

Braes High School



Standards and Quality Report

Session 2020-2021



Vision, Aims and Values

Our vision at Braes is to ensure that every pupil in our care feels valued, respected and challenged. Braes High School aims to be a school of the highest quality, providing an education which is appropriate yet challenging to all of our young people. As part of our ongoing self-evaluation we continue to develop and refine our courses and curriculum to ensure our young people are well prepared with the skills required for our ever changing world of work.

Our motto "Build Respect and Earn Success - Be Part of It!" defines the school and remains significant in building our school vision and ethos which continues to flourish. Through our commitment to restorative practice, we build respectful relationships and encourage hard work in order to gain success. Our pupils fully immerse themselves in the wide and vast ranging opportunities available - