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Standards and Quality Report  
Orkney Islands Council  
Kirkwall Grammar School

**August 2019**



## **Introduction**

The purpose of this Standards and Quality Report is to inform of the work of the school in the context of the national agenda for continuous improvement and, through the process of self-evaluation, identify goals and targets for the future.

## **The School and the Community**

Kirkwall Grammar School is a six-year comprehensive school serving the town of Kirkwall, the East Mainland of Orkney and all of the North and South isles excluding the island of Graemsay. The school is an ancient one, first mentioned in a royal charter in 1486 but possibly considerably older.

The school population reflects the increasing diversity of local society, economy and industry. Agriculture and fishing have been traditional industries for many years, but these have been supplemented by a growth in tourism, the oil terminal at Flotta and a growing 'renewables' sector.

The school enjoys excellent relations with local businesses and industry with many senior pupils taking advantage of the opportunity to take part in work experience programmes forming part of their individualised curriculum.

The catchment area of the school comprises 11 associate primary schools and 3 Junior High Schools. This poses particular challenges in maintaining close relationships, in setting up curricular links, managing pupil transfer and also in maintaining good contact with parents. This session, 54 pupils are currently resident in the Papdale Halls of Residence and the school needs to be particularly sensitive to the needs of pupils who are separated from their families and from their island communities.

From the mainland primary schools and from the smaller islands, pupils transfer from P7 into S1. The larger islands - Westray, Sanday and Stronsay- have Junior High Schools from which pupils can transfer usually at the end of S2 or S4.

In Kirkwall Grammar School, we are very proud of the wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs which are organised for pupils. These include supported study as well as sporting activities such as rugby, football, hockey, volleyball and climbing. The carol service in St Magnus Cathedral is always a highlight of the school year. Traditional music, Hadhirgaan and the school orchestra are among the activities offered by the Music Department and as is usual, 2019 saw the successful Musical/Dramatic production of Mary Poppins which ran in the schools theatre.

KGS is not just a school, it is a learning community. A community that recognises teaching and learning does not start and stop at the school gates. Through development of partnerships in and out of school, we will work as a team to provide outstanding learning and leadership experiences and opportunities to support and furnish each individual youngster with the knowledge, skills, experiences and insight that will set them on their path to a prosperous future, effectively contributing to life and work in Orkney, Scotland and world wide.

## **Our school vision, values and aims**

### **Vision**

A school with a sense of community where every pupil is given every opportunity to achieve and attain their potential whatever positive pathway or destination they decide to take. A school that sets high expectations and whose focus is on learning and improving so that both teachers and pupils can achieve the remarkable.

### **Values**

Wisdom  
Compassion  
Integrity  
Justice

### **Aims**

The aims of the school are to provide all pupils with the opportunities and experiences that will allow them to fulfil their potential as individuals, lifelong learners and contributors to society. A school that promotes respect for others and self within the school and the wider community.

### **The Core Areas of our Practice**

This report summarises the strengths of our school, our recent improvements and what needs to improve. This information has been gathered throughout the year in a variety of ways in order to ensure our report is as accurate as possible.

We take time to compare what we do with local and national examples of best practice. We visit each other's classes to share good practice and standards in learning and teaching. We look at all pupils work to see how they are progressing. We cross mark and moderate work and make use of factual data and information including attainment results responding and adapting our teaching in line with pupils needs. We assess using our professional judgement and results tracking. Pupils peer and self-assess. We gather the views of pupils, parents, staff and members of the local community and use all of this information to arrive at our view of the quality of education we provide.

In order to track progress and monitor the impact of this upon learners, and to evaluate our capacity for improvement, we have drawn upon a variety of evidence. This has involved gathering the views of pupils, parents, staff and the work from our whole school working and development groups. Our evidence is drawn from data as well as direct observations. This gathering of evidence is on-going task and shows our commitment in taking forward our self-evaluation agenda.

## Our Key Strengths

Positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents.  
Continued staff engagement with tracking, monitoring and reporting on pupils attainment and achievement.  
Quality and range of pupil experiences.  
Pupil behaviour  
Excellent achievement and attainment results.  
Excellent positive destination results.

## Our Improvements Last Session

Continued improvement and engagement in the use of data analysis across all departments.  
Improved tracking, monitoring and reporting  
Promoting and celebrating pupil achievements.  
Pupils taking increased responsibility for learning.

## Our Priorities For Improvement for Next Session

Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement  
Learning, Teaching and Assessment  
Further developing the pupil voice in leading learning.  
Increasing parental engagement – with a focus on supporting the life and work of the school.  
Developing Scotland's Young Workforce targets by increasing opportunities for employers and educators within Orkney to work together to help young people develop the right skills needed for when they join the world of work.

The following table explains the words used in the table below when making judgements.

