors assessed by HMIE.

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

Area of Evaluation: QI 1.3 - Leadership of Change

- Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- Strategic planning for continuous improvement
- Implementing improvement and change

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community.

Areas of Strength	How do we know?
Ownership of our vision, aims and values	Our collegiate management structure means all staff work collaboratively to make decisions and manage the school; staff can take on roles of responsibility to contribute to the wider school. The aims and values of the school are written into our policies and school literature, and are highlighted during every recruitment process. Decisions are made through discussion, debate and consensus. All pupils are encouraged to attend the pupil council, and their objectives and actions are shared with staff. Pupils write and review the school's Code of Etiquette and are therefore engaged in developing and sustaining our vision, aims and values. We have an "open door" policy for families and encourage them to raise concerns, queries and suggestions. Tutors are in frequent contact with families.
Our commitment to ensuring that we achieve the highest possible standards and success for all learners: Staff have consistently high expectations of all learners The vision of the school is ambitious and focuses on improvements in outcomes for all.	All staff are aspirational for pupils and work hard to re-engage them with learning which most have missed out on before they arrive at Dunedin. Pupils can re-engage with a broad curriculum when they attend Dunedin, and are encouraged and supported to pursue qualifications, which may have been previously unattainable, at whatever level is appropriate for them. Our tracking and monitoring systems demonstrate that the learning experience is improved for our pupils when they arrive at Dunedin. Pupils' attendance at school improves significantly after enrolling at Dunedin. SQA results are evidence of our pupils' achievements in learning – but the achievement of each individual is valued, whether they sit an exam or not. Nurture and understanding the individual needs of each pupil underpins our ethos. Our tutor system ensures we sustain focus on this. By working collaboratively with pupils, families and other professionals, we identify the barriers pupils face and remove as many of these as possible to support them to achieve. We are flexible and responsive to changing needs. All pupils have equal access to resources, including IT, so no one is disadvantaged. All trips, activities and resources are provided by the school. Our transitions support is held in high regard, and pupils are encouraged to pursue their ambitions and interests.
All staff show commitment to shared educational values and professional standards as embedded in the GTCS standards; Teachers have systematic opportunities to review and refresh their pedagogical practice and participate in career-long professional learning.	All teachers participate in a PRD process, validated by GTCS, in which they engage with the Professional Standards and agree areas for development and career-long professional learning needs. Professional development is encouraged and renumerated by the school. PRD groups support and challenge staff, give them opportunities to reflect on their practice, and ensure teaching staff adhere to the values embedded in the GTCS standards.
All staff are committed to change which results in improvements for learners All staff are involved in the process of change and in evaluating the impact of improvements.	All staff attend regular meetings to discuss the achievement and wellbeing of pupils and the management of the school. All staff are involved in the annual whole school evaluation and improvement planning cycle and can choose to work on areas of improvement in which they have expertise, or which particularly interest them. All staff can suggest and/or introduce new initiatives to meet pupil needs. All staff are encouraged to undertake career-long professional learning to support improvement and development at a personal, departmental and whole-school level. All staff have opportunities to take on management tasks which allow them to develop a range of skills and experience.

Areas for Future Development:

Reassess our vision, aims and values so all staff understand the fundamental purpose of the school and agree how to sustain it in our daily practice; Involve families and others within the school community more effectively in the creation and ongoing review of the school's vision, aims and values; Carefully consider how best to take forward priorities identified by staff, so pace of change is manageable and does not have a negative impact on staff wellbeing; Increasing time for enquiry, reflection on pedagogy and critical and creative thinking, and for staff to share learning

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

Area of Evaluation: QI 2.1: Safeguarding and Child Protection

- Arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection
- Arrangements to ensure wellbeing
- National guidance and legislation

This indicator focuses on the wide range of duties required of all staff and partners to ensure that all children and young people are safe, well cared for and enabled to flourish. This indicator looks to how the school takes account of statutory requirements in relation to child protection to ensure the needs of all learners are met. Safeguarding all children and young people requires strong partnerships to be established between the school and its local community. This includes well-planned progressive learning opportunities so that children and young people can become more resilient and develop a sound understanding of how they can keep themselves safe.

Areas of Strength	How do we know?
We have clear, appropriate and up-to-date policies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people including child protection	Our Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually to ensure it meets current legislation and guidance. A designated member of the Board of Governors has responsibility for overseeing Child Protection and regularly meets with the Child Protection and Safeguarding team. Updates are given at every Governors' meeting. Each pupil is allocated a personal tutor who works closely with the pupil, their family and other professionals, where appropriate, to ensure that they are making good progress and that their wellbeing needs are met. GIRFEC meetings are held with professionals at least once a year and as frequently as required. There is clear guidance on, and procedures for, reporting concerns about any member of staff. All incidents are securely recorded in accordance with national guidance. The school adheres to a strict Safer Recruitment policy. All teachers must be GTCS registered and all staff (including volunteers) undergo PVG checks. All volunteers and Governors must undertake CP training. There are clear policies on administration of medicines, allergies etc.
All staff take part in regular professional learning and are confident in responding to any child protection or safeguarding issue. CP leads have been trained in safeguarding matters to a high level and demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding. They provide good support and direction for all staff.. Robust arrangements are in place to ensure that all staff (including volunteers and partners) are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection and equality policies and procedures	All staff, including volunteers, undertake annual CP training and regular Home Office Prevent duty training. Every 3 years all staff and volunteers undertake a full CP certification course. All staff are trained in procedures to follow in the event of a disclosure. All staff have access to a dedicated secure online sharing space where they can access all current policies and procedures, and professional learning materials. Designated CP leads attend high level training and ensure all staff are updated on policy in addition to delivering annual training to all staff. The names and photos of the designated members of staff responsible for Child Protection and safeguarding are clearly displayed, along with information regarding how to contact them. A discrete child protection email account for staff, parents and any concerned person is advertised. This is monitored throughout the year by the CP leads, including during holiday periods.
Approaches to safeguarding and child protection are an important part of our self-evaluation and improvement activities.	Safeguarding and Child Protection are discussed annually during at least one inservice and, additionally, form part of the annual whole school evaluation process which involves all staff. Child protection is discussed at every Board of Governors' meeting and with a designated Board of Governor regularly throughout the year.
The curriculum effectively promotes safeguarding and wellbeing across all stages, Children feel able to make a complaint against school practice and procedures, and are confident their views will be taken seriously and acted upon.	All pupils have timetabled PSE classes. Health and wellbeing is the focus of at least one annual interdisciplinary event. All pupils are given information about how to make a complaint. All pupils have a dedicated member of staff they can speak to if they have any concerns, or they may choose to raise concerns via a dedicated email, or make use of a "worry box".
Unexplained, regular or long-term absence is supported through a range of approaches and strategies	Tutors monitor attendance and respond swiftly to any decline in attendance, engaging with the pupil, their families and other professionals to overcome barriers to attendance.

