

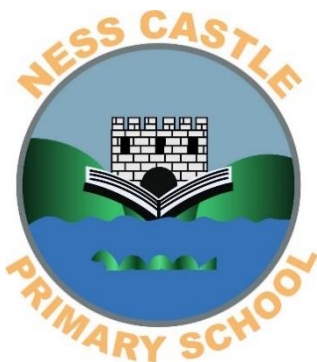


# STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT AITHISG INBHEAN IS CÀILEACHD

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2023-2024

# Ness Castle Primary School



\*Friendship\* \*Honesty\* \*Kindness\* \*Respect\* \*Trust\*

#BuildingStrongFoundations

# Introduction: Local and National Context

## Ro-ràdh: Co-theacsa Ionadail agus Nàiseanta

This Standards and Quality Report is influenced by both Highland and national priorities. These can be summarised as follows:

### Highland Priorities



### National Improvement Framework Priorities



#### Entitlement, Excellence & Equity:

We will raise attainment and achievement for all, especially for children and young people from disadvantaged circumstances, including rural deprivation. We will focus relentlessly on improving standards and the quality of learning and teaching, to ensure that entitlement, equity and excellence are delivered across the system.

#### Empowerment & Leadership:

We will develop leadership skills at all levels of the system, for now and the future, building a culture of empowerment and professional capital.

#### Relationships:

We will maximise health and wellbeing for all children and young people, to give them the best possible start in life. We will ensure every child and young person feels part of the community they live in.

#### Opportunity:

We will maximise opportunities for our children and young people, and for the wider Highland community and its visitors, through the provision of high-quality services.

The key priorities outlined in the National Improvement Framework are:

- 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 attainment**, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

#### Self-evaluation

To support self-evaluation, quality indicators from the national evaluative framework How Good Is Our School?4 are referenced.

Links to these sources (and others referenced) can be found here:

- [National Improvement Framework Improvement Plan](#)
- [HGIOS? 4](#) and [HGIOELC](#)
- [Health and Social Care Standards](#)
- [National Gaelic Language Plan](#)

In this report the following words are used to describe the numbers and proportions used:

All	Almost all	Most	Majority	Less than half	Few
100%	Over 90%	75% - 90%	50% - 74%	15% - 49%	Up to 15%

We are pleased to present our Standards and Quality Report for Session 2023-24. This report forms part of our quality improvement framework and provides important information regarding our school's progress to date and our next steps in school improvement.

**Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement** is at the heart of our practice. We continue to develop our practice in making robust use of evidence as a basis for judgements regarding the impact of our work on our learners. All staff understand that self-evaluation is an integral aspect of our approach to continuous improvement through addressing the 3 key questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

Throughout the year we continuously evaluate what we do and how it makes a difference to our learners. We want to know what is working well for our school community and what needs further improvement. We inform decision making and actions through a continuous process of looking inwards, outwards and forwards.

#### Looking inwards - starts with those working with our children and young people

We focus on the impact on outcomes for learners. Our self-evaluation processes triangulate information, data, people's views and observation of practice to measure impact and inform planning for improvement.

#### Looking outwards - learning from others

Looking to others for new ideas that challenge our practice and support continuous improvement allows us to learn from what works and what doesn't. This includes practice in other schools, learning communities and learning from educational research.

#### Looking forwards - creating a vision and planning for implementation

Through leadership at all levels, we anticipate challenges and explore creative solutions. This helps us to create an aspirational vision for our school which shapes our actions and provides a focus for improvement.

Our children and young people are actively consulted and involved in this process. We also give staff, parents/carers, and other partners the opportunity to participate in discussions and activities to shape our improvement journey.

When we develop our improvement plan, we use key questions at scheduled review times throughout the session to know how well we are progressing towards achieving these positive outcomes and changes.



Together we are working hard to ensure the Highlands is the best place for children and young people to grow up safely, learn, develop and achieve.

With positive experiences, our children and young people will always see the Highlands as home.

Le eòlasan deimhinneach, bidh ar cloinn is ar n-òigridh daonna a' faicinn na Gàidhealtachd mar dhachaigh.

Name  
Head Teacher  
School

# School Profile

## Pròifil na Sgoile

The following information can be found on [Parentzone Scotland](https://www.parentzone.scot.nhs.uk/). It is important to remember that statistical data alone is not a measure of how well we are doing. All schools are unique. To understand how well we are doing it is important for us to look at a range of different data sources.

<b>Attendance</b> 91.4%	<b>Average Class Size</b> 19.8	<b>Meeting PE Target</b> Target Met
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<b>Pupil Numbers (inc nursery)</b> 167(+84 in nursery)	<b>Teacher Numbers</b> 10	<b>Pupil Teacher Ratio</b> 15.2
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<b>N3</b> 15.9%	<b>N4</b> 17.5%	<b>P1</b> 11.5%	<b>P2</b> 13.1%	<b>P3</b> 10.0%	<b>P4</b> 7.2%	<b>P5</b> 9.6%	<b>P6</b> 9.2%	<b>P7</b> 6.0%
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<b>SIMD Q1<sup>1</sup></b> 0-10%	<b>SIMD Q2</b> 0-10%	<b>SIMD Q3</b> 0-10%	<b>SIMD Q4</b> 90+%	<b>SIMD Q5</b> 0-10%	<b>Unknown</b> 0-10%
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<b>ASN<sup>2</sup></b> 30-40%	<b>No ASN</b> 60-70%	<b>FSM<sup>3</sup></b> 80-90%	<b>No FSM</b> 10-20%	<b>EAL<sup>4</sup></b> 0-10%	<b>No EAL</b> 90+%
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2023/24 Proportions of pupils achieving Curriculum for Excellence Levels (P1, P4, P7 combined):

<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Listening and talking</b>	<b>Numeracy</b>
Most	Majority	Almost all	Most

We have had no exclusions this year.

<sup>1</sup> SIMD – The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a relative measure of deprivation.

<sup>2</sup> ASN – Additional Support Needs

<sup>3</sup> FSM – Free school meal entitlement

<sup>4</sup> EAL – English as an additional language

# School vision, values and aims

## Lèirsinn, luachan agus amasan na sgoile

Over the course of last session, we undertook the exciting challenge of establishing our Vision, Values and Aims. We did this through consultation and discussions with many stakeholders including all staff (School and ELC), parents (School and ELC), community members and, most importantly, the children of the ELC and School. We are proud of what we have come up with and look forward to embedding these across future years.

The infographic is set against a black background with yellow and white decorative elements like stars, swirls, and a grid. At the center is the school's name, 'Ness Castle Primary School', with its logo below it. To the left, under the heading 'Our Vision', is the hashtag '#Building Strong Foundations'. Below that, under 'Our Values', are five puzzle pieces labeled 'Friendship', 'Honesty', 'Kindness', 'Respect', and 'Trust'. To the right, under 'Our Aims', are four categories: 'INCLUSIVITY', 'LEARNING and ACHIEVEMENT', 'CREATIVITY AND CURIOSITY', and 'WIDER COMMUNITY/SKILLS', each with a brief description and a small icon.

**Our Vision**  
#Building Strong Foundations

**Our Values**  
Friendship, Honesty, Kindness, Respect, Trust

**Ness Castle Primary School**

**Our Aims**

- INCLUSIVITY**  
To create a warm, safe, inclusive community which enables everyone to achieve their full potential.
- LEARNING and ACHIEVEMENT**  
To develop and encourage a love of learning by building confidence and celebrating personal achievements.
- CREATIVITY AND CURIOSITY**  
To promote creativity and nurture curiosity through every aspect of our school community.
- WIDER COMMUNITY/SKILLS**  
To inspire and nurture happy, healthy and resilient individuals who have the skills required for learning, life and work.

# Review of progress for session

## Ath-sgrùdadh air adhartas airson an t-seisein

These projects are linked to the vision and priorities for Scottish Education based on delivering excellence and equity. Parent/Carer information is available [here](#).

### School Priority:

#### COMMUNITY

*To continue to promote Ness Castle as the heart of the local community, ensuring everyone's voice is heard.*

#### Purpose:

As a school that is only a year old, having only been established in our new building within the local community for four months, establishing our place at the heart of the community continues to be vital. As there are very few local amenities within the area, it is essential that we become that hub.

We want to continue to establish an open, approachable and encouraging family centred ethos, allowing our pupils, families and the local area to really feel part of the work we do and learning we promote. Establishing our stakeholder group is fundamental, ensuring they are fully involved in the while process.

