



Alness Academy

ESTABLISHMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SESSION 2025-2026



Leadership, Aspiration, Compassion



Overview of National and Local Priorities

National Improvement Framework Key Priorities

- ☐ 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

National Improvement Framework Key Drivers

- ☐ School and ELC leadership
- ☐ Teacher and practitioner professionalism
- ☐ Parent/carer engagement and family learning
- ☐ Curriculum and assessment
- ☐ School and ELC improvement
- ☐ Performance information

How good is our school? (4th edition)

- ☐ 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
- ☐ 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 Partnership
- ☐ 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion
- ☐ 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement
- ☐ 3.3 Increasing creativity and employability

ELC Quality Improvement Framework Realising the Ambition

Leadership:

- ☐ Leadership and management of staff and resources
- ☐ Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment
- ☐ Leadership of continuous improvement

Spaces & environment:

- ☐ Children thrive and develop in quality spaces
- ☐ Inside and outside, open ended and natural resources

Children play and learn:

- ☐ Play and learning
- ☐ Curriculum
- ☐ Learning, teaching, and assessment
- ☐ Inspiring confidence, creativity, and curiosity

Children are supported to achieve:

- ☐ Nurturing care and support, interactions, and relationships
- ☐ Wellbeing, inclusion, and equality

Highland Council Education Priorities

- ☐ We will raise attainment and achievement for all, especially for those children 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.
- ☐ We will focus our improvement on the themes within our Raising Attainment and Achievement Strategy:
 1. Leadership
 2. Learning & Teaching
 3. Curriculum
 4. Data Analysis
- ☐ 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.

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	☐ Children's progress – observations, planning, and tracking ☐ Safeguarding and child protection	
How good is OUR school?	Gaelic Education	Health and Social Care Standards
☐ Theme 1 Our relationships ☐ Theme 2 Our learning and teaching ☐ Theme 3 Our school and community ☐ Theme 4 Our health and wellbeing ☐ Theme 5 Our successes & achievements	☐ <u>Education Scotland Advice on Gaelic Education</u> focus: - high quality GME immersion experiences - improving fluency - whole school Gaelic ethos ☐ Secondary – Increasing immersion curriculum opportunities in BGE and Senior Phase ☐ <u>Gaelic Learner Education Experiences</u> ☐ Initiatives and projects that promote and support Gaelic extra-curricular experiences ☐ <u>Local Authority Gaelic Language Plan</u> priorities, initiatives, and activities to promote Gaelic across the 4 themes of - Communities and Home - Media, Arts, Culture and Heritage - Business and the Economy - Education	☐ I experience high quality care and support that is right for me. ☐ I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support. ☐ I have confidence in the people who support and care for me. ☐ I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support. ☐ I experience a high-quality environment if the organisations provide the premises.



Establishment Improvement Priorities	RAAS Themes 1-4	Linked NIF Priority	Linked NIF Driver	Linked Highland Priority	HGIOS? 4	ELC QI Framework	Linked GME Priority	Linked H&SC Standard
1. Developing a shared vision, values and aims, policy relevant to Alness and our community.	Leadership	Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education	School and ELC Leadership	We will develop leadership skills at all levels of the system	1.3 Leadership of change	Leadership of continuous improvement	Choose an item.	I have confidence in the people who support me
2. Teaching and Learning. - Foster a culture of professional growth where all staff are empowered to refine their teaching practice,	LTA	Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education	Teacher and practitioner professionalism	We will develop leadership skills at all levels of the system	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Learning, teaching and assessment	Choose an item.	I experience a high quality environment if the organisation provides the premises
3. Raising attainment and achievement.	Curriculum	Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people	Curriculum and assessment	We will raise attainment and achievement for all	3.2 Raising attainment and achievement/securing children's progress	Children's progress	Choose an item.	I experience a high quality environment if the organisation provides the premises
4. Ensuring wellbeing, equity and Inclusion.	Health and Wellbeing	Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing	School and ELC improvement	We will maximise health and wellbeing for all children and young people	3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	Choose an item.	I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support