Areas for Future Development:
Improve visitor monitoring by supplying lanyards with information regarding child protection leads and processes for reporting concerns.

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

Area of Evaluation: QI 2.3: Learning, Teaching and Assessment

- Learning and engagement
- Quality of teaching
- Effective use of assessment
- Planning, tracking and monitoring

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements.

Areas of Strength	How do we know?
The ethos and culture of our school reflects a commitment to children's rights and positive relationships. The learning environment is built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high-quality learning outcomes. Our teaching is underpinned by our shared school vision and values.	We re-engage pupils who are not accessing education in other settings by providing them with a learning environment based on understanding, nurture, encouragement, acceptance, and respect. Most pupils immediately improve attendance when they arrive at Dunedin, and most senior pupils can work towards qualifications. We place pupils at the centre of all our teaching, and understand that success looks different for each one. Teachers adapt practice and recognise what works for one pupil does not work for all. We place an emphasis on young people's emotional regulation and take steps to ensure that young people are ready to learn. We are attuned to the trauma many pupils have experienced and understand their barriers to learning and support needs, and how these might change. Each pupil has a tutor to ensure wellbeing is supported so they can engage in learning.
We use a wide range of learning environments and creative teaching approaches.	Subject teachers recognise different barriers to learning and provide appropriate support to help pupils develop resilience. Pupils can work independently and at their own pace. We tailor teaching and the curriculum to pupil need and interests whenever possible. We make use of varied learning environments and approaches to learning, to develop the 4 capacities, e.g. delivering a charity coffee morning, Green Team, DofE, field trips etc. We use facilities in the community, such as leisure centres and riding stables to deliver aspects of the curriculum, such as P.E. We organize subject-specific and whole-school trips, and activities throughout the year so pupils have access to other learning and social environments, such as museums, libraries and theatres. We make use of our garden and the surrounding environment to enhance learning and wellbeing, including for art, investigations, and for activities which support physical activity and wellbeing. We have a programme of outdoor education and activities in June, which encourages and challenges pupils to access a range of different environments, including historical sites, the countryside and organisations where they can develop team-working and problem-solving skills. An annual residential trip is available to, and free for, all pupils, providing opportunities for pupils to participate in supported but physically and socially challenging activities.
Learning is enriched and supported by our effective use of digital technologies Learners exercise choice, including the appropriate use of digital technology, and take increasing responsibility as they become more independent in their learning.	Every pupil has access to their own laptop, and to a range of assistive technology if they need it. Pupils make regular use of this for independent research, and creating and producing coursework. Pupils have opportunities to choose areas of study in many subjects, and select topics for essays, talk activities and investigations, particularly to fulfil coursework requirements for national qualifications.
Our learners are successful, confident and responsible. They contribute effectively to the life of the school and wider community in a range of well-planned activities. They know that their views are sought, valued and acted upon.	We provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community so they can develop confidence and a sense of responsibility, e.g. engaging in the pupil council, litter picking. Pupils' views are sought on a variety of issues, including aspects of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, through the pupil council, questionnaires and discussions. Our pupils' success is evidenced by their improved attendance and engagement, academic achievements, their developing social confidence and independence and their engagement in planning life beyond school. Leavers' destinations also demonstrate our impact. These are varied and match individual interests, skills and aspirations. Leavers have progressed on to university, college, employment, volunteering and engaging with further support to develop employability skills or move on to further education.

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

Area of Evaluation: QI 2.3: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (contd.)

- Learning and engagement
- Quality of teaching
- Effective use of assessment
- Planning, tracking and monitoring

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements.

Areas of Strength	How do we know?
Staff observe learners closely to inform appropriate and well-timed interventions and future learning. We use feedback effectively to inform and support progress in learning. Assessment approaches are matched to the learning needs of learners and are used to support them to demonstrate where they are in their learning.	Our high staff-to-pupil ratio means we are attuned to each pupil's needs, and learning and assessment is individualised. Feedback is instant and regular and identifies "next steps". Our tutor system facilitates ongoing and open dialogue about learning and engagement between teachers, families, pupils and other professionals. Tutors ensure interventions are made whenever necessary. We have two parents' evenings and two formal reporting opportunities each year, and pupils engage in reviewing their progress and set targets. We have an "open-door" policy, and families can discuss learning and engagement whenever they require. Assessment of specific learning needs and targeted support is provided by our Support for Learning teacher. We have a robust Assessment Arrangements policy to ensure equity of access to formal qualifications .
Tracking and monitoring are well-understood and used effectively to secure improved outcomes for all learners, including the most deprived children and young people and those who are looked after.	The school's current tracking system is used to record historic attendance and achievement prior to a pupil arriving at Dunedin, when this information is available. Attendance and achievement are recorded in each subsequent year so there is clear, simple and accessible evidence of progress and achievement. A separate BGE tracker is used to monitor progress of pupils in S1-S3. Tutors are aware of, and responsive to, any changes in their tutees' wellbeing, behaviour, attendance and progress in learning. Assessment of needs are updated annually and help to inform individualised support for each pupil.

Areas for Future Development:

Improve and centralise our tracking systems to create a more consistent approach to tracking that will allow us to collate more data on the progress of each of our pupils.
Continue to strengthen our community engagement.
Develop approaches to check assessment standards by engaging with colleagues from other schools.
Continue to develop work experience links for pupils.
Continue to improve the involvement of parents in planning and improving learning for our pupils.

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

Area of Evaluation: QI 2.5: Family Learning

- Engaging families in learning
- Early intervention and prevention
- Quality of family learning programmes

This indicator focuses on increasing the positive impact of working with families to improve learning and achievement. The emphasis is on schools working in partnership with others in the community to support families to secure better outcomes through programmes which enable them to improve literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

Areas of Strength	How do we know?
Creative approaches are used to engage families. Parents and carers are supported to actively and meaningfully engage in their children's learning and life at school. Staff work with parents and carers to reduce potential barriers to engagement and are responsive to the family circumstances	Dunedin does not deliver specific family learning programmes. Instead, our approach is to engage with our families and work alongside them, so that they feel included and involved in their young person's learning, and can support them to achieve. Our tutor system is central to facilitating ongoing and supportive dialogue with our families. We work as partners rather than as "authority figures", and respect families' expertise and their experience. The tutor system means families have a member of staff who they can easily contact, who they know will advocate for their young person. We operate an "open door" policy for families to make sure they feel welcome and valued by staff. We have a dedicated Transitions Co-ordinator who liaises regularly with families; families are fully included in discussions about next steps and post-school destinations. Sharing events about transition support, the careers service and other services have previously been delivered. Families are invited to complete an annual questionnaire as part of the whole school evaluation and school improvement processes.
Family learning is responsive to identified needs. Families know that whatever their needs they will be able to access the right support that will enable them to reach their full potential as individuals and as a family	By working in partnership with families, and understanding their particular circumstances, staff are better able to identify barriers and needs, and agree the supports needed to mitigate these. All young people at Dunedin have at least one planning meeting to which families are invited, and where their views are sought. Any targeted support is put in place in agreement with families.
Staff have an appropriate shared understanding of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and use these approaches to meet the needs of families Almost all learners report improvement in their health and/or wellbeing.	We are committed to GIRFEC. Tutors understand the importance of placing the young person at the centre and engaging with all the people who are important in their lives. All tutors use the GIRFEC model to structure and record outcomes of planning meetings. This includes use of the wellbeing indicators to assess the needs of each young person. Tutors work collaboratively with families and other professionals to define targets and actions to improve wellbeing, and to ensure support is put in place when it is needed and when it is available. Improvements in wellbeing are evidenced by improved attendance, engagement, achievement and developing confidence and independence.
Family learning promotes equality, fairness and diversity	Although we do not deliver specific family learning programmes, our ethos supports and promotes equality and fairness. All pupils have free access to the resources they need for learning and to all trips and activities. No young person or family should be disadvantaged.

Areas for Future Development:

Increase opportunities for families to feed back on, and be involved in, school life.
Identify areas about which families would like more information and organise sharing events.
Refresh the website to ensure families have ready access to the information they need.

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

Area of Evaluation: QI 3.1: Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion

- Wellbeing
- Fulfilment of statutory duties
- Inclusion and equality

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements.

Areas of Strength	How do we know?
The whole learning community has a shared understanding of wellbeing and young people's rights, and understand their role and responsibility in supporting learners' health and wellbeing.	All staff working at Dunedin understand that pupils' wellbeing comes first, and learning can only happen when this is supported. We are attuned to the needs of the pupils, and adapt teaching to support this. GIRFEC is well embedded at Dunedin, and our tutor system means every young person and their family has a named person to whom they can turn to discuss concerns or problems. The tutor has oversight of each tutee's wellbeing and is in regular communication with them. their families and other staff. Our aims, values and ethos, and our commitment to GIRFEC, as well as gaining the Rights Respecting Schools Bronze award all reflect our commitment to the UNCRC. The Rights of the Child are displayed and regularly discussed. Wellbeing is supported across the school day and across the curriculum, in PSE, in activities, and during social times. As a responsibility of all, staff look for innovative ways to support physical and emotional wellbeing.
We comply and actively engage with statutory requirements and codes of practice. All staff engage in regular professional learning to ensure they are fully up-to-date with local, national and, where appropriate, international legislation affecting the rights, wellbeing and inclusion of all children and young people.	We have a schedule of annual mandatory training to fulfil statutory requirements, such as Child Protection and Prevent, and all staff are encouraged to undertake additional professional learning that will support them in supporting our young people. This has included training on incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law. Our PRD process ensures staff sustain engagement with the GTCS professional standards and undertake continuous professional learning.
We have established a positive, supportive and inclusive environment where all young people can achieve, and we promote positive and supportive relationships across the school community	Staff use a nurturing and person-centred teaching approach within lessons and activities. The school's Code of Etiquette, developed in collaboration with pupils, emphasises our core values of respect, tolerance and understanding. We scaffold social activity to model and support positive relationships. All our young people face barriers to learning and we have adapted the environment and teaching to help them overcome these. We are committed to learning about diverse needs. We accept young people for who they are, and focus on their strengths and potential. We work hard to ensure equity. All pupils have access to quality equipment to use in learning, and no pupil is excluded from trips or activities. We demonstrate improved attainment and achievement through significantly increased attendance from prior levels, which we capture when a pupil starts with us. We can also demonstrate improved attainment through tracking levels achieved in BGE and qualifications gained in the senior phase. Our families tell us that being at Dunedin has made a difference to their young people. ..

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

Area of Evaluation: QI 3.1: Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion (contd.)

- Wellbeing
- Fulfilment of statutory duties
- Inclusion and equality

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements.

Areas of Strength	How do we know?
We consider each child and young person as an individual with his/her own needs, risks and rights .	We are flexible and responsive to the different needs of each pupil. Support is individualised at Dunedin. Before admission, staff take time to understand the particular barriers to learning and specific needs of each young person, and then adapt practice to support these. Tutors are in frequent communication with families to ensure ongoing needs are addressed. Planning meetings focus on the needs of the individual, and risks to their wellbeing, and actions are agreed to support these. We make adaptations to the timetable for those who need it.
We listen to and involve children and young people in making decisions about their wellbeing, their lives and their future	Senior pupils have an opportunity to develop their own transitions plan with our Transitions Co-ordinator, and receive any targeted support they need to enable them to move on to a positive and sustainable post-school destination. All pupils are encouraged to attend YPPMs, which they have at least once per year. They are encouraged to participate in regular Pupil Council meetings where they can discuss their views on aspects of school life and suggest areas for improvement. They are active participants in discussions about activities and trips, and these are planned around their interests. They have access to a tutor who knows them well, and can also raise concerns via a confidential email if they are worried about something. They are actively involved in planning their next steps, setting targets for themselves with our transitions co-ordinator, and in discussions with our careers advisor. We adapt timetables when necessary/possible to suit individual needs and aspirations.

Areas for Future Development

Continuing to focus on promoting positive relationships and managing and sustaining friendships

Providing more opportunities to recognise and celebrate diversity

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

Area of Evaluation: QI 3.2: Raising Attainment and Achievement

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy
- Attainment over time
- Overall quality of learners' achievement
- Equity for all learners

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes.

***Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator*.**

Areas of Strength	How do we know?
Learners make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment.	All young people who attend Dunedin School have experienced challenges within a mainstream setting which has led to extremely low or no attendance for a significant period of time. For most young people, this means that opportunities for them to achieve have been restricted. Teachers at Dunedin develop a good understanding of individual support needs and barriers to learning and adapt teaching to suit pupil need, interests and learning styles where possible. Pupils can work at a pace appropriate to them in each subject. By these means, pupils develop confidence and are able to re-engage and make significant progress in attendance and learning. In session 2024-2025, a total of 16 out of our 21 pupils achieved SQA freestanding units and/or National Qualifications, from N3 to Higher level. Pupils also develop confidence and wider skills through the range of extra-curricular activities and transition support available to them at Dunedin. .
We have effective systems in place to promote equity of success and achievement for all our young people. We have raised the attainment of all our learners.	A pupil's individual barriers to learning are identified and considered at the start of the admissions process, and kept under review by tutors and our Support for Learning teacher. Staff are experienced in implementing a range of strategies to overcome individual barriers – from adapting the timetable and curriculum, small-group teaching, providing time out for wellbeing, to providing targeted learning support etc. Each pupil has access to their own laptop and any other resources and stationery that might be required throughout the school day. Pupils can access a range of assistive technology and targeted support from SfL as required. All activities are open to every pupil. The school also provides a breakfast club which all pupils can access.
Pupils move into sustained positive destinations when they leave school.	All leavers last session planned and developed a transition pathway and had support from the Transitions Coordinator, tutors, careers advisor and families to fulfil this. Any pupil whose plan required adjustment was supported by the TC and SDS in collaboration with families and other support networks. Senior phase pupils engage well in finding out about post-school pathways. They are supported to attend careers fairs and familiarisation visits to college campuses and workplaces. All senior phase pupils have opportunities to engage with our careers advisor to discuss next steps, and have a weekly Life skills lesson in which they can develop independent living skills such as budgeting, as well as career management skills. Pupils in their final year have 3 planning meetings to ensure support is in place for moving on from school. This ensures every young person leaves with a positive destination, or other professional supports, in place. The Transitions Co-ordinator also supports all young people in the first few months after leaving school. Last session, one pupil moved on to university, two pupils moved on to full-time college courses, and two pupils continued to engage with support to determine their next steps.

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

Area of Evaluation: QI 3.2: Raising Attainment and Achievement (contd.)

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy
- Attainment over time
- Overall quality of learners' achievement
- Equity for all learners

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes.

Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator.

Areas of Strength	How do we know?
Children and young people are fully engaged in their learning and participate in decision-making about their learning pathways and future career aspirations. .	Pupils have opportunities to engage in personal learning planning, and, with their tutor's support, set targets for themselves, and highlight any support they need. Pupils also discuss subject reports with their tutors and view their progress. At the end of S3, pupils make decisions, in discussion with families and tutors, about their preferred senior phase learning pathways. All pupils are encouraged to attend annual YPPMs where they can discuss career aspirations. They participate in career management skills education throughout their time at Dunedin and all senior pupils have regular meetings with the school's Skills Development Scotland advisor, as well as the Transitions Co-ordinator to plan their next steps.
The school empowers children and young people to have a say in the quality of their learning experiences and how to improve	All pupils complete questionnaires as part of the school's evaluation process. Their responses suggest they have opportunities to influence what and how they learn, they enjoy learning at school and they feel they are making good progress in subjects. Pupils also suggest they are encouraged to do the best they can. All pupils have at least one annual YPPM, more if required. Pupils in their final year have 3 meetings to support transition. All pupils are encouraged to attend meetings, and most do. Some pupils were not able to participate in planning meetings before attending Dunedin, or when they first enrol, but almost all do so by the time they leave. These meetings provide further opportunities for pupils to have a say in the quality of their learning experiences. Pupils also have access to support from their tutor, with whom they can raise concerns about any aspect of their curriculum and/or learning experience. All pupils can attend Pupil Council meetings and are encouraged to discuss ways to improve school, and identify gaps in the curriculum and activities.
Attendance levels are high and improving. Exclusion rates are low.	Attendance is usually one of the first things to improve when pupils enrol at Dunedin, as most arrive with no or very low levels of attendance in their previous school. During session 2024-2025, average agreed attendance across the school was 79.7%. This was slightly lower than the previous two years, but reflects the significant challenges in health and wellbeing experienced by several of the pupils during the session. Tutors quickly implement a range of interventions when there are concerns around attendance. Exclusions are extremely rare, as staff look for positive interventions to sustain engagement. There were no exclusions in session 2024-2025.

Areas for Future Development:

Develop the range of interdisciplinary activities and projects to support wider achievement.

Record and track the skills and knowledge gained through participation in wider achievement activities.

Continue to improve development and tracking of literacy and numeracy, particularly at senior level.

Improve formal tracking and monitoring, ensuring it is accessible to all staff and there is a formalised overview of the progress of all learners across the curriculum and at all phases in their education.

Earlier engagement in transition support where appropriate.

Provide more opportunities for planned religious observance.

Build more time for physical education.

Consider ways to provide access to modern language learning.

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

As part of our evaluation process, we also assess the progress we have made towards the improvement targets we set ourselves in the previous session. This is shown below:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">School Improvement Priority 1: Review and Refresh the Curriculum with a clear focus on developing skills of literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, creativity, digital and employability skills</td></tr>
<tr><td>Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers</td><td>Link to How Good is our School (4th Edition)</td></tr>
<tr><td>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
Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people
Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy</td><td>Learning Provision
2.2: The Curriculum

Successes and Achievements
3.2: Raising Attainment and Achievement
3.3: Increasing Creativity and Employability</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Target/Outcome/Desired Impact:
Complete accreditation as a Reading School
Revisit policy on Literacy Across the Curriculum</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Progress
Audit carried out to determine which level of accreditation we should go for (Core)
Several activities related to promoting reading carried out , including celebration of World Book Day; everyone reading; teachers displaying currently reading signs; books gifted at Christmas; regular reading time set up on Friday afternoons
Library audit and clean up by pupils and some new texts, requested by pupils, procured
Whole-school visit to local library to discuss current literature
Introduction of trial of “The Daily 10” - reading for enjoyment for 10 mins after lunch each day</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Next Steps
Continue to work towards full accreditation as a reading school
Continue to find new ways to inspire reading, including participating in Empathy Festival</td></tr>
</table>

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

School Improvement Priority 2: ***Leadership and Management of Staff***	
Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers	**Link to How Good is our School? (4th Edition)**
Drivers: • *Teacher and practitioner professionalism* • *Curriculum and assessment* • *School and early learning and childcare improvement*	**Leadership and Management** *1.4: Leadership and Management of Staff* **Learning Provision** *2.1: Safeguarding and Child Protection*
Target/Outcome/Desired Impact: • Staff will have time to plan and complete management tasks and fulfil pastoral care responsibilities • Wellbeing is promoted across all aspects of the life of the school • We are able to respond effectively to the wellbeing of each child and young person • Record keeping for all safeguarding matters is maintained to the highest standards	
Progress: Working group discussed various models that might afford teachers more time to complete management tasks Working group reviewed the possibility of providing "non-contact" periods for teaching staff A 6-period timetable drawn up to be trialled on Tuesdays and Fridays next session	
Next Steps: • Staff health and wellbeing group to continue to look at ways to support teachers to fulfil all tasks effectively • Review the effectiveness of the 6-period day	

School Improvement Priority 3: ***Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion***	
Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers	**Link to How Good is our School? (4th Edition)**
• 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	**Successes and Achievements** *3.1: Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion* *3.2: Raising Attainment and Achievement*
Target/Outcome/Desired Impact: • Pupils develop greater empathy • Staff create a more harmonious environment • The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to explore diversity and multi-faith issues, and to challenge racism and religious intolerance. • Pupils are knowledgeable about equalities and inclusion. They feel able to challenge discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance when they come across it	
Progress: • Whole staff meeting held to discuss strategies to develop empathy and understanding within the school • All pupils invited to review our current "Code of Etiquette" with its emphasis on tolerance and respect • Use of phones discussed at Pupil Council • Volunteering opportunities in the local community explored • Understanding Prejudice workshop delivered by TIE • Included in PSE lessons • Daily reading linked to developing empathy	
Next Steps: • Invite speakers with different life experiences to share these with pupils • Work with pupils and families to carry out further review of impact of mobile phones on learning and wellbeing • Continue to seek volunteering opportunities for pupils as appropriate	

OUR EVALUATION FOR SESSION 2024-2025

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">School Improvement Priority 4: Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion</td></tr>
<tr><td>Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers</td><td>Link to How Good is our School? (4th Edition)</td></tr>
<tr><td>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</td><td>Successes and Achievements
3.1: Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion
3.2: Raising Attainment and Achievement</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Target/Outcome/Desired Impact:
We are clear and confident in our expectations and in our application of our behaviour policy
The whole learning community has a shared understanding of wellbeing and children’s rights
All pupils feel safe and secure
All pupils feel listened to and are secure in their ability to discuss personal and sensitive aspects of their lives because they feel cared about
All staff and partners take due account of the legislative framework related to wellbeing, equality and inclusion</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Progress:
Consultation with pupils to establish why some report feelings of concern
All pupils invited to review our current “Code of Etiquette” with its emphasis on tolerance and respect
Procedures for supporting pupils shared with all staff to develop greater consistency
Procedures for recording any incident of concern reviewed and shared with all staff to develop greater consistency</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Next Steps:
Carry out further surveys/discussions to ensure all pupils feel safe and secure</td></tr>
</table>

SCHOOL PRIORITIES FOR 2025-2026

Whole-school evaluation helps us to identify the school's improvement priorities for the next session. From the inspection findings, questionnaires, evaluation of last year's improvement plan, and through whole-school discussion, we have agreed the following as our priorities for 2025-2026. Working groups will set targets and actions to achieve these, but relevant links to ***HGIOS4*** have been given below.