#### Progress:

##### VISION/VALUES and AIMS

Develop our Ness Castle Vision, Values and Aims, through consultation with all stakeholders including;

- Staff (ELC and School)
- Pupils (P1 – P7)
- Parents/Carers
- Other agencies
- Local Community (via Community Council/School Chaplain etc)

Promote of our Ness Castle Vision, Values and Aims, through displays and posters, values characters (child designed), assemblies, newsletters, website and social media)

##### PUPIL VOICE

Establish this session's Nessie Natter Pupil Voice Groups, adapting them from last session to have a P1 – P3 group and P4 – P7 group within each theme, working together or separately when appropriate. Groups to include;

- Rights Respecting and SDGs
- Reading Schools
- Community
- Outdoor Play and Learning

Nessie Natter Groups to formulate an individual action plan of achievable actions for the year

##### PARENT/CARER VOICE

Parental engagement and involvement calendar to be created to ensure purposeful participation at key points throughout the year including;

- Vision, values and aims
- Feedback from parent sessions and school events
- Hopes and Dreams and Parents' Evenings
- Curriculum Development

#### Impact:

All stakeholders have been involved in the process of developing our Vision, Values and Aims and these have already become part of school life, in classes and the ELC playroom and within Assemblies, with pupils and staff being aware of what they are and using them within day to day work.

The creation and promotion of these has supported our journey to becoming a Silver Rights Respecting School and within the development of our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

Very good progress was made in this area.

Each Nessie Natter Group included P1 – P7 pupils, with 2 lead teachers, and a comprehensive Action Plan, which was created with the children.

The implementation of the Nessie Natter Groups gave a vehicle for the children to engage across stages to develop their teamworking and social skills as well as working and respecting others. It also allowed the teachers to develop their skills of working across different stages.

The Nessie Natter Groups meant that we were able to achieve our Bronze RRSA and Core Reading Schools Award.

Good progress was made in this area.

Parents/carers were involved in the creation of our Vision, Values and Aims.

Our Hopes and Dreams evening for the School was successful in parents sharing information about their child with their new class teacher. Feedback was taken at all Parents' Evenings and Stay, Play and Learn Events.

A version of the HMIE Questionnaire was issued in the final term. Collated responses of this are being considered and used to form this element of the SIP for next session.

Opportunities to include wider family members to participate in the life of the school was provided through class and school Assemblies as well as invitations to Sports Days and Leavers' Celebrations in ELC and School, building connections with our families.

An adapted Stay, Play and Learn, with a Literacy focus, was successful in the final term at the ELC.

Very good progress was made in this area.

#### Next steps:

Vision, Values and Aims – We need to continue to promote these throughout the school, involving the children in the creation of characters and displays. The RRS steering group should be developed to include more community members and the House and Vice Captains in the school should be encouraged to take on a greater leadership role to help promote them.

Pupil Voice – We want to ensure each group is aware of the others' aims and recognise any crossover/links that there are between groups and maximise on these. Each group has worked independently so it would be good to have an opportunity throughout the year for pupils to feedback to each other. It would also be useful to see where the ELC could link into each of the groups, utilising the expertise of staff and ensuring the positive pupil voice of even the youngest Nessies.

Parent Voice – A series of open mornings/afternoons/evenings or workshops to be established to promote curricular/learning events, allow opportunities for shared learning as well as share how parents can help their children at home. This could include sending home resource packs to support home learning (eg. fine motor development in ELC)

Consideration to be given how we can continue to involve the whole family/community in our work.

## School Priority:

### CURRICULUM

*Continuing to develop the Ness Castle curriculum, ensuring it is relevant, inclusive and aspirational.*

#### Purpose:

We need our new curriculum rationale to be the vital building blocks for taking learning and teaching forward across our school. It is important that our Curriculum is aspirational and creative, continuing to build on the work we began last session, where we had no history and nothing to build upon as we were brand new. We have a range of staff, with a range of experiences across different ELC and school settings. It has been exciting pulling together many of these experiences, forming them into our own. This will take time.

Now that we know our community, catchment and context better, we are now able to prioritise the relevance and inclusiveness of our curriculum, both of which, we now know, are vital for the children of Ness Castle Primary and ELC.

General elements of the curriculum will be ongoing, but we have chosen to prioritise Literacy and Health and Wellbeing.