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Action Plans

Improvement Priority 1 Action Plan:	1 - Leadership QI 1.3) Developing a shared vision, values and aims, policy relevant to Alness and our community.	Lead: Tom Magowan (Head)		
Please detail the information/data which has prompted this work:				
Surveys – We have surveyed all stakeholders, and the common message is that we all know what the values are but are not embedded in our practice. Also, why these are our values and how they support the learning environment.				
Research/Experience - Alness has a complex demographic and through previous experience and looking outwards at similar communities we know that focusing on a shared vision around values and aims in the school is crucial for creating a unified, positive, and effective learning environment. It will provide a clear direction for the entire school community - students, teachers, staff, and parents - and helps align their efforts towards common goals.				
Expected outcomes:	Measures:	QI – 1.3	When? Who?	
- Promote Cohesion and Unity: All stakeholders understand and buy into the same values and aims, creating a sense of belonging and shared purpose. - Decision-Making: Our Values will underpin all major decisions, from curriculum development and classroom management to extracurricular activities and budget allocation. All teachers will make choices that are consistent with the school's core identity and long-term goals. - Fosters a Positive Culture: Shared values, such as Leadership, Aspiration and Compassion will be explicitly taught and modelled throughout the school creating an environment where students feel safe, supported, and motivated to learn.	- Cohesion and Shared Understanding – All stakeholders will use the language of the vision and values in their daily conversations - Surveys and Feedback - Regular surveys will gauge how well the vision is understood and if people feel a sense of ownership. - Observations – Consistency, are staff using it in their daily practice. For example, does everyone define		See below	

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- Enhance Student Outcomes: Students will be part of Alness Academy with a strong, shared vision. They will understand the expectations and what it means to be a good student and community member. - Build Trust and Community Support: Have an articulated vision to communicate the school's identity and mission to parents and the wider community. This transparency will build trust and encourage greater involvement and support.	"Aspiration" similarly, and are they held accountable to that definition? - Decision-Making: School leaders, teachers, and staff will be using the vision and values as a filter for their decisions. - Physical Evidence - The values will be displayed prominently. Student achievements and projects celebrated in ways that reflect the school's aims. Student Outcomes: Attendance and Engagement: Increased student attendance and participation in extracurricular activities. Behaviour and Discipline: A decrease in behavioural issues and an increase in positive, prosocial behaviours among pupils Academic Performance: improved academic performance			
QI 1.5 Management of Resource		QI 1.3 Leadership of Change		QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement
Implementation/Actions	Time Resource	Who?	When?	Progress
1- Further develop the use of our Values across the school through engagement activities. Continue to use the core values to deliver key messages to all pupils and staff through communication.		Tom Magowan	June 2026	



Assess whether pupils know what the key values are and be confident in upholding them. Staff refer to values regularly throughout lessons. • Values are embedded into the policy development to ensure consistency including. • Celebrating Success Policy • Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy • Learning and Teaching Policy				
2- Implement Self-Evaluation Policy. The newly updated policy and approach to self-evaluation will be fully implemented by all departments. • Robust improvement meetings will take place at the start of the academic year • Evaluation will inform decision making for improvement planning in all departments. There will be a strong ethos of sharing good practice and this will be displayed on the Self-evaluation Site for staff access. • Self-evaluation will be continuous, recorded and acted upon across the school. There will be a focus on gathering views from pupils, parents, and staff. Addition of 'Use of data' into Self-Evaluation Policy. More robust use of data to inform improvement planning including implementation of HC tracking module. Agreed actions on Insight data and robust approach to use of SNSA/MIDYIS and tracking data. Data calendar to be compiled to inform attainment meetings and School Improvement Planning.		Tom Magowan/Deirdre Murray	December 2025	
3- Professional learning activities for all staff will be clearly linked to the Values and results of self-evaluation and identified areas for improvement.	Meetings of working groups 5 x 1 hr for each group. Staff training 4 x 1 hour CPD events	Tom Magowan	June 2026	



