



MILNE'S HIGH SCHOOL

Standards and Quality Report

2016

A community where the individual matters and expectations are high

Our Vision at Milne's High School



We aim for every individual to:

- Be ambitious to achieve excellence
- Feel safe, happy, respected and included
- Realise their full potential
- Develop a positive attitude to lifelong learning
- Contribute positively to the school community
- Benefit from effective partnership working

We will strive to raise attainment for all by being the best we can in these key areas:

- Curriculum design
- Learning and teaching
- Creating an ethos of ambition
- Self-evaluation for self-improvement
- Supporting learners to achieve success
- Leadership of learning at all levels

HONESTY - ASPIRATION - RESPECT - DILIGENCE
VALUES



Milne's High School
A community where the individual matters and expectations are high

This report will be produced annually in March and refers to the previous session (2015-16). This is in line with our improvement planning processes and many mechanisms for self-evaluation as a school.

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Context of the School

Milne's High School provides comprehensive education from first to sixth year (aged 11 to 18 years). In addition to young people from Fochabers itself, the school zone includes Mosstodloch, Lhanbryde, Garmouth, Spey Bay, Kingston and Urquhart as well as smaller communities stretching towards the area surrounding Portgordon and Buckie.

Essentially, the catchment area includes a large part of the eastern area of Moray's rich agricultural land involving farming, forestry and plant nursery developments as well as a range of industry including Baxters of Speyside which is less than a mile from the school. The school roll is presently 442.

The local communities within the area are active supporters of the school and its underlying values. This is very much appreciated and where possible reciprocated through links from the school to the community.

The Senior Management Team consists of a Head Teacher, three Depute Head Teachers. In addition, there are eighteen Principal Teachers, nineteen Class Teachers and twenty-three members of support staff. There is a strong team ethos among the staff with most undertaking leadership roles.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Most young people learn and achieve well. Overall relationships across the school between young people and staff are positive.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- A new Learning and Teaching strategy has been devised across our associated primary schools, following the introduction of an authority policy. Staff across all the schools will come together on the May inset day to work on the areas of this strategy identified by staff as being areas to focus on as a start to embedding this strategy. The next steps will be to embed these policies and establish learning rounds to spread good practice. Staff are working on challenge and motivation.
- An Assessment school improvement group has provided staff training during the November inset on the Significant Aspects of Learning. Departments are applying these to assessments and providing criteria that will be used for tracking progress.



Raising Attainment.

- We use the Insight tool from the Scottish Government where our performance is compared locally and nationally. A “Virtual Comparator” is a sample group of pupils from other parts of Scotland who have similar characteristics to the young people in our school. This is because there is no school exactly the same as Milne’s High School. The percentage of school leavers moving into a positive destination has traditionally been high with Milne’s High School outperforming their virtual comparators and both the Moray and national averages since 2011. Although the percentages moving into positive destinations has fallen, the current level remains higher than the virtual comparator and national average. Plans are in place with Skills Development Scotland and the Guidance department to improve this and ensure that the Risk Matrix is utilised effectively to ensure maximum support is given to students.
- The average tariff of the lowest 20% was much higher than the virtual comparator (almost double) and higher than the Moray and national average. The average tariff score of the middle 60% outperformed the virtual comparator, local authority and national average. Performance for the highest 20% was lower than all comparators and this is consistent with the school’s own self-evaluation. Clear processes and strategies are in place to address this including a whole school focus on the Growth Mindset, changes to course choice processes and the structure of departmental attainment reviews.
- The percentage of leavers attaining SCQF level 4 and 5 in Literacy and numeracy continues to im-

Young people are gaining in confidence and developing skills through taking part in activities such as:

- Music – Fochabers Fiddlers.
- Sport – Dance groups, archery, athletics, badminton, basketball, football, hockey, rugby, netball, fitness .
- There is also an annual sports day, inter-house competitions and cross-country events.
- Provision is made for students to compete in national competitions with students winning championships in areas such as Martial Arts, Orienteering, Ice-skating, Athletics, Golf and Archery.

Leadership opportunities are available to develop the capacity of students. These include:

- In June of each year, pupils entering sixth year are offered the opportunity to become members of the Peer Support Team.
- Other opportunities include Duke of Edinburgh with the highest uptake per ratio of pupils in the authority, World Challenge, book group, discos and public speaking.
- A number of extra-curricular activities in Music including the Jazz Band, Orchestra, Choir, Guitar Group and Theory Club – new members are always welcome. In addition to this, there are various performance opportunities throughout the year for all year groups with occasions such as the Christmas Concert.