- Health and Wellbeing – To support the range of needs across our children, a focus on inclusivity and elements of wellbeing are vital. Using the Circle, Inclusive Classroom resource as well as the Glasgow Wellbeing and Motivation Profile (GWMP) will support this – both in curricular aspects, as well as our third Priority of Consistency
- Literacy – Within our ACEL data, Writing (P1 – 66% achieved, P4 – 70% achieved) and Reading (P1 – 67% and P4 - 75%) feature as our two lowest elements assessed. Making these a focus of our plans will help to increase these levels, not just at P1 and P4, but across the school.

#### Progress:

##### INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM (Improvement Group)

- An introduction to the CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Tool for all staff
- Improvement Group to look at elements of the Tool, select elements to create a baseline across the school
- Improvement Group to pilot elements in own class and feedback
- All classes to implement element and feedback

Initial baselines for all classes were created following initial training for all teaching staff. The Improvement Group completed more detailed audits for classroom spaces.

Elements of the audit were difficult to action due to the layout and structure of the building.

Good initial progress was made in this area.

##### LITERACY

- SWOT Audit of current literacy practice – identifying gaps and areas for development
- Agree best way forward for Reading and Writing curriculum
- Undertake training/input on specific elements to develop Reading and Writing, as appropriate
- Monitor elements of Reading and Writing as part of Self Evaluation Calendar
- Identify raising attainment Reading and Writing groups in each class across the school, implement supports and track regularly

Elements of literacy development were undertaken throughout the session, including Literacy for All training and intervention training for PSA team members. Because of these developments, there are small improvements with children in the class and literacy levels of achievement have improved.

Some progress was made in this area.

##### WORDS UP/LITERACY in the ELC

- Audit of Words Up knowledge and use within the ELC
- Training on Words Up Strategies within the ELC – by SALT and at regular ELC staff meetings
- Consider how to make the ELC a literacy rich environment

Words Up knowledge was audited at the end of the previous session, with each staff member reflecting their level of knowledge and expertise.

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A literacy lead developed literacy across the playroom, both indoors and out, with the support of all practitioners. The Circle Audit tool was used to support this.

A Bookbug Stay, Play and Learn Session was successful in sharing some of the strategies and techniques for supporting reading for enjoyment at home.

Good progress was made in this area.

## Next steps:

**Inclusive Classroom** – Next steps were identified through the audit process and these should be actioned in the coming session. This includes the development of quiet, inclusive spaces in each area. Children's views would help to support the development of ensuring Ness Castle was as inclusive as possible, as well as involvement of the PSA team too. Consistency across the whole School (and ELC) needs to be developed to ensure children receive consistent messages and have a consistent inclusive experience. Other elements of the Inclusive Classroom resource would also be beneficial and interesting to explore.

**Literacy** – Consistency of approach across the school needs to still be developed. This will come through all teaching staff undertaking "Stephen Graham" Writing Training next session. Reading resources/programme needs to be audited, categorised and a progression decided upon to ensure consistency across all stages and between stages. Parent home learning support (through resources, workshops and advice) should be developed too, to support reading and writing at all levels.

**Literacy within the ELC** – Words Up needs to be a focus within quality assurance activities in the coming session, to sure the strategies are being used consistently by all staff. This will help to identify any future CPD needs of staff. Although mentioned at Parent Information Sessions and signposted to parents, workshops or specific information sessions on Words Up would help support parents/carers in using these.

Specific use of Early Level Es and Os within the planning of literacy activities across the ELC will help to promote and develop literacy for all children and staff.

## School Priority:

### CONSISTENCY

*Continue to develop a consistent approach to learning, teaching and assessment across the school (and learning and observation across the ELC)*

#### Purpose:

We are in the unique position to ensure that consistency is evident from the start. This began successfully last year, omitting any unnecessary bureaucracy and ensuring everything we were doing was for the benefit of the children in our school.

With a Highland Council focus on pedagogy and what constitutes effective approaches to teaching and learning, embedding this, as well as widening this out to our planning and assessment processes and approaches to self evaluation ensures we have a shared, collegiate approach to good practice and, as a result, a consistency for the pupils and children in Ness Castle.

#### Progress:

##### ASG Powering Up Our Pedagogy

This to include 3 ASG sessions and associated 3 sessions within individual schools.

- Session in individual schools to introduce concepts before ASG session 1 (engage with Crash Course in Learning)
- ASG session 1; introduce approach, Spotlight assessment, collaborate.
- Individual school session to follow content above. Outline given by those creating the session.
- ASG session 2; review Spotlight assessment, introduce differentiation, collaborate)
- Individual school session to follow content above. Outline given by those creating the session.
- ASG session 3; review differentiation, next steps (staff vote within the session).
- Individual school session to follow content above. Outline given by those creating the session.
- Optional online drop in sessions to discuss content of session 1 and session 2
- Staff and Pupil (HGIOURS based) survey: Pre and post.

#### Impact:

- Most staff felt more confident following the Spotlight Assessment session.
- No change and more confident - most staff (76%)
- Looking forward, staff have indicated for next session that they would like...
  - Teachers sharing good practice (72%)
  - Time for dialogue with colleagues (88%)
  - Speakers in their area of expertise (64%)
- 74% are keen to keep the same 3 sessions of 1 ½ hours.
- The focus for these sessions could be...
  - Overarching themes – Sustainability, Creativity, Digital (58%)
  - Feedback and Plenary (46%)
  - 4 Contexts for Learning (40%)



### Promoting Positive Relationships (Improvement Group)

- Full staff consideration of Highland Council Promoting Positive Relationships and brainstorm ideas
- Improvement Group to look at elements of professional reading around positive relations – linked to Charters, RRSA, Paul Dix etc and create draft policy and processes.
- Improvement Group feedback to all staff.
- Staff pilot across the school.

### Approaches to effective Assessment/Self Evaluation

- Establishment of Hopes and Dreams input for parents/carers to allow them to discuss individual needs (early Sep 23)
- Self Evaluation Calendar to be created for School and ELC, linked to SIP Priorities, HGIOS, HGIOELC and HGIOURS to include;
  - ✓ Class visits (using WMAGL format from above)
  - ✓ Peer visits (using WMAGL format from above)
  - ✓ Learning Walks/Learning Conversations
  - ✓ Weekly/Fortnightly Reviews of the Week, using the 4 contexts of learning as a template
  - ✓ Sharing the Learning Opportunities for parents – in school and at home
  - ✓ Termly learning newsletters from staff
- Any Self Evaluation activity to be actioned appropriately, considering next steps or the best way forward.
- Ongoing use of TMR to track class data, using this to inform Attainment Meetings (3x a year), tracking Literacy, Numeracy and HWB (using GWMP tool)
- Review of Calendar and set up for next session.

### Pupil Profiles

- Audit of current practice of Pupil profiles across other schools and discussion on effective pupil profiles – what/who are they for and what should be included?
- Piloting of Ness Castle pupil profiles
- Feedback on Profiles and roll out across all classes

### ELC approaches to Planning and Observation

- Audit current planning and observation processes
- Consider how they should be adapted/streamlined and alter as appropriate
- Monitor via Self Evaluation Calendar (see above)

The Improvement Group discussed and created a Promoting Positive Relationships draft policy, which included how staff will undertake Restorative Conversations, very much linked to Rights Respecting School aims. This was shared with all teaching staff, with the restorative conversation elements allowing pupils to feel listened to. Policy to be shared with parents and wider staff early in new session.

Hopes and Dreams successfully implemented, with positive feedback from staff and parents.

Self Evaluation elements undertaken throughout the year, both in the School and ELC, but more "ad hoc" than planned via a calendar. These included... Class visits, peer visits (in school), playroom observations, self evaluation activities by School and ELC staff (using HGIOS and HGIOELC), Class Blogs and ELC Facebook Posts sharing learning with parents on a weekly basis, Learning Assemblies introduced for each class throughout the year and You Said/We Did shared with ELC and School parents following consultations.

Attainment meetings were productive, focusing on Borderline children as well as general conversations about pupil attainment levels. TMR utilised more by class teachers on an ongoing basis. HWB not tracked this session as Training for the GWMP was undertaken but wasn't implemented.

Good progress was made in this area.

Following discussion and comparison of previous Pupil profile experience, the "scrapbook" format of Nessie Novels (a chapter for each year of their time in school) was established. Most pupils have enjoyed scrapbooking their learning, although it is identified that for infant classes it can be time consuming.

