



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Standards and Quality Report (Session 16/17)
for
James Gillespie's High School



'We value the diversity that exists'

Standards and Quality Report for session: 2016/17

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Our **vision** is to provide a curriculum which enables all learners at James Gillespie's High School to achieve their potential. We aim for excellence in learning and teaching and expect all learners to be actively engaged in their own learning. We recognise that learning is a lifelong process and is one to which we, as a school community, make a significant and lasting contribution.

Our school **values**, which demonstrate what is important to us as a school, are:

1. Respect
2. Equality
3. Inclusion
4. Honesty
5. High expectations/aspirations

Section 1 The school in context

James Gillespie's High School is a large non-denominational secondary school with a roll of approximately 1255. Founded in 1803, it is situated in the heart of the beautiful and vibrant City of Edinburgh, Scotland. Our catchment area includes Marchmont, Bruntsfield, the historic Royal mile and both Holyrood Palace and the Scottish Parliament. We are a modern culturally diverse school, educating pupils aged 11 to 18 years of age. Our pupils are proud to be at James Gillespie's and they respond enthusiastically to a 'values led' approach to ensuring that positive and respectful relationships are the basis upon which we operate. We have a complement of 86 teaching staff and 30 support staff. Our S1 intake of 240 in August 2017 is drawn from 14 primary schools across Edinburgh.

In August 2016 we moved on to our completed campus after a rebuilding programme which started in 2013.

In addition to having an outstanding academic record, our school prides itself on the varied and extensive extra-curricular programme of activities on offer. We are actively involved in sport, debating, performing and expressive arts, and a range of other academic pursuits. All our pupils are fully supported by a dedicated and committed staff who work hard to ensure that all pupils realise their potential. We provide Gaelic Medium Education (GME) for a growing number of pupils from S1 to S6. Within our school, 47 official languages are spoken. We are a culturally diverse school and we value and celebrate the diversity that exists. We enjoy international links and exchanges with schools in a growing number of countries. This includes: Spain, Germany, France, Hong Kong, Shanghai and South Africa.

Our aim at Gillespie's is to encourage each student to be self-confident, inquiring, tolerant, positive, well-rounded, independent and an individual who respects and appreciates the value of growing up in a culturally diverse and enriched world. By the time he/she leaves the school, we want each student to have that true sense of self-worth which will enable him/her to add value to society. In partnership with parents, we are committed to ensuring that our students are challenged, successful, safe and happy. As an organisation we consider ourselves to be 'Work in Progress'. We are always seeking to improve, and, to that end, we value the views of others to help us plan for improvement.

If you would like to know more about our school then please visit our website at jamesgillespies.edin.co.uk

Section 2

Leadership of Change (Quality Indicator 1.3)

Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and community

Each faculty has a self-evaluation calendar in place and this is used by all faculty staff. Self-evaluation is evident across the school and contributes fully to the school's planning and strategic direction. Our self-evaluation focuses on key aspects of learners' successes and achievements. It draws on a wide range of advice and evidence and is rigorous, systematic and transparent. Our various teams reflect on current practices and evaluate any new initiatives, ideas and changes we have introduced.

We are good at identifying strengths and areas for improvement. We share good practice regularly within some faculties. We make evidence-based decisions on the allocation of resources to target key agreed objectives in order to achieve best value. Our Curriculum Leaders and Senior Leadership Team demonstrate that they are committed to learning by making improved arrangements for class visits, modelling good practice, giving appropriate feedback, sharing insights widely and stimulating self-evaluation. We actively reinforce a distributed leadership culture where staff feel able and confident to take lead roles within and beyond the classroom. Our approach to leadership is consultative and collegiate, securing shared commitment.

We are committed to planning and implementing strategies for improvement. We understand the need for support and challenge, have demanding targets, manage change effectively and use best practice in self-evaluation to improve learning. Improvement in our school takes account of our capacity for improvement and we are aware of the need and challenge involved in giving staff adequate time to consider and embed changes. Towards the end of session 16/17 I am grateful to the group of 4 parents who, along with 3 senior staff joined me in developing and finalising our priorities for development in session 17/18.