Excellent	means outstanding, sector-leading
Very Good	means major strengths
Good	means important strengths with some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	means strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Weak	means important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	means major weaknesses

Quality indicator	School self-evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Good
2.2 The Curriculum	Good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good

School priority 1: Raising Attainment and Achievement

<p><u>NIF Priority:</u> Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy</p> <p><u>NIF Driver:</u> Assessment of children's progress</p>	<p><u>HGIO Quality Indicators</u> 2.3 Learning, teaching &amp; assessment 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</p>
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### 2.3 Learning, teaching & assessment

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

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Attainment over time
- Attainment in literacy and numeracy

### Highlights

Another year with very positive results at Advanced Higher, Higher and National 5 in most subjects. For Higher, 100% pass rate in PE, Fashion and Textile Technology, Photography, Politics and Spanish. The number of pupils achieving three or more higher passes is down slightly at 1% on last year.

Our S4 cohort achieved some excellent results with the number of pupils achieving 5 or more National 5's increasing on last year.

All Principal Teachers continue to received training in the use of the exam analysis programme 'Insight' and CfE Machine and continue to grow in confidence in using the data to evaluate and inform improvements.

An increased number of Senior Phase pupils opted to take part in college based courses.

### Senior Phase A to C passes

1306 presentations in total across Senior school in 2019  
(1214 in 2018, 1286 in 2017, 1177 in 2016, 1410 in 2015, 1516 in 2014)

1028 passes (901 in 2018, 1035 in 2017, 1039 in 2016, 1209 in 2015, 1296 in 2014)

122 No Awards (161 in 2018, 165 in 2017, 138 in 2016, 201 in 2015, 220 in 2014)

<p><b>National 5 A - D</b> 90 % pass rate (88% in 2018, 87% in 2017, 88% in 2016, 84% in 2015, 84% in 2014)</p> <p><b>Higher A - D</b> 92% pass rate (84% in 2018, 87% in 2017, 88% in 2016, 88% in 2015, 88% in 2014)</p> <p><b>Adv Higher A - D</b> 90% pass rate (98% in 2018, 92% in 2017, 93% in 2016, 90% in 2015, 85% in 2014)</p>	<p><b>National 5 A - C</b> 78 % pass rate (74% in 2018, 81% in 2017, 82% in 2016, 76% in 2015, 76% in 2014)</p> <p><b>Higher A - C</b> 78% pass rate (75% in 2018, 79% in 2017, 80% in 2016, 80% in 2015, 79% in 2014)</p> <p><b>Adv Higher A - C</b> 88% pass rate (85% in 2018, 85% in 2017, 84% in 2016, 81% in 2015, 74% in 2014)</p>
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Staff at KGS continue to improve their analysis and evaluation of both attainment and improvement planning using evidence based statistical systems.

### Strengths

Pupils at KGS are fortunate to be given the opportunity to take part in a wide range of learning experiences. This range of experiences is delivered by staff who are prepared to give so much of their time. At KGS we recognise and value all the different types of learning that takes place. For example:

- A number of pupils were involved with Historic Environment Scotland as part of the 'Your Kirkwall' Initiative.
- KGS school band Hadhirgaan support the Shires at the Picky centre and travelled to Glasgow to perform as part of the Orkney Gathering at Celtic Connections.
- KGS were successful in being awarded the Rights Respecting Schools Bronze Award which recognises that KGS is a Rights Committed school.
- Orkney Youth Awards where a large number of pupils received awards for first aid and food hygiene, the Dynamic Youth Award, Saltire Award and being recognised for outstanding voluntary and community work.
- A number of pupils attend the Youth Conference at the Kirkwall Community Centre as part of CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK.
- Timeless, the KGS Young Enterprise team took the honours at the Young Enterprise Orkney Finals.
- The annual Fereday Prize Ceremony at the end of March where pupils from both KGS and Stromness Academy receive certificates as their entries were Highly Commended. A KGS pupil won the overall prize for their project
- The KGS Children in Need fundraising week which raised over £2700.
- The Science Festival
- Drama Production of Mary Poppins.



### **Areas for further development**

Continued curriculum development with regard to changes in National, Higher and Adv Higher courses by the SQA.

Development and improvement to our tracking and monitoring reports to increase the number of students achieving 5 or more higher passes.

Continue to make more effective use of SNSA, MidYis and TMR data to monitor progress and set aspirational targets.

Work with the parent council to increase pupil and parental engagement with the learning and teaching.

Develop the work experience programme to gain SCQF credits for pupils.

Develop the Leadership skills programme to gain SCQF credits for pupils.

Continue to develop pupil profiling by the recording skills learned in extra-curricular activities.

Development of Strategic working and development groups with a focus on raising attainment and effective Learning and Teaching.