Good progress was made in this area.

ELC planning was adapted on an ongoing basis, dependant on how the playroom environment was set up and adapted.

The observation process was ongoing, with learning observations being recorded by all staff members. An area of the office wall is now used for staff to share observations with one another as well as identify individuals who require some focus/additional observations.

Planning area displays are now evident across the playroom, with this week and last week's planning being on display

Some progress was made in this area.

## Next steps:

**Promoting Positive Relationships** – Policy and procedures to be launched early in new session, following them being shared with PSAs and ELC staff (and feedback given by them). Needs to be launched by staff to parents and pupils. Policy to be checked to ensure it is inkeeping with all new ASN laws.

**Approaches to Assessment and Self Evaluation** – A Self Evaluation Calendar for the coming year needs to be established early on so that everyone is aware of what is happening and when – both in the ELC and in the School. This should include all elements and then should be embedded as the year moves on. Monitoring and Quality Assurance of blogs and facebook pages will ensure consistency across the school/ELC.

The GWMP tool will be used across the school in the coming session as a way of monitoring and assessing elements of HWB.

**Pupil Profiles** – Smarter ways of working need to be considered and agreed. Consistency of contents should also be agreed, with a list of "have tos" for each stage as well as "if you wants". A greater reflection of learning by the children should be developed, considering target setting and how this can be recorded. Nessie Novels have not yet been shared with parents so this should happen in the coming year, as well as PSAs being made more aware of the process and consideration of how they can add to the process.

Online Learning opportunities to be explored by the ELC and a decision made on how their profiling is taken forward.

**ELC approaches to Planning and Observation** – This is an area of specific focus for the coming session. The use of the current planning document needs to be developed and evaluated. Staff need to be encouraged to use it more regularly and responsively, rather than as an evaluative tool at the end of the week. The use and purpose of floorbooks to support planning/evaluation will also be developed in the coming session.

## Progress and impact of Pupil Equity Fund

### Adhartas agus buaidh Maoin Cothromas Sgoilearan

This session, we used our PEF money to pay for a 0.1 teacher and 14 hours of a PSA across the course of the year.

The teaching input was focused on supporting the literacy inputs being undertaken by the PSA team but, more so, a focus on developing social skills with focused groups of children.

- This PEF Intervention aimed to offer children a shared and consistent approach to the teaching of emotional literacy, enabling learners to develop a shared language of emotions. A total of 15 children were nominated by their class teacher to attend this group with the aim of supporting them to develop the skills to develop emotional literacy to enable them for example to cope better with frustration, develop resilience, develop empathy and to build confidence. All children completed the Glasgow Wellbeing and Motivation Profile as a baseline assessment.
- Initial work focused on building a warm and welcoming group ethos and the P1 – P4 group were quick to gel and their increased confidence was evident as they were increasingly more at ease to talk about their emotions and personal experiences as the weeks went on. Through the use of story, drama and art the children were supported to recognise and label emotions and identify associated body sensations, behaviours, possible triggers and emotional regulation strategies and relate these to their personal experiences.
- Due to the individual needs of the children, the P 5 – 6 group required more support in order to become confident in working together and sharing their personal experiences and feelings. Initial work focused on 'Getting to know you' activities, supporting the children to recognise their own unique skills and attributes in order to build their self esteem and whole group emotional literacy activities. By the end of the intervention all children showed an increased ability to partake in the activities mentioned above.
- In a review undertaken with class teachers all were positive about the input.

The PSA Literacy intervention input included 5 minute box, Speed Up (fine motor skills/handwriting development) in conjunction with our local OT, precision teaching and Time to Talk (talking and listening/confidence skills for our younger pupils)

- As the year went on, the interventions that took place developed, allowing each of our PSAs involved to take the lead of a different one. These included literacy precision teaching (focused on letter recognition, formation and handwriting), Speed Up (fine motor skills/handwriting) and Time to Talk (talking and listening skills).
- Every child involved in these interventions made progress at their own level. A level of enjoyment, particularly in Speed Up, was noted by all 5 participants, as well as an improvement transferable in fine motor skills. Within the precision teaching sessions, the improvements made between the start (baseline) and end of the week progression was markable. This gave the children involved a real sense of success and this has transferred into their writing work.

