



# St John's RC Academy

## Standards and Quality Report 2020-21

---



# School Aims and Values

## Mission Statement

In St John's RC Academy, we seek to grow together as a community of faith and learning in which every member feels welcomed, valued and safe. Guided by the gospel values of Jesus Christ, our staff will work to provide the highest quality of education for the young people in our care. In doing so, we will help them to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to our school and to society.

**S**t John's RC Academy is a community of Faith and learning where every member is valued and respected

**T**ime keeping and good attendance are essential for success

**J**oining in, always trying my best and working together helps everyone become successful learners

**O**rganising myself, doing homework and bringing in everything for class helps me to be prepared for learning

**H**aving a 'can do' attitude will allow my talents to grow and develop

**N**eat and smart uniform unites our school community

**S**eeking the Good – in ourselves and others, guided by our Gospel Values

*I belong to the community of St John's RC Academy. I will do my best to behave well, to work hard, to tell the truth, to care for others and to achieve to the best of my ability.*

*St John's RC Academy Pupil Statement*



## Aims

The work of everyone associated with our school is directed by the following aims:

- we will help each other to grow in faith and to develop our values and spiritual lives
- we will inspire in each other a lifelong love of learning with a positive culture of achievement
- we will encourage our pupils to take responsibility for their learning and lifestyle
- we will support our families and the life of the wider community
- we will promote self-respect and show consideration for others
- we will develop our gifts in the service of others promoting a spirit of peace and forgiveness

## Values

- Fairness, Achievement, Respect, Love

## Context

---

Session 2020-21 began with us emerging for the nation's first lockdown due to COVID-19 and a short phased transition back to school. With mitigations in place to reduce the spread of the virus, the school looked and felt different – staggered starts and ends to the day, off-set breaks and lunches, the wearing of face coverings, regular hand sanitising and handwashing, 2m distancing from adults and much else. From August to Christmas, the focus was on ensuring the wellbeing of our pupils and staff, rebuilding our relationships and ensuring that face-to-face teaching was maximised.

As the second lockdown began, our learning from the first and our contingency plans were used to provide the best offer possible. Every child from nursery to S6 had daily opportunities to engage with staff, with regular check-ins by phone to families to encourage participation and address any issues. With the aid of national and local government, pupils with no/limited digital access were provided with devices. And all this happened while the school remained opened for children and young people who were most vulnerable or were the children of keyworkers. This represented a truly monumental effort, and was successful due to the commitment of our young people, staff and our parents/carers.

Our return to school in term 3 and term 4 looked different for nursery, primary and secondary pupils, and the mitigations remained throughout the year. Our senior pupils undertook assessment opportunities to provide the high quality evidence needed to demonstrate their attainment for SQA qualifications, and we worked with our feeder nurseries and primaries to ensure successful transitions into P1 and S1. While events were curtailed, we enjoyed an S6 day in Fife, our First Holy Communion celebrations and our digital awards ceremony and P7 leavers' ceremony were very well received.

The year was also marked with change in the school's management team. Mrs Lora Burgess departed in March, and we welcomed Mr Jason Hynes as DHT in the secondary. At the end of the session Mr Steve McIntosh, our Business Manager, retired and Mrs Cheryl Gahan took up her new role in August. Our Headteacher since 2014, Mr Seán Hagney also departed in August to take up the Headteacher post at St John's High School, Dundee, to be replaced in the interim by Dr Robert G Staines. While this has naturally been challenging, we have worked to ensure a smooth transition for all our children and young people. An appointment to a substantive Headteacher of the all through school of St John's RC Academy and Campus Leader is still to be made.

In 2020-21 we continued to receive a substantial sum of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This enabled us to extend or begin a number of initiatives focused on raising attainment, increasing participation and engagement, reducing exclusion and increasing inclusion, and promoting attendance. Our data is showing that this investment is having a positive impact across the nursery and school. Our participatory budgeting initiative allowed our pupils to invest in school improvements, including the Allmeria Outdoor Classroom, outdoor seating and Teddy, our school dog.