Through our consultation sessions in recent sessions we have developed a shared vision and value base for what is important for our school community. We plan improvements in line with that vision. Results of our self-evaluation exercises are routinely used to consolidate what we do well.

During session 17/18 it is our intention to revisit our school's values and vision statements in order that they, as appropriate, may be refreshed to reflect our evolving school and societal context. This exercise was last carried out in session 12/13.

<p>Strategic Planning for continuous improvement</p>	<p>Leaders across the school aim to create conditions where staff feel supported to initiate well informed change and are committed to collective responsibility in the process of managing change. The school has experienced considerable change in recent years and has taken the opportunity to evaluate and refresh practices across the school. Some of our evaluation methodology is as listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular classroom visits by SLT and CLs • Fixed “sharing good practice” agenda items at faculty meetings • Student focus groups • Student, parent and staff questionnaires • SQA performance analysis • SEEMIS tracking and monitoring of all students (attendance) • Regular review of departmental and whole school improvement plan • SLT links to departments • We regularly seek and welcome feedback from parents, and students. • As individual teachers and with colleagues, there is a growing awareness of the importance of how we evaluate our own classwork as reflective practitioners and make improvements. • We work as a school community and with partner agencies to evaluate provision in order to secure • Continuous improvement, including major change where this is needed. • In tandem with the wider Council, we have developed some systems to gather the views of staff, parents, learners, partners and others about the quality of our work. • We work in active partnership with other services for children to secure improvement.
<p>Implementing improvement and change</p>	<p>Our ambition is for our school community to take a joined-up approach to improvement across all that it does. We are committed to acting on the results of self-evaluation and can show clear evidence of improvement based on our actions as part of our self-evaluation. Our improvements focus particularly on continuing improvements to learning and teaching and the achievement of all learners.</p> <p>Throughout the past session we have gathered information from staff, parents and pupils on what has worked well and made appropriate changes to address concerns and challenges. Our working relationships are built on respect and a genuine concern for all. We work collaboratively to tackle challenging problems, share information and deal with difficulties. We reinforce an atmosphere of collective responsibility and mutual support across the school community. Everyone is encouraged to recognise and celebrate their achievements. We encourage staff leadership and development and have a high number of staff undertaking additional personal study each year as a result.</p> <p>Self-evaluation is key to our shared leadership and is used effectively to develop a shared understanding for the vision and direction of the school.</p>

What are we going to do next?

During the coming session we will further develop our approaches to school self-evaluation. We will:

- Use HGIOS 4 to develop a whole school self-evaluation policy/procedure that summarises all the main self-evaluation activities for the school.
- Continue to provide meaningful opportunities for shared self-evaluation to inform the vision and direction of the school
- Continue to develop approaches to gathering the views of all stakeholders
- Continue to develop leadership across the school community and to provide opportunities for self-development
- Continue to explore opportunities to enhance partnerships across the school community
- Actively seek new partnerships with agencies, local businesses and community groups to further enhance our school provision
- Continue to improve parental engagement in the school in general and self-evaluation exercises including a variety of School Improvement Teams
- Continue to develop staff capacity in evaluating our teaching and learning practices.

Section 3 Learning, teaching and assessment (Quality Indicator 2.3)

Learning and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are highly positive relationships between teachers and learners, and an ethos of positive learning is evident. • Learners are engaged, motivated and actively involved in the majority of lessons, and are given opportunities to make choices and lead learning within the classroom. • Learners’ experiences are appropriately challenging and enjoyable and well matched • Coursework in subjects is relevant, and learners are provided with effective support and challenge to achieve their next steps in learning. • Digital technology is widely used across all subjects • Learners play an active role in the school and the community through well-planned activities • Learners’ achievements are recognised and recorded • Learners’ achievements are recognised and recorded
Quality of teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide range of teaching environments and teaching approaches are demonstrated. • Questioning techniques are varied and engaging, with particular emphasis on enabling learners to develop higher-order thinking skills. • Staff continually develop their own pedagogy by attending appropriate CPD courses and training. • Learner feedback is used effectively in order to inform progress and next steps in learning.
Effective use of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of assessment approaches is used across all subject areas. • Assessment approaches are matched to the learning needs of learners, and are used to support them to support them in their next steps • Processes for assessment and reporting are manageable and effective in informing improvements in learning and teaching.

<p>Planning, tracking and monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We plan appropriately over different timescales to meet the needs of learners across all areas of the curriculum. • Learners are fully involved in planning learning • We have clear information on learners’ attainment across all curriculum areas, including those facing additional challenges • We use data to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve outcomes for all learners • All teachers have well-developed skills of data analysis which are focussed on improvement
<p>What are we going to do next?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continually review and update JGHS approaches to Learning and Teaching in order to ensure that all of our pupils are sufficiently challenged and actively engaged in their learning. • Continue to provide in-house support for improvements in Learning and Teaching methodologies • Improve Tracking & Mentoring across the school • Continue to offer opportunities for all students to feedback their views • Make good use of the Personal and Social Education programme to encourage good citizenship (e.g. bullying and anti-racial inputs) • Develop revised approaches to countering bullying behaviours in schools • Use self-evaluation to support consistent approaches to Active Learning and Feedback across the curriculum • Revise and relaunch a policy that better promotes consistency across the school in regard to managing pupil behaviours • Offer increased opportunities for pupils and staff to help those suffering from mental health issues

Section 4 Improving wellbeing, equality and inclusion (Quality Indicator 3.1)

<p>Wellbeing</p>	<p>Information about learners’ strengths and additional support for learning needs is accessible and used effectively by a number of staff to support individual and groups of learners to make appropriate progress. The school takes positive and proactive steps to ensure that factors such as learning environment, family circumstances, health needs, disability, previous educational experience and/or social or emotional factors which may hinder or support learning are used as the basis of planning.</p> <p>Different learning activities are used by a number of teachers to match the needs of individual and groups of learners.</p> <p>Tasks, activities and resources provide appropriate support and challenge to enable many learners to achieve their next steps in learning.</p> <p>The range of courses and programmes meet the needs of the majority of learners.</p> <p>The pace and challenge of learning is appropriate for many learners.</p>
<p>Fulfilment of statutory duties</p>	<p>Key staff including SfL & SfP identify, review and evaluate learners’ needs including those whose needs are significantly different from those of their peers, those who are Looked After or those whose achievement falls within the lowest 20%.</p> <p>Looked After Children are assessed to determine whether they have additional support needs. Partner agencies are involved to ensure barriers to learning arising from domestic issues are addressed.</p> <p>Attendance and exclusion figures are shared and analysed by key staff to attempt to provide appropriate support for improvement.</p> <p>Almost all information collected and stored about learners with ASL needs is accurate, up to date, relevant and complete.</p> <p>Information is being used to identify, anticipate and respond to emerging and changing trends within the school population over time.</p>

<p>Inclusion and equality</p>	<p>We take positive and proactive steps to ensure that factors such as the learning environment, family circumstances, health needs or disability, social or emotional factors which may hinder learning, are promptly identified and addressed effectively. Learning support staff and partner agencies in our school provide valuable support and advice to staff and individual learners.</p> <p>Individualised educational programmes and additional support plans contain appropriate learning targets for our learners. We involve parents and learners well and effectively in reviewing learners' needs and learning plans. Support for Learning staff provide a range of effective, valuable services to young people and staff. Their contributions cover the full range of roles associated with good practice in support for learning. Support specialists have provided advice and training for all school staff on key issues in support, including the role and function of additional support plans and IEPs.</p> <p>Support staff pay particular attention to the needs of vulnerable groups in the school, including those who are looked after. The progress and welfare of vulnerable groups is monitored carefully, and staff draw on a wide and effective range of provision, from within the school and involving a wider group of partners, to design programmes which are well matched to the learners' needs.</p>
<p>What are we going to do next?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop self-evaluation to support more consistent approaches to Active Learning and Feedback across the curriculum • Further develop opportunities for staff to learn from each other across the school. • Revamp and re-launch 'Excellent Relationships for Learning' policy and positive reward scheme • Improve differentiation across the school in all areas • Continue to improve communications with parents on pupils' progress • Refresh training for staff on statutory duties pertaining to teachers

Section 5 Raising attainment and achievement (Quality Indicator 3.2)

Attainment in literacy and numeracy	<p>James Gillespie's High School continues to perform to a very good standard. We have, over the past session, maintained very high standards of attainment in all measures. We are particularly pleased to note the strong progress made by our lowest attaining pupils and those in SIMD 1-4. The excellent P7/S1 transition arrangements we have in place for all pupils and the inclusive ethos of our school ensures that all of our pupils benefit fully from the rich and varied curriculum on offer.</p> <p>Learners in our school, across all ability ranges, make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment. We have very effective strategies for raising the attainment of those who are at risk of missing out.</p> <p>Based on examination data analysed in August 2017, it is clear that S1-3 students have made very good progress in their courses and it is evident that pupils are working across the 4 capacities with increasing confidence. The majority of students in S1,2 are currently judged to be making very good progress with their learning at level 3 in most subjects. In S3 almost all students are working within level 4 and begin studying towards courses at National 4 and 5. Students have been tracked throughout S1/2 in Maths and English and those who were not able to progress in line with their peers, due to barriers to learning, have been identified and appropriate additional support is in place to support onward progression.</p> <p>Our results at the end of S4, S5 and S6 continue to be excellent. Comparisons with our virtual comparator school confirm that we are very strong across all of the curriculum areas. This is particularly pleasing given the challenges we have faced through this period of extensive change in our school.</p>
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<p>Attainment over time</p>	<p>Our Improvement Plan is a result of consultation across all our stakeholders and is continuously evaluated through a programme of self-evaluation.</p> <p>Our learners are increasingly successful and confident. They also exercise responsibility and contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. We are very proud of the many and varied achievements of all of our pupils across a very wide and diverse range of pursuits. Our 16+ tracking is highly successful and this, in conjunction with our other schemes, has resulted in a very good and improving record in achieving sustained and Positive Destinations for all of our leavers. We are committed to ensuring that our school is inclusive for all. We are strongly supported in achieving this by a committed staff, an active Parent Council and the JGHS Trust that contributes towards ensuring all pupils can access the varied curricular experiences on offer.</p> <p>An extensive range of achievements are celebrated across the school in a variety of ways. Newsletters, Weekly updates to all parents and staff, displays across the school, assemblies and the school website are all used to good effect.</p> <p>This range of achievements and opportunities includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer mentoring • Assembly presentations on anti-bullying awareness • Pupil Voice • Debating (Gaelic and English) • School magazine (Award winning in June 2015) • Buddying of younger pupils • Fundraising for various local and international charities • Duke of Edinburgh (both during the school day and in after school activities) • Pipe Band • LGBT club • Scripture union • Various choirs • Film Club • Drama Club • Various ensembles – including wind, percussion and stringed instruments • Football teams
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- Cycling Club
- Water Polo Teams
- Chess Club
- Gardening Club
- Basketball teams
- Cricket Teams
- Swimming teams
- Athletics teams
- Dance clubs
- STEM club
- Maths club
- Nurture Group
- Excursions in the past two years to a variety of overseas destinations include: New York, Germany, France, Tenerife, Switzerland, South Africa, Ireland, Italy, Shanghai, Italy, Belgium, London and Skye
- Field trips and excursions across a wide range of subjects
- Spanish exchange for S3 pupils to Tenerife
- German exchange trip for S4 pupils to Munich
- French exchange for S3 trips to Nimes and various other places of interest
- A level Art exhibition
- Sports leaderships awards for senior pupils
- Annually, a large number of high school and cluster pupils take part in raising funds in advance of 30-50 of our S6 students visiting our partner schools in South Africa.
- Pupils take part in various musical events including Music Fest, our annual Christmas concert at the Usher Hall and Spring Fling.
- ‘Diverscity’ show takes place each year to showcase the diversity of our pupil base.

Through our continuing feedback mechanisms, we will continue to develop our programme of ‘extra’ activities for our pupils. We believe this to be a vital part of the school experience for all pupils.