## Wider achievements

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Across the course of session 2023/24, we continued to share many successes across the Ness Castle team, which we have all been extremely proud of.

We continue to use our monthly Nessie Natter Newsletters – which not encapsulate sections for the School and ELC. We use our school website, mainly as an information sharing channel, but each of our classes have a Class Blog held within it, which is updated weekly. Our Twitter/X account also shares successes and information as well as our closed Facebook Group for our ELC parents/carers. Our School App is also utilised to share information and quick messages.

As part of our Community focus next session, we will encapsulate all of this within a Communication strategy, following a survey with parents to ensure what we have is enough and is working well.

Over the last session our Parent Council have again organised a range of different events - The Great Nessie Bake Off 2, Pumpkin Design Competition, A Christmas Fayre and an Easter Egg decorating competition. The year will finish with End of Term Discos for all our ELC children and School pupils.

As a school, we have participated in sporting events including Interschools Cross Country - McRobert Cup, Interschools Athletics (where each participant from P6 and P7 won a medal in at least one event) and the Baillie Cup (where there were also a range of medal winners). We also had a P6 team compete in the Euro Quiz and a team from across P6 and P7 in the Scottish Mathematical Challenge.

Our Christmas Nativity was a great success, with the children from P1 – 3 performing it so well, with P4 – 7 forming a great choir for before and afterwards. A group of children from across the school also performed two songs at "Jodie's Christmas at the Cathedral" concert at Inverness Cathedral in front of a packed audience.

We once again have supported a number of different charitable organisations and events throughout the year, including the Highland and Dalneigh Primary Food Banks, The Highland Hospice, Purple for Polio (through the local Rotary Club) and a new local charity, Highland VIP Walking Group (Vision Inclusive Positivity).

As part of our focus on Pupil Voice, we have maintained our Nessie Natter Pupil Voice Groups. One of these was focused on Reading Schools – where we have achieved our Core status and are aiming for Silver. Another was focused on Rights and Sustainable Development Goals and through this we have successfully been recognised as "Rights Committed" in the Rights Respecting School Programme and are working towards our Silver Award. This was due to the hard work of our staff members and their Pupil Voice groups.

We held our first P7 residential trip in May and it was a great success. Our 15 Primary 7s made their way to Loch Insh for a 3-day/2-night adventure and it was fantastic! The weather was amazing!

Staff members from our ELC organised a Garden Community Day in June, asking parents, families and members of the local community to help out and develop our ELC garden space. The results are fantastic, providing the ELC children with wonderful areas to explore and play in.

Wider individual achievements are shared at a monthly Celebrating Achievements Assembly, as well as Nessie Knighthoods being awarded on a weekly basis, with each class teacher selecting a weekly winner who is knighted at our Assembly. This year we also introduced a termly Community Assembly, where anyone from our community could join us for a "normal" weekly Assembly.



## Comments from learners, families, stakeholders and staff Beachdan bho luchd-ionnsachaidh, teaghlaichean, luchd-ùidhe is luchd-obrach

\*Friendship\* \*Honesty\* \*Kindness\* \*Respect\* \*Trust\*

#BuildingStrongFoundations

Across the course of the session, we have undertaken a range of different consultations, looking for feedback and actions for our way forward. This was collated and shared with parents/carers in a number of different Newsletters and formats, a couple of examples are below.

Across October – December we consulted on our Vision, Values and Aims -a piece of work we are very proud of. These have now been shared with the whole School Community and can also be seen below.

In the final term, we have recently distributed a version of the HMle Questionnaire to both our ELC and School parents/carers. As we have now been open for almost two years, it was felt appropriate to ask some of the big questions. This has supported us in the development of the coming year's Improvement Plan – with the main points of Action being listed below.

**ELC and School Questionnaire Results**

Many of you completed the ELC and School Evaluation Questionnaires recently. Before the end of term, the full responses, with a YOU SAID, WE DID/WILL DO feedback, will be shared with all parents. Below are some of the key areas we plan to work on, going forward.