## Review of Progress



### School Priority 1: Our staff, children and young people are leaders of learning and change.

#### NIF Priority

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

#### NIF Driver

School improvement;  
school leadership;  
parental engagement

**HGIOS?4 QI(s)**  
1.2, 1.3

#### Progress and Impact

##### The

- Session 2020/21 has been a year of rapid change, and the need for leadership based on clear aims and values has been very important. Changes in what we do and how we do it have affected every school day of the year, and despite many and varied difficulties, we have successfully navigated these changes to provide our children and young people with positive learning experiences and positive/improved outcomes.
- While we have reduced, slimmed down or removed some whole school, department or class teacher activities to create capacity to manage other changes, we maintained our self-evaluation cycle across the nursery and school, informing this document.
- Feedback by nursery staff using QR codes was praised as innovative by the care inspection team
- Our ongoing, long term planning has given us the opportunity to relentlessly focus on what is important, and our vision and values have helped us understand this within the school's narrative/rationale. We have prioritised health and wellbeing of all, face-to-face learning and teaching, and learning relationships, and have successfully managed the many transitions throughout 2020/21 in line with the expectations of Scottish Government and PKC.
- We have implemented change collaboratively, with surveys (with very high participation rates), Parent Council meetings (formal and informal), ELT and Staff Consultative Group meetings, union rep discussions, pupil and staff focus groups, to inform our thinking, manage local decision making in line with the changing government guidance, and ensuring the safety of all.
- Staff development has been focused on improving digital skills, managing direct communications, working in unfamiliar surroundings (home or within a Hub), and working in line with clear, but significantly different, expectations
- Pupils have, by the circumstances, needed to take a more active role in leading their own learning, overcoming barriers and engaging positively
- We gathered views through our normal processes but added additional focus groups to better understand pupil, parent and staff concerns
- Successful participatory budgeting opportunities were undertaken in primary and secondary
- Review and renew secondary leadership and management package, including QA calendar, to update self-evaluation processes, integrating pupil participation and parental engagement into our processes and adapt for nursery/primary contexts
- Improved opportunities for professional engagement and collegiate learning
- Reestablish, where possible, peer mentoring programmes across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
- In line with UNCRC, reestablish learner participation in all aspects of the life of the school (in learning and teaching, in opportunities for personal achievement, in decision making groups and in connection with the wider community)
- Build on participatory budgeting opportunities in the primary and secondary
- Promote school values within our classroom settings and school policies
- Refocus teacher leaders/working groups to reflect and research the following PKC strategies/policies to refresh the policies within St John's Academy

**School Priority 2: Learning, teaching and assessment meet the needs of all learners.****NIF Priority**

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

**NIF Driver**

Assessment of children's progress;  
performance information;  
teacher professionalism

**HGIOS?4 QI(s)**

2.3

- Session 2020/21 has required a range of strategies to ensure very good learning and engagement across the nursery and school. Our transition, including our staggered starts to the school year, enabled the best possible start to the year. Some learners and their families, for a variety of reasons, were reluctant to engage but each of these has been addressed and progressed. Our school focus on health and wellbeing (pupils and staff) supported the high level of engagement with the COVID mitigations. Our mitigations adapted and changed in line with the public health guidance, consulted upon appropriately and managed successfully.
- The quality of learning relationships was prioritised, and face-to-face learning took place whenever possible. We promoted positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which led to high quality outcomes.
- Engagement across the nursery and school during Jan-March was high, both online and in our 'Hub' provisions. Our offer, agreed with staff in August, was implemented and required the use of a wide range of software including Teams, Google Classrooms, SeeSaw, e-Sgoil, SumDog, Linguascope, SCHOLAR, etc. Daily live interactions in nursery and primary were supported by digital tasks; in secondary the timetable was followed daily. Feedback on our offers across the nursery and school were very positive and complimentary. We ensured further engagement by allocating devices to learners who needed it, although there has been a delay in some of these.
- Non-engagement was addressed with regular home contact made with all our families, and more support offered to those that needed this. The staggered return for nursery and primary, and then the practical subjects arrangements and the staggered return for secondary, enabled a successful full return to school for all post-Easter.
- We developed consistent expectations regarding the quality and quantity of teacher input during lockdown, and this was delivered almost all of the time.
- Teachers across the school have been tracking and monitoring progress, drawing on generated evidence and supported by standardised testing (SNSA, SOFA, SQA assessments) to identify gaps and address these. We have been developing the use of the progression framework to better build on prior learning.
- SQA moderation and verification has been fair and robust and completed in collaboration with others inside the school, in partner departments, across the local authority and with SQA.

**Next Steps**

- Across our school, prioritise the quality of engaging learning experiences within our classrooms
- Enhance the learning experiences of our children and young people through play strategies, outdoor learning and skills development, particularly skills relating to HWB and DYW
- Enhance the learning experiences of our children and young people through digital learning opportunities, in school and at home, including for those pupils who are self-isolating or not consistently engaging with in-school learning
- Reestablish, subject to risk assessments, programmes to enhance learning experiences through learning excursions and activity days
- Reestablish our enhanced curriculum programmes at lunch and after-school, including supported study and the Monday Library 'Learning Hub'
- Reengage with partners to develop a holiday programme for targeted learners, including for P7-S1 transition
- Continue to promote the importance of differentiation, feedback and leadership of learning, including through sharing our practice
- Focus on the importance of routines and high expectations, including in relation to uniform and readiness to learn

**School Priority 3: Attainment and achievement is raised for all and the poverty related gap is closing**

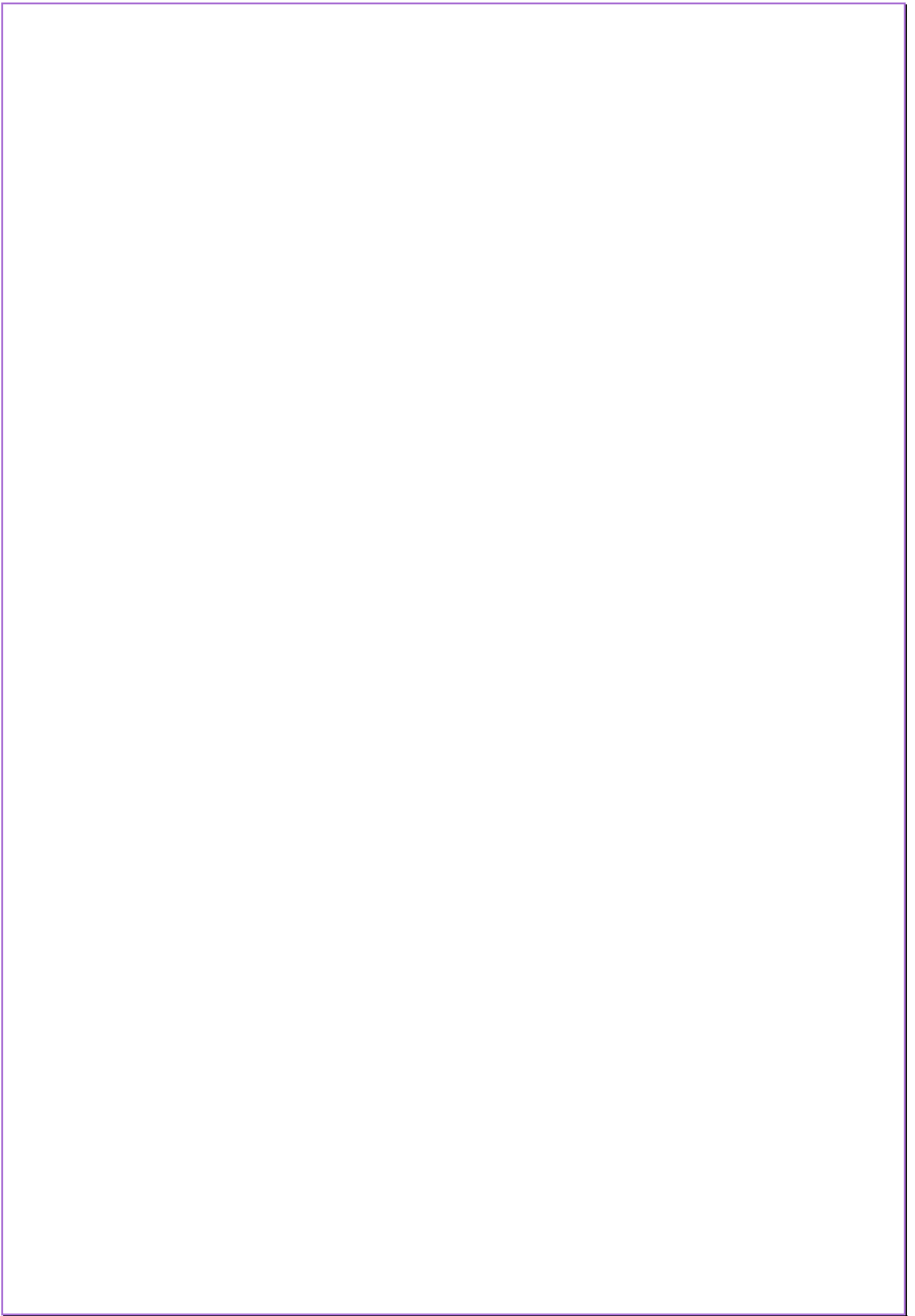
<b>NIF Priority</b> Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy; closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children	<b>NIF Driver</b> All	<b>HGIOS?4 QI(s)</b> 3.2
---	--------------------------	-----------------------------

**Progress and Impact**

- During session 2020-21 attainment across all aspects of learning has been challenging due to disruption as a result of the global pandemic. Nevertheless, across the nursery and school we have worked collaboratively to support our learners in many ways
- In P1 the literacy intervention has supported learners' vocabulary, listening, narrative and other skills and improved attainment in P1
- Precision numeracy training for PSA is already making an impact, and the use of additional staff supported by PEF and COVID funding have enabled us to improve attainment for many targeted young people throughout the school
- Our pupil support department in secondary and our pupil support team in primary are increasingly able to target learners and improve attainment, including through the 5@3 pathway
- Our positive attainment trends across primary and secondary demonstrate very good progress in this area
- Wider achievement opportunities have been curtailed this session, but have continued whenever possible, including Duke of Edinburgh
- In 2020-21 average attainment in 88% of P1 pupils were on track (achieved Early Level) in numeracy, writing and reading, with 82% on track in listening and talking. For P4s, 78% were on track (achieved First Level) for listening and talking, 70% for reading, 67% for writing and 69% for numeracy. For our P7s, 92% were on track for listening and talking (achieved Second Level), 83% for reading, 73% for writing, with 74% on track for numeracy. In S3, 89% were on track (achieved Third Level) for listening and talking, with 90% on track for reading, 89% for writing, and 83% for numeracy.
- Attainment by leavers is increasing both in actual total tariff points and in relation to the VC in most areas. For leavers, performances significantly exceeded the VC in almost all key indicators.
- The gap between those from the most and least deprived is significant. The gap between those most and least deprived is not consistently present across all measures, indicating that our interventions are making an impact.
- Analysis of the attainment of candidates in the 2021 session suggests a positive picture overall, and reflects the raising of attainment over time. 74% of S4 pupils achieved at least 5 awards at National 3, down from 75% the previous year; 70% achieved at least 5 awards at National 4, up from 69% in 2018-19; 38% achieved at least 5 awards at National 5, down from 46%. In S5, 56% (Note CFE machine reports 63%) achieved at least 1 Higher (A-C), down from 62% in 2018-19; 32% achieved at least 3 Highers (Note CFE machine reports 36%), a fall of 2% from 2018-19, with 10% achieving at least 5 Highers, a drop of 10%. S6, who were a very high achieving cohort in S5, have continued to build on their success. 41% achieved at least 5 Highers (A-C), up from 23%, with 24% (Note CFE machine reports 26%) achieving at least 1 Advanced Higher, a 6% rise from 2018-19.

**Next Steps**

- Use SNSA, SOFA and other tools to identify gaps in learning and address these through universal and targeted interventions
- Create a whole-school reading culture through the Reading Schools framework
- Renew our focus on raising attainment in learning and achievements across the four contexts of the curriculum for all our learners, providing universal and targeted opportunities and universal offers
- Respond to the requirements of SQA throughout the session and actively advocate for qualifications which address the needs of learners in line with the aspirations of CfE and the NIF
- Build on our very good school-home communications, specifically relating to attainment and wider achievement opportunities, improve and incorporate strategies to inform 'hard-to-reach' parents
- Identify targeted learners/groups and ensure they are appropriately supported to overcome barriers to learning, including those adversely affected by the pandemic
- Remove mandatory costs relating to the Secondary School Day via the Pupil Equity Fund, and remove all costs from mandatory primary day excursions for those entitled to FSM+Clothing Grant children.



**School Priority 4: Our children and young people's wellbeing is ensured through equity and inclusion**

<b>NIF Priority</b>	<b>NIF Driver</b>	<b>HGIOS?4 QI(s)</b>
Improvement in Children's and young people's health and wellbeing; improvement in employability and sustained positive leaver destinations for all young people	All	3.1; 3.3

**Progress and Impact**

- Session 2020/21 has been marked by major changes, often at short notice which has affected every one of our community. The year has been marked with periods of isolation (during lockdown and through positive COVID cases), concerns regarding the welfare of some, and concerns about inclusion, and equity/equality of access
- In school we have addressed these concerns very well, making HWB a focus for every teacher and member of staff, placing the quality of our relationships at the centre of our recovery
- The care inspection team rated the HWB in the nursery good on a very challenging day of staff absence, and in light of their feedback, we are confident that our standard is very good
- We have communicated our expectations clearly and reinforced this consistently
- We have used extra staffing to support daily transitions and offered extra support to those requiring this
- We have invested in outdoor seating and an outdoor classroom, encouraged outdoor learning and play across the school
- We reorganised TG time in secondary to focus on HWB
- During lockdown, we contacted all families regularly and gave additional support to those that needed this. Daily live interactions from nursery to the SP ensured that connections were kept and even deepened
- We organised multiple 'Hubs' for vulnerable children and young people and for the children of keyworkers in nursery, primary and secondary, providing those who needed it most, providing stability, care and quality learning experiences
- All staff were aware of their statutory obligations and how to raise concerns throughout the year; we signposted parents/carers to partners who could offer further appropriate support, including welfare agencies
- Our partnership working with SDS has ensured that almost all of our leavers entered positive destinations, and the work led by our PT Guidance (DYW) post is a sector leading innovation
- Almost all school leavers (99% - for the second year) enter into a positive destination, with the majority continuing in education. Staying on rates from S4 to S5 remain steady, with a significant increase in figures for S4 into S5 and S4 continuing into S6. We have a very positive relationship with SDS and work with them to ensure that we agree and share the risk matrix and target pupils for both SDS and school interventions. Our DYW strategy is very well developed particularly in the secondary. This promotes career management skills and includes curriculum offers as well as a range of opportunities across the PKC entitlements.

**Next Steps**

- Reflect on and renew our focus on our approaches to nurture and inclusion across our nursery and school, including through the use of CIRCLE
- Respond to government and PKC advice relating to COVID-19, establish and maintain appropriate mitigations and ensure children/young people and staff who are self-isolating are appropriately supported
- Develop our use of counselling and mentoring through the use of additional resources
- • Renew our focus on staff wellbeing (spiritual, physical, emotional) to enable them to meet their own and learners' needs
- Continue to develop partnership with Skills Development Scotland to identify and target pupils at medium and high risk, and plan and deliver 'universal, targeted and opportunity' interventions
- Evaluate our DYW strategy and practices and align with the new DYW KPIs
- Continue to review academic and vocational opportunities and pathways to ensure the best possible provision for learners, including through the use of NPAs and virtual/blended opportunities
- Improve business, STEM and social enterprise links at stage/department and whole school levels



## Priorities for Improvement Planning 2020-21

---

Our initial focus for 2021-22 will be on our recovery. During this time we will be prioritising the health and wellbeing of our learners and staff as we re-establish our community of faith and learning.

Beyond this, our focus for 2019-20 will continue to be on our current priorities, focusing on the following four strategic aims:



**Our staff, children and young people are leaders of learning and change**

**Learning, teaching and assessment meet the needs of all learners**

**Our children and young people's wellbeing is ensured through equity and inclusion**

**Attainment and achievement is raised for all and the poverty related gap is closing**



The school's capacity for continuous improvement is very good.

Quality Indicator	School Self-Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of Change	Very good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Very good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Very good