• Leadership opportunities are made available for staff through working groups, whole school CPD and departmental opportunities. These will be linked to staff needs and the result of self-evaluation. • Staff are informed and encouraged to participate in professional reading and professional learning to develop skills and gain experience. • We will continue to create opportunities for consultation and professional dialogue through ELT and staff meetings. • Working groups/individuals will be encouraged to share good practice through CPD sessions.	Improvement meetings 3 x 1 hour per dept			
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Improvement Priority 2 Action Plan:	2 - Aspiration QI 2.3 Teaching and Learning. - Foster a culture of professional growth where all staff are empowered to refine their teaching practice, leading to improved outcomes for all learners.		Lead: Deirdre Murray	
Please detail the information/data which has prompted this work:				
Feedback from our own self-evaluation has highlighted the need to have more focus on specific improvement areas of learning, teaching and assessment. This aligns with the Highland Council Education Priorities of raising attainment.				
Expected outcomes:	Measures:		QI 2.3	When? Who? See below
Improved Academic Performance: This is the most direct and measurable outcome. Better teaching practices, such as evidence-based instruction, formative assessment, and targeted interventions should lead to higher test scores and overall academic achievement. Reduced Learner Gaps: By using data to identify and address individual student needs, improved teaching will narrow the achievement gap between different student groups, ensuring all learners have an opportunity to succeed. Increased Student Engagement and Motivation: When teaching is high-quality and relevant, pupils will be more engaged in their lessons. A supportive and well-managed classroom environment will reduces stress and encourage students to participate, ask questions, and take academic risks. Pupils will have a "can-do" attitude.	• Stakeholder Surveys • Academic performance -Insight/SQA • Pupil focus Groups • Tracking and Monitoring • Pupil attendance in classes -Truancy rates • Health and wellbeing survey. • Tracking of behaviour • EPraise – Awards system			
QI 1.5 Management of Resource		QI 1.3 Leadership of Change		QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement
Implementation/Actions	Time Resource	Who?	When?	Progress

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Action 1: Implement Tier 1 Peer Observation Cycle All staff to complete a minimum of two reciprocal peer observations per academic year within their subject or faculty. Feedback will be logged in a shared professional learning journal.	Activities arising from the SIP - Time required to complete identified tasks, which may include whole school activity, working groups and individual time.	Hheads of Faculty/Subject Leaders	Term 1: Observation pairs/groups established. Term 2: First observation cycle completed. Term 3: Second observation cycle completed.	
Action 2: Introduce a Structured Whole-School Observation Programme The Senior Management Team (SMT) will conduct a targeted cycle of observations based on specific HGIOS quality indicators and CfE capacities. The focus will be on sharing best practice across the school.		Senior Management Team (SMT)	Term 1: Observation focus: "Confident Individuals" and "Successful Learners". Term 2: Observation focus: "Effective Contributors" and "Responsible Citizens". Term 3: Observation focus: Progress and attainment across the school.	
Action 3: Develop Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) Create and facilitate monthly or termly professional learning communities (PLCs) where teachers can collaborate, share resources, and discuss feedback from observations. These sessions will be a key forum for addressing the feedback from Tier 1 and 2 observations.		DHT L&T		
Action 4: Establish a Learner Feedback Forum Create a formal, regular forum (e.g., Learner Council, focus groups) for learners to provide direct feedback on the learning and teaching policy and its implementation. This ensures their voices are central to our improvement process.		Senior Management Team, Learner Council Representatives	Term 1: Learner forum established, and terms of reference agreed upon. Ongoing: Regular meetings to discuss learning and teaching.	