School Improvement Priority 1: Improving Pupil Engagement and Relationships	
Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers	**Link to How Good is our School (4th Edition)**
• 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 • Improving relationships and behaviour, and attendance, with increased engagement in learning and a culture of dignity and respect for all.	**Successes and Achievements** *3.1: Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion*
Target/Outcome/Desired Impact: • A transparent process is in place to deal with negative behaviours • There is a greater sense of belonging among the pupil cohort • Pupil questionnaires demonstrate an improvement in how pupils feel about relationships with their peers • Pupil questionnaires demonstrate improved levels of happiness amongst pupils • Overall attendance improves	

School Improvement Priority 2: Improving Family Engagement	
Link to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers	**Link to How Good is our School? (4th Edition)**
• Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing • Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people • Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people • Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy	**Learning Provision** *2.5: Family Learning*
Target/Outcome/Desired Impact: • Increase opportunities for families to feedback and be involved in school life • Create focus groups for families to meet and feedback to governors or teaching staff, allowing consultation with parents/carers • Identify areas that families would like to be informed about, for example, what coursework is involved in a subject • Reinvigorate website to suit parent/carer needs	

In addition, we are addressing the areas for development highlighted by the Inspection team.

ATTENDANCE, ACHIEVEMENT AND TRANSITION

Attendance

Pupils who come to Dunedin have usually experienced a fractured learning experience, marked by low or no attendance within their previous setting, or attendance in only specific subject areas and in limited spaces within the school. Increased attendance when they arrive at Dunedin is one of the clearest indicators that we are providing our young people with the support and environment they need in order to thrive, and it demonstrates their commitment to re-engaging in education. The majority of our pupils increase their attendance very quickly, but for others, feeling safe and secure and developing the confidence to be back in school full time can take a little longer. We aim to meet each pupil where they are.

Attendance is monitored carefully at Dunedin as it can be an early indication that a young person is experiencing challenges and pressures and may need additional help and understanding to resolve these. Tutors step in very quickly to address any barriers, and work with families to put in place any support that is required

For session 2024-2025, the whole-school average approved attendance figure was **79.75%**.

We always aim to be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of all of our pupils so that they are supported to do their best no matter what challenges they face throughout their time with us. That they all increase their attendance so significantly from previous levels, and engage in a broad curriculum, is a real achievement they can be proud of.

Achievement

Despite the fact that all pupils arrive at Dunedin having experienced difficulties accessing education in a mainstream setting, and many have long periods of non-attendance at school, our young people often re-engage with the curriculum quickly, and most see almost immediate progress in their learning.

Pupils in S1-S3 usually work within the **Broad General Education (BGE)** curriculum.

Pupils in S4-S6 can work towards qualifications, at a pace and level which suits them, and are supported to plan their transition from Dunedin.

In session 2024-2025, there were 15 pupils in the senior phase, and 6 pupils working within the Broad General Education phase. All senior pupils were working towards a variety of units and course qualifications, from National 2 to Higher. Some S3 pupils also began, or continued, National Qualification work if they had been working towards units and qualifications before they arrived at Dunedin.

After-school revision classes were available to pupils during the session to help them prepare for exams, and a series of exam revision workshops took place during the Easter break.

Between them, our senior pupils achieved 86 Units, and 35 National Qualifications during the session. We know the hard work that goes into gaining every single one of these, and the personal challenges each pupil has to overcome. We are so proud of every one of them.

ATTENDANCE, ACHIEVEMENT AND TRANSITION

Transition

We remain absolutely committed to supporting our pupils to make a positive transition on from school, and, though it can be a challenging and worrying time, we encourage them to embrace the opportunities and experiences they can enjoy as young adults.

For most of our pupils, we also know that transition is a gradual process, and not always a smooth one. Their first steps into the world beyond school can be faltering, and it is not unusual for some to take time to decide what the next step will be, and sometimes initial plans need to be adapted. Ongoing support is usually needed to help them to move on.

Although supporting transition is a team effort our transitions co-ordinator, Jen Laing, is indispensable. She takes the lead to enable pupils, their families, guidance tutors and our careers advisor to work together to ensure pupils are taking positive next steps.

In 2024-2025, at least 3 transition planning meetings were held for each young person in their final year, to give them, and their families, time to engage with the process of transition.

Jen creates a personalised action plan with each leaver, which helps them to develop the independent skills they will need beyond school, whether that is travelling independently, creating bank accounts or shopping. She also organises trips to careers fairs, workplace visits, work experience, shadowing and familiarisation visits to college. Importantly, Jen liaises with families, and with learning support staff from college, ensuring vital information regarding support needs is shared, with the agreement of pupils. She helps pupils manage the college application process if that is their chosen route, encouraging them to increase their independence and confidence in communicating directly with college staff. Jen also continues to support our leavers for 2 months into the new session if they need it, to ensure the transition from school is established, and any new supports are firmly in place.

Last session, we also continued our very well-established relationship with Skills Development Scotland, and Janice O'Brien, our link careers advisor, regularly met with senior pupils to discuss their next steps and the variety of pathways available to them. She also attended each of the 3 transition planning meetings held for each leaver. Janice is another indispensable support for us. She takes time to get to know our pupils and is a wealth of knowledge.

At Dunedin, we are always focused on finding a pathway that suits our pupils and matches their very varied interests and passions. We know there is no single pathway and encourage each pupil to look at all the opportunities available to them to get to where they want to be.