<p><u>NIF Priority:</u> Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.</p> <p><u>NIF Driver:</u> School leadership Parental engagement</p>	<p><u>HGIO Quality Indicators</u> 1.3 Leadership of change 2.2 Curriculum 2.6 Transitions</p>
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## 1. How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

### 1.3 Leadership of change

- Strategic planning for continuous improvement
- Implementing improvement and change

### 2.2 The Curriculum

- Rationale and design of the curriculum
- Development of the curriculum
- Skills for learning life and work

### 2.6 Transitions

- Arrangements to support learners and their families
- Continuity and progression in learning

### Highlights

All staff are committed to ensuring that pupils receive the best possible learning and teaching experience in their curricular area and have worked extremely hard to produce materials for the new national qualifications and changes imposed by the SQA.

In S3, pupils continue to follow a Broad General Education and make 8 subject choices based on curriculum areas. Pupils in S1 and S2 continue to experience 2 different languages before making their language choice for S3.

The S4 and S5,6 option choice form continues to develop and, despite staffing challenges last session, we have been able to maintain a full range of curricular provision. Almost all pupils were able to get their first choice of options. The Curriculum Support department work hard to accommodate pupil needs and a number of alternative curriculum packages have been put in place for senior pupils.



Pupils in S4, S5 and S6 are able to choose work experience as part of their curriculum and pupils can also opt to attend college courses to broaden their curricular choice.

KGS are extremely proud of our inclusive approach and partnership work with external agencies as well as our successful transition programme. Students moving from Junior High schools are now able to experience an enhanced transition which allowed them to spend time in the Papdale Halls of Residence as well as shadowing new classmates during their transition visit. Feedback from pupils and parents on their transition experience has been extremely positive.

We have developed valuable partnerships with a number of external agencies including Social Work, Health, Educational Psychologists, Mental Health workers, CAMHS and Skills Development Scotland.



### **Areas for further development**

We will continue to monitor and develop the senior phase of S4, 5 and 6 to ensure we offer relevant progression pathways for all pupils. This will include appropriate checks to ensure pupils are following the courses most appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

Senior Phase provision will allow S4, 5 and 6 pupils to access work experience and college courses as part of their course options.

Development of new and existing partnerships with external organisations and businesses to enhance curriculum provision.

Continue to support staff in the delivery of new Highers and Advanced Highers.

Ensure staff are aware of the Career Education Standard and this is embedded into faculty and department improvement plans.

Ensure effective use of data to inform and support pupil subject choice.

School priority 3: Developing school leadership

NIF Priority:

Improvement in attainment

NIF Driver:

School leadership

Teacher professionalism

School improvement and performance information

Parental engagement

HGIO Quality Indicators

1.3 Leadership of change

2.3 Learning, teaching & assessment

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

**1.3 Leadership of change**

- Strategic planning for continuous improvement
- Implementing improvement and change

**2.3 Learning, teaching & assessment**

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

**3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**

- Inclusion and equality

**Strengths**

All departments are producing development plans with a firm focus on raising attainment. Staff are volunteering to participate in whole school strategic working groups in a bid to improve engagement with collegiate working and bring a transparency to whole school improvement.

These groups are generally chaired by non promoted staff to provide leadership opportunities. Parents and carers are also given the opportunity to participate in the groups and this has proved to a very positive move with uptake increasing from last year.

Weekly strategic meetings with PTs and link DHTs focused on strategic improvement are now embedded and proving to be effective in sharing good practice and data analysis.

Pupils and parents are routinely asked for feedback which is shared with staff to develop whole school impact and action points.

### **Areas for further development**

Opportunities for learning walks and class room observations to share good practice.

More opportunities need to be provided for the pupil voice and opportunities for pupils to lead their learning

Provide more support and feedback to PTs on Departmental Improvement Plans, and in particular how to gather evidence and lead improvement.

Provide more opportunities for staff to take leadership responsibilities.

Develop staff confidence in the reporting on a level in the BGE.

Training and development will be offered to all staff on effective use of data to enhance and inform learning and teaching.



***Don Hawkins***  
Head Teacher



## Information and advice on education and learning for parents in Scotland

*Be at the heart of your child's learning . . .*



Sign up to receive our Parents and Carers e-bulletins for the latest developments in Scottish education.

[edscot.org.uk/p/LQE-391/subscribe](https://edscot.org.uk/p/LQE-391/subscribe)

Email: [enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk)

[education.gov.scot/parentzone](https://education.gov.scot/parentzone)



# Parentzone

## SCOTLAND

Parentzone Scotland is a unique website for parents and carers in Scotland, from early years to beyond school. The website provides up-to-date information about learning in Scotland, and practical advice and ideas to support children's learning at home in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and science.

Information is also available on Parentzone Scotland regarding additional support needs, how parents can get involved in their child's school and education. Furthermore, the website has details about schools including performance data for school leavers from S4-S6; and links to the national, and local authority and school level data on the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels.

Parentzone Scotland can be accessed at <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>

**working together to raise aspirations and attainment by achieving excellence and equity**