			Term 3: Learner feedback report presented to the Senior Management Team.	
Action 5: Embed a Professional Review and Development (PRD) Link Ensure that the outcomes and action points from all tiers of the observation framework are directly linked to each teacher's individual Professional Review and Development plan.		All Teaching Staff and Line Managers	Ongoing: Teachers to update their PRD plans throughout the year with insights from observations. Term 3: Formal PRD review meeting for all staff.	
Action 6: Evaluate and Report on Impact The SMT will use quantitative and qualitative data (e.g., learner attainment, survey data, feedback logs) to evaluate the impact of the observation framework on teaching and learning. A report will be shared with all staff.		Senior Management Team (SMT)	End of Term 3	



Improvement Priority 3 Action Plan:	Aspiration (QI 3.2) Raising attainment and achievement. Increased Creativity and Employability.	Lead: Robert Dunsmuir		
Please detail the information/data which has prompted this work:				
We need to continue improving on positive destinations for all young people. Over 50% of young people at Alness go into the world of work. We want to focus on our skills-based learning to better prepare pupils for life, not just for exams. Employability skills go beyond just a student's career prospects. They include a range of personal qualities and attributes like communication, teamwork, and self-management. These are essential for navigating the complexities of modern work and life. We want to prioritise these skills so that we are not just preparing students for a job, but for a successful and fulfilling career.				
Expected outcomes: • Maximise opportunities for our children and young people through our curriculum. • Pupils as learners will experience a curriculum through which they learn about the world of work and job possibilities, and which makes clear the strengths and skills needed to take advantage of these opportunities. • Staff having knowledge of and utilising alternative courses to provide achievement opportunities for pupils. • Staff will work with a range of partners including parents/carers, employers, and other practitioners to design and deliver an appropriate personalised curriculum that takes account of the individual needs of pupils. • Sustained input from external partners to support curriculum delivery. • Businesses to offer positive destination advice and give pupils greater opportunity to engage with employers directly. • Pupils across the school will have opportunities to explore and develop their understanding and experience of vocational pathways/potential	Measures: Tracking data – Pupil Interventions impact Stakeholder Surveys Insight – Positive Destinations Pupil Engagement - Attendance Increased attainment in S5/6 – total tariff points	QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement/securing children's progress	When? Who? See below	



destinations and careers, across curricular areas and beyond. • Pupils will be better able to make informed decision regarding their transition to a positive destination. • Consistent approach to recognising positive achievement that all stakeholders engage with.									
QI 1.5 Management of Resource					QI 1.3 Leadership of Change		QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement		
Implementation/Actions		Time Resource		Who?		When?		Progress	
Action 1 Enhance Partnership Working DHT to build on existing partnership relationships and foster new partnerships to enhance the offering to all pupils. Student tracker to be used to track interventions. Survey pupils involved in interventions and track progress.		Activities arising from the SIP - Time required to complete identified tasks, which may include whole school activity, working groups and individual time.		DHT, Guidance and ASN staff		Ongoing			
Action 2 Integrate Creativity into the Curriculum Embed creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills in all subjects, not just the arts. This involves moving away from rote memorisation and toward project-based learning. Higher student engagement in creative projects, increased participation in arts and innovation-focused extracurricular activities, and positive feedback from student surveys on their creative confidence.				DHT, DYW working group		End of Term 2			
Action 3 Enhance Employability Skills Directly link classroom learning to real-world applications and future careers. This is about building a bridge between education and the workforce. Continue to develop partnerships with local businesses and industries to offer work experience, mentorships, and quest				DHT, GT, DYW co-ordinator, DYW PSA, SDS. Young enterprise group CB		Term 1 Access the Unifrog platform to allow pupils to better plan and explore 16+ options.			



speaker sessions. Review and update the curriculum to include explicit teaching of "soft skills" such as communication, teamwork, resilience, and digital literacy. Introduce Employability SQA qualification for S4 DYW lessons.				
Improved academic results in key subjects, including an increase in the number of students achieving top grades. Introduce a recognition and reward system that celebrates not only academic success but also creative efforts, entrepreneurial spirit, and personal growth. Utilise data analysis to identify attainment gaps and target interventions for specific groups or individual students who require additional support to reach their goals.		SMT, Faculty Heads	Ongoing	