This session, our leavers moved on to a real variety of destinations, as each pursued their interests and took the first steps to realising aspirations and ambitions. Destinations included further study in English and History, blacksmithing, travel and tourism and volunteering with a local enterprise, as well as preparation for employment.

We wish all of our leavers every success and always look forward to future visits from them to hear about their continuing journeys. Although it is always hard to say goodbye to them, they are role models for the pupils they leave behind.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PUPILS' EXPERIENCES AND WIDER ACHIEVEMENT 2024-2025

One of Dunedin'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. They also bring the school together so all pupils and staff can feel part of a community.

These experiences are also vital in delivering aspects of the National Improvement Framework, particularly improvement in young people's health and wellbeing, and developing highly-sought employability skills such as flexibility, resilience, planning and organising, communication and teamwork.

Extra-curricular activities are free, and 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 challenge themselves and develop the confidence to give new activities a go.

And whilst some activities may be challenging, we do try to have some fun too!

Residential

In session 2024-2025 we had not 1 but 2 outdoor education residential trips – the first in September 2024, and the second in June 2025. This was to bring the residential back in line with previous sessions, when it was historically part of our end-of-year outdoor activities, but also to give pupils who had just started with us in September, and who were not able to participate in the first residential, an opportunity to experience the residential at the end of their first year.

The residential is a very special event, and since it was introduced, we have seen a real increase in pupils' confidence and willingness to participate. Both residentials this session took place in the now familiar surroundings of Kinlochleven, and as in previous years, all activities were led by Andy Spink and his team at Hebridean Pursuits, who now know us well.

In the first of the residentials in September 2024, an incredible 15 pupils participated – the highest number of pupils we have ever taken away on a trip. It was a fantastic couple of days, and the group were blessed with good weather. They swam, climbed and walked, but also participated in artwork, and enjoyed toasting marshmallows on an open fire on the beach, beneath the Milky Way! Pupils also helped prepare meals and enjoyed social activities in the evenings. Attending a residential at this time of the year is a great way to develop relationships, and bind pupils and staff through shared experience.

The second residential, in June, gave those pupils who had not had the confidence to participate previously another chance to experience the beauty of Glencoe and all that it has to offer.

There is no doubt that the residential provides challenge; it is not easy to be away from home, in an unfamiliar environment. But those are the challenges that have the biggest reward, and this is an activity that really helps develop independence and confidence in our young people.

It is also a lot of fun, and hopefully leaves everyone who participates, including staff, with many fantastic memories.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PUPILS' EXPERIENCES AND WIDER ACHIEVEMENT 2024-2025

Dunedin School Annual Charity Coffee Morning

Another highlight of the school calendar is our annual charity coffee morning. Pupils are involved at every stage of planning, project-managing and delivering this event, beginning with researching and suggesting charities for which we could raise money. This year, their chosen charity was Young Minds. This is the UK's leading charity fighting for a world where no young person feels alone with their mental health. Their mission is to stop young people's mental health reaching crisis point, and to make sure all young people get the mental health support they need, when they need it, no matter what. Their work chimes with us at Dunedin and so we were delighted to be raising money to support them.

As always, pupils took on responsibility for every aspect of the coffee morning – from writing and designing invites, planning menus, budgeting, shopping, decorating the school, writing and delivering a vote of thanks, and the all-important baking. This is another great opportunity for them to develop important life skills and work as part of a team.

The coffee morning itself was held in October, coincidentally the day after World Mental Health Day, and we welcomed our families, staff who have worked with us in the past, previous and current Governors and other friends and supporters of the school. It was a sizeable crowd, but pupils had baked and cooked plenty of goodies to go round, and we were incredibly proud of how they managed the event.

Most importantly, they raised £347.86 for Young Minds, as well as increasing awareness of the charity with the information they provided on the day of the event.

Supporting our mental wellbeing continued to be a focus throughout the year, too, both in lessons and beyond the classroom.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PUPILS' EXPERIENCES AND WIDER ACHIEVEMENT 2024-2025

Other Activities

We enjoyed many other activities and trips throughout the session, including those listed below:

- A programme of sporting and recreational activities for Tuesday and Friday afternoons, such as horse riding, walking, paddle and tennis, cooking sessions, all-new games clubs, and art workshops

- A full-day visit for some senior phase pupils to the University of Edinburgh to attend Biology workshops on DNA profiling/gel electrophoresis and bioinformatics, as well as a lab tour and opportunity to meet scientists

- Weekly whole-day sessions working with the Green Team over a two month period, during which pupils carried out woodland conservation projects at Vogrie Park, as well as engaging in various outdoor learning activities such as how to safely light fires and cook on them, safe use of a range of tools, using natural materials to make Christmas wreaths, leaf sculptures, bark imprints, and team games in the woods

- A visit from The Royal Marines to deliver STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) activities to the whole school. Pupil engaged in team-based, hands-on engineering challenges and learned more about the work of the Royal Marines

- A visit from Zoolab to meet, safely handle and learn about a whole host of interesting creatures, from corn snakes to Giant African land snails

- Drumming workshops

- Visits to college open days, supported by Jen, our Transitions Co-ordinator

- A visit to a careers fair for senior pupils

- A careers workshop delivered by Janice from Skills Development Scotland for all S1-S3 pupils

- A series of Money Management Skills workshops for pupils in S5 and S6

- Regular visits to the local library

- A science trip to the Mining Museum for pupils in S1-S3

- A Photography field trip around Edinburgh

- An in-school workshop with Drake Music

- A whole-school Understanding Prejudice workshop delivered by TiE (Time for Inclusive Education)

- Participation in the UKROK (UK Youth Rocketry Challenge) in which pupils designed, built and launched a model rocket carrying a fragile payload, for a UK-wide competition. This challenge helps pupils develop skills in Maths and Science, whilst gaining practical experience of building and executing complex missions

HIGHLIGHTS OF PUPILS' EXPERIENCES AND WIDER ACHIEVEMENT 2024-2025

Other Activities (contd.)