<p>Overall quality of learners' achievement</p>	<p>The priorities of our school improvement plan have had a measurable impact on improving the attainment, achievement and well-being of our learners and the work of the school. We decide on improvements based on rigorous self-evaluation and input from all our stakeholders including staff, students, parents & officers from both local and central government.</p> <p>We regularly evaluate our progress with the school improvement plan during our Senior Leadership Meetings and at Cluster HT meetings. In preparation for this we meet with key stakeholders and discuss progress.</p> <p>Arising from our school improvement plan 2016/17, attainment measures have improved, consistency and innovation across Learning & Teaching continue to improve and our evolving Curriculum for Excellence is on track. 'Insight', the newly developed benchmarking tool for assessing the school's performance across a range of measures, relative to a virtual school comprised of pupils from similar socio-economic backgrounds, clearly demonstrates that we are a very high performing and successful school for all of our learners.</p>
<p>Equity for all learners</p>	<p>We have a variety of systems in place to promote equity of success and achievement for all of our young people. We have raised the attainment of all of our learners above the levels of our virtual comparator and in particular our most disadvantaged and less privileged young people. Almost all of our learners move into sustained positive destinations when they leave school. With the continuing support of the James Gillespie's Trust, our Parent Council and the Pupil equity Fund, amongst others, we will continue to ensure that we are ambitious for all of our learners regardless of their background.</p>
<p>What are we going to do next?</p>	<p>During sessions 2017/18/19/20 we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to take steps to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. • Continue to ensure that Learning and Teaching opportunities are maximised • Further develop how we utilise ICT to enhance learning • In order to better support access to online learning materials, seek to gain access to Council Wifi for senior pupils • Continue to focus on streamlining procedures so that bureaucracy is minimised • Continue to focus efforts to improve attainment at all levels across the school • Continue to ensure that all youngsters with barriers to learning, including Autism, are fully supported • Continue to focus on the number of students going on to and maintaining sustained positive destinations

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to promote and encourage high achievement and attainment of all of our pupils• Review and enhance the curriculum experiences for pupils from S3-S6 in line with evolving best practices• Continue to develop opportunities for wider achievement and vocational learning throughout the curriculum• Continue to improve self-evaluation in the school ensuring all stakeholders are fully involved in the processes• Further develop tracking and monitoring systems across the school• Continue to develop Literacy, Numeracy & HWB including tracking and promotion of cross curricular skills• Continue to improve communications with parents and carers• Continue to improve attendance and reduce exclusion figures• Continue to improve support for pupils who are experiencing challenging circumstances• Continue to develop our approaches to learning and teaching across the school |
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Section 6 Summary of evaluations against key indicators

Evaluation key:

Level 6	Excellent	Outstanding or sector leading
Level 5	Very Good	Major strengths
Level 4	Good	Important strengths with areas for improvement
Level 3	Satisfactory	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Level 2	Weak	Important weaknesses
Level 1	Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses

QI	Leadership and Management	Evaluation
1.3	Self-evaluation for self-improvement	5
QI	Learning provision	Evaluation
2.2	Curriculum	5
2.3	Learning, teaching and assessment	4/5
QI	Successes and Achievements	Evaluation
3.1	Improving wellbeing, equity and inclusion	5
3.2	Raising attainment and achievement	5

QI		2016 - 2017	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020	Comments
1.1	Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement					
1.2	Leadership of Learning					
1.3	Leadership of Change	√	√	√	√	
1.4	Leadership and Management of Staff					
1.5	Management of Resources to Promote Equity					
	Leadership and Management Overall					
2.1	Safeguarding and Child Protection					
2.2	Curriculum					
2.3	Learning, Teaching and Assessment	√	√	√	√	
2.4	Personalised Support					
2.5	Family Learning					
2.6	Transitions					
2.7	Partnerships					
	Learning Provision Overall					
3.1	Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion	√	√	√	√	

3.2	Raising Attainment and Achievement	√	√	√	√	
3.3	Increasing Creativity and Employability					
	Successes and Achievements Overall					

Donald j Macdonald (Updated 25 November 2017)