Improvement Priority 4 Action Plan:	Compassion Enhance our approaches to tracking, monitoring and evaluating Wellbeing, Equalities & Inclusion.	Lead: Donald Macrae		
Please detail the information/data which has prompted this work:				
<u>Students</u> Verbal feedback in focus groups stated that whilst there have been improvements, they would like to feel more included in school activities and a desire to improve this. The Rights Respecting School Award was discussed but needs to be promoted.				
<u>Parents</u> Feedback from parents on the need to improve the level of support around the child. Particular focus on Dyslexia.				
<u>Staff</u> Feedback from staff on improving class attendance by students, Student behaviour around the school, the PSE programme.				
<u>Whole School</u> School attendance in session 24/25 was 83%. School partnership tracking commenced last session 14 activities with 6 partners but requires further improvement / enhancement.				
Expected outcomes:	Measures:	QI	When? Who?	
Expected outcomes: <u>Students</u> Feedback reporting improvements in student inclusion, included in school activities and being listened to. The Rights Respecting School Award being visible.	School based student surveys Planet Youth Surveys School attendance data Assembly calendar Increased partnership working Progress on Dyslexia Friendly school	QI 3.1 Wellbeing, equality & inclusion Themes: Wellbeing; fulfilment of statutory duties; inclusion and equality.	September onwards - Planet Youth	
<u>Parents</u> Feedback from parents to report student support and approaches to supporting students/parents with dyslexia has improved.	Student Council Student leadership School exclusion data Parent surveys Partnership surveys PSE Programme PPR	QI 2.4 Personalised Support Themes: Universal support; targeted support; removal of potential barriers to learning.	Weekly/Monthly review - School Attendance team	
<u>Staff</u> Improving class attendance, Curriculum Review, Student behaviour around the school, the PSE programme.			August onwards - ASN Team	
			Pupil Council - to meet twice a term	



		QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement. QI 2.7. (Partnerships) Themes: The development and promotion of partnerships; collaborative learning and improvement; impact on learners.	SLT	
QI 1.5 Management of Resource		QI 1.3 Leadership of Change	QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	
Implementation/Actions	Time Resource	Who?	When?	Progress
Attendance team assemble and meet weekly/monthly with a targeted focus on improving attendance along with universal support to support families	Weekly, 1 hour meetings Monthly review meeting with support team.	D Macrae / YSO / Family Liaison Worker/ School staff	Weekly / Monthly	
Create a working group to focus on achieving the Bronze RRSA	Working group to meet termly. Termly assembly input Staff meetings	Working Group	Termly	
To provide opportunities for student voices to be collated / listened to and acted upon.	Meet 1 hour twice a term	Students from each year group that make up the Student Voice.	Termly	
Implementation of Planet Youth Survey (S3 + S4) and creation of action plan	15 hours over the school year	R Dunsmuir + MK Taylor Planet Youth	Survey in September	
To provide senior students with the opportunity to take on leadership opportunities across the school.	Weekly and twice termly as team	Student leadership Team + SLT	Weekly and twice termly as team	
To create an effective and shared School Assemblies programme that provides varied opportunities to inform	2 Year Group and 2 house group	SLT / Support Team	During term time.	

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students of school wide initiatives, partner engagement and self-evaluation exercises.	assemblies every term			
PSE Review of S1-S3	8 hours built into student support meetings over the year	Student Support Team	Inservice Day / Support meetings	
To improve the attainment, achievement and wellbeing outcomes of students with dyslexia / Literacy difficulties. To work towards a dyslexia Friendly School	12 hours over the year	Student Support Team Whole school	Dept. Meetings / class time (small group/ 1:1)	
Improving student learning experience in the classroom with a focus on providing effective and targeted support for Students with additional support needs.	20 Hours	Student Support Team - ASN	Identified class time	