- A young carers awareness workshop delivered by Edinburgh Young Carers
- Litter-picking in the local community
- An Easter themed quiz and Easter egg hunt to celebrate the end of spring term
- A host of outdoor education activities to celebrate the end of the year, including Go Ape (treetop assault course); a visit to Edinburgh Zoo; a visit from the Menagerie Petting Zoo, who brought goats, rabbits, guinea pigs, lambs, alpacas and even a miniature pony; a visit to the National Museum of Flight
- A whole-school trip to Seacliff Beach
- A whole-school trip to World of Bowling
- A celebration of World Book Day
- A whole-school trip to The Lyceum Theatre

These activities not only offer fun and variety, and give pupils experiences outside of the classroom, but help pupils develop many social and life skills, and encourage them to access spaces and amenities within their local community.

Whenever possible, we use public transport for our trips, to increase the independence and confidence of our young people, and to promote sustainable travel. Our Transitions Co-ordinator also supports pupils to apply for the young person's National Entitlement Card if they do not already have this.

STAFFING AND GOVERNANCE

Staffing

2024-2025 was an extremely busy session for staff who, alongside teaching, had many other aspects of school business to attend to.

We prepared for and underwent inspection, prepared a bid to tender for a contract with City of Edinburgh Council, and held ongoing discussions regarding the proposal to build a new hotel on land adjacent to us.

Two departments – English and History - underwent SQA verification for National 5 courses. This is a quality assurance check on standards carried out by SQA. Both departments received "Accepted" outcomes, with very welcome complimentary comments from the verification teams about the evidence provided.

We held an open afternoon, inviting other professionals and interested parties into school to meet with staff and to find out about our work. The event was well attended, and it was a pleasure to talk to others about the school.

We were also delighted to be able to provide the space for a series of workshops taking place as part of a project entitled Artistic Resilience: Healing for Displaced Young Ukrainian People. The aim of the project was to bring together small groups of displaced Ukrainian teenagers and young adults to work with art professionals. Participants were given an opportunity to share their stories, process traumatic experiences, support one another, and gain a measure of healing and restoration of self. It was a privilege to be able to support the project in this small way.

There were a number of changes to the team during this session too. Nicola Jamieson, our second art teacher, returned from a period of maternity leave just in time for our inspection in January 2025. We were delighted to have her back, and she immediately threw herself into teaching, quickly re-establishing her relationship with pupils, as well as helping us prepare for the inspection. However, with a long commute, and with a young family to look after, Nikki made the decision to accept a role closer to home, and finished at Dunedin in June. Nikki was a calm, creative and positive presence throughout her time at Dunedin, and she left with our very best wishes.

To ensure continuity, Anne Gatherer decided to take sole responsibility for art and relinquish her role as Support for Learning teacher. Recruitment for this post took place in June 2025, and Jenny O'Shea was appointed and will take up the role at the beginning of the new session.

Amanda Butters, our Biology teacher, also took maternity leave during the session. We welcomed Marina Jimenez Lao in her place, who embraced all things Dunedin with enthusiasm and energy. She contributed a huge amount to the school in the year she was with us, encouraging pupils to participate in the UKRoc competition, organizing trips, encouraging reading, preparing pupils for exams AND breezing through the inspection. We are very grateful to her, and we know that she has a great career ahead of her.

STAFFING AND GOVERNANCE

Staffing (contd.)

It continued to prove very difficult to recruit a new Home Economics teacher, a role vacated when Gill Hinton left in June 2023. This is a problem schools are experiencing across Scotland. So, we managed to persuade Gill to return to deliver practical cooking sessions in 2024, and it has been fantastic to have a busy working kitchen again. And, of course, Gill returns with a wealth of experience and knowledge about the school which we have all benefitted from.

Lynne Munro, who we appointed to the role of life skills coach in January 2024, made the decision to retire and pursue other adventures in December 2024. In the year Lynn was with us, she supported S5 and S6 pupils to project manage the coffee morning, *and* an ambitious whole-day whole-school activities programme to celebrate the end of term. Her previous experience working with Skills Development Scotland was invaluable in helping pupils develop vital career management skills that will help them in their lives beyond school. Lynne did not say goodbye entirely and returned in summer to invigilate exams, a reassuringly familiar face for all of our senior pupils.

We were delighted to be able to offer the role of life skills coach to Jen, our transitions co-ordinator, who took up the position in January 2025. This role dovetails naturally into, and augments, her transitions work.

Finally, Rosie Galloway, our administrator of 11 years, retired from her post in December 2024. She was at the very heart of Dunedin, and listened to us, supported us, kept us right and kept us sane! She was also always there for our families and often the very first member of staff that welcomed and cared for new pupils. She is a tremendous loss, but we are happy that she has left to pursue new adventures.

We were very fortunate to find Sarah Boak to take on the Administrator's role, however. Sarah comes to Dunedin with years of experience within a school setting and found her feet remarkably quickly at Dunedin. She arrived just in time for the inspection, which did not seem to faze her at all, and in fact she was a calming and soothing presence throughout. We are delighted to welcome her, amazed at how quickly she has fitted in, and are grateful for all the support she offers to staff, our families and pupils.

Governors

As always, we end by acknowledging our hard working and committed Board of Governors. Over the past few years, they have had more to do than ever, but during this session especially, staff have received unwavering support from them, and this has helped us to cope with the many demands the year put on us. Our positive inspection report could not have been achieved without them.

They continue to support us in all sorts of ways, but the work they do is very much behind the scenes, and therefore not always visible to those who do not know them. Our Governors combine to provide financial, business and educational knowledge and expertise and we are incredibly grateful for their continued support for the staff, and of the school's ethos and vision in general.