Residential Experiences

- A major educational experience for pupils is the three day residential at Badaguish in May in which all third year pupils are given the opportunity to attend.
- All S6 students, as part of their induction, also attend a 3 day residential at Badaguish. This takes place in June and focuses on team-building and leadership training.
- Various locations have been visited from Peru and South Africa to Holland, France and Germany. This year a group of our students are taking part in *World Challenge* in Tanzania.

How well does the school support young people to develop

Meeting the needs of all learners and supporting students with the appropriate level of challenge is an area for improvement. The behaviour of a cohort of learners remains a cause for concern and together with plans to improve the curriculum; a new behaviour management strategy is being developed this session to raise standards and expectations in the classroom.

The school continues to develop its curriculum taking account of local contexts and national guidance.

- The Senior Phase has been designed to allow different pathways. The school's uptake of centrally offered provision for Chemistry, Biology and History at Advanced Higher level is successful.
- The school is embarking on the Career Ready programme.
- A new curricular rationale is being devised across the ASG to take account of local context and the need to have a shared understanding by all stakeholders of the purpose and intended aims of the curriculum.
- Discussions and plans are ongoing to produce a rigorous programme for Universal Pupil Support within the proposals for a 33 period week.
- There is a strong S6 Leadership Programme whereby seniors provide peer support, paired reading, supervision at breaks and leadership of committees. This also means that S6 join Community Council and the Parent Council. They organise many whole school events such as parties for the junior years.
- The Pupil Council provides further leadership development opportunities for students and they appreciate being involved in improvement planning as occurred recently with the new Homework strategy and Behaviour management system's implementation.
- The Transition programme is being re-developed to include curricular as well as pastoral projects to ensure a more seamless transition. This includes highly successful events such as STEM programme, K'nex challenge and the outdoor learning day at Roseisle.
- There are many IDL opportunities, including Hooked and the Baxter's soup challenge and staff are committed to investigating more ways to join up the curriculum.
- There are events to promote achievement out of the class including library quizzes, Languages events, visits to local businesses such as Johnstons and working with charities such as Lepra.
- Student Leadership skills are developed through their organisation and management of a Farmers' market and a coffee morning to raise money for students with Additional support needs, an annual school fete.
- There are many proposals to further develop the curriculum: introduction of the Scottish studies award, Leadership SQA, Travel and tourism; wider achievement courses in the Senior Phase and the introduction of Electives in S1-3. Partnership working also adds opportunities through involvement of organisations such as YPI and the Mens' Shed project.
- Students are supported through key transitions by Guidance staff and Skills Development Scotland (Careers Scotland) works in partnership with us to support key parts of both our Guidance work and related work in Personal and Social Education. Our programme of careers education is enhanced by contributions from Suzie Ross from Skills Development Scotland.
- Staff organise many speakers to promote achievement including authors, engineers, the police, health and many other agencies.
- Student success is celebrated through the newsletter, local media and through the school's involvement in community ventures. Plans are in place to re-design and populate the school website.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The newly formed Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has established a clear vision for improving the school. The pace of change has been managed by streamlining school priorities, local directives and national initiatives over a three year period. Staff are committed to looking outwardly as well as inwardly and the following new developments are in progress:

- A new self-evaluation for self-improvement policy and procedure has been introduced to identify 5 QIs from Education Scotland's *How Good is our School?* (version 4) for the next three years. This has already had an impact on improving learning experiences across many departments. All departments have their own bespoke self-evaluation calendars. Departments are using minute templates around the school's identified five key Quality Indicators.
- Parents evening questionnaires look at key questions within these identified QIs and the Parent Council lead groups of parents to seek their views on how to improve the school.
- An open consultation at the beginning of the year for staff, pupils and parents saw a newly-established vision, values and aims statement that is guiding the work of the school in line with the focused QIs.
- Learning visits by SLT are in partnership with primary 7 teachers to measure progression. Generic feedback is shared with all staff to spread good practice.
- Calendared Learning Conversations between staff and learners are having a positive impact on learning with pupils noting the difference this level of feedback is making to their progress.
- CPD – *By staff for staff* has been resurrected so that staff learn from the skills of practitioners in the school. Staff now share their learning from CPD sessions by feeding back via a section on the staff bulletin.
- The *Increased Expectations* (2015) document from Education Scotland was used to enhance self-evaluation questioning by SLT to inform Improvement planning.
- A more consistent consultation mechanism has been adopted with staff to ensure that their views are captured at every stage of the improvement process.
- Staff, parents and inset days are planned a year in advance in line with the School Improvement Plan to maximise building capacity opportunities with staff.
- Pupil focus groups focussing on the use of planners coupled was combined with a parents evaluation resulting in the purchase of Show my Homework and this is currently being implemented. Student focus groups are happening



Milne's High School is progressing well towards the vision of raising attainment for all by being the best we can and all members of our school community will continue to work together so that we continue to be ambitious to achieve excellence.