**ELC** 70% of ELC parents gave a response

- \* provide opportunities to share with parents how they can help their child at home
- \* ensure children's Learning Folders are consistent and share appropriate feedback information
- \* undertake workshops or other sessions to allow parents to learn with their child
- \* encourage ELC representation on the Parent Council

**SCHOOL** 62% of school parents gave a response

- \* share more about the curriculum and expectations with parents
- \* share more about how we use assessment to support the children with our parents
- \* undertake workshops and/or open sessions to ensure parents are learning together with their child and so they know how they can support their child at home
- \* promote the work of the Parent Council and encourage new members

THANK YOU

**Policy Review - Snack and Lunch**

Each month we are reviewing a different policy within the ELC. For the month of April it is the Snack and Lunch policy.

We will look at this with the staff, but are also keen to hear any views you have on it. The current policy will be emailed to all ELC parents with the chance to give feedback. Please take the opportunity to do this.

**Our Vision**  
#Building Strong Foundations

**Our Values**  
Trustworthy, Honest, Respectful, Supportive, Trust

**Our Aims**

- INCLUSION** To create a warm, safe, inclusive community which enables everyone to achieve their full potential.
- LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT** To develop and encourage a love of learning by building confidence and celebrating personal achievements.
- CREATIVITY AND CURIOSITY** To promote creativity and nurture learning through every aspect of our school community.
- WIDER COMMUNITY SKILLS** To ensure our children have healthy and resilient individuals who have the skills required for learning for and work.

**Our Ness Castle Values**

Following our Values Consultation, involving all children, ELC and School parents, staff and community members, we are very pleased to announce our Ness Castle Values.

Next term, we plan to involve the children in creating characters to represent each of the Values, as well as dig deep into what they mean for us as a School and ELC.

VALUES: Honesty, Trust, Friendship, Kindness

**Wee Nessie News**

**Our ELC Self Evaluation**

Thank you to the ELC parents who came along to our Wee Nessie Chit Chat at the start of February. It was great to have an informal conversation about their thoughts on elements of the Nursery, in particular under the heading of our Quality Indicator 1.1, "Nurturing Care and Support". Some of the comments, along with our actions, are below. We hope to organise another one early next term.

**Nurture & Care**

- "staff know my little boy well"
- "care is very personalised"

**Staff**

- "staff are caring and approachable"
- "staff are very engaging"
- "staff are understanding and compassionate"
- "staff take the time and know what my child needs"

**Experiences**

- "I like the lunches in the lunch hall - good preparation for school"
- "responsive to children's needs and interests"
- "children are engaged"
- "keyworker groups at lunch time is a good opportunity for building relationships with new children"

**Things we can improve/ideas for the future**

- "more child ownership of the Learning Journal"
- "good to let parents know that kids folders can be taken home"
- "an out of hours Stay and Play" for parents/carers that work"

**ELC Profiles**

A reminder that you are welcome to view your child's Learning Profile at any time. It is kept in...

WEE NESSIE CHIT CHAT

## Capacity for continuous improvement Comas airson leasachadh leantainneach

Using indicators from 'How Good is our School 4' together with learner, parent, carer, partner and community feedback we believe we have made the following progress this session:

	ELC	PRIMARY
<b>QI 1.3</b> Leadership of change	Good	Good
<b>QI 2.3</b> Learning, teaching and assessment	Good	Good
<b>QI 3.1</b> Wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good	Good
<b>QI 3.2</b> Raising attainment and achievement/Securing children's progress	Good	Good

Our overall evaluation of our capacity for continuous improvement is:

We are confident in our capacity for continuous improvement.

Over the coming session, our Self Improvement Calendar will help us to be more specific within the QIs identified above, giving us more robust Self Evaluation evidence.

\*Friendship\* \*Honesty\* \*Kindness\* \*Respect\* \*Trust\* #BuildingStrongFoundations

## Key priorities for improvement planning

### Prìomhachasan airson planadh airson leasachadh

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Our three priorities for the coming year are:

- **COMMUNITY** – To ensure our community is informed and that their involvement and engagement is purposeful
- **CURRICULUM** – *To develop the Ness Castle Literacy and Health and Wellbeing Curriculum, ensuring it is inclusive and aspirational*
- **CONSISTENCY** – *To continue to develop a consistent approach to learning, teaching and assessment across the school and ELC*

## Planning ahead

### A' planadh air adhart

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Full details of the school's 2024/25 improvement priorities and actions are detailed on the school improvement plan, which can be accessed on our website <https://sites.google.com/invernessroyalacademy.org.uk/nesscastleprimary> or by contacting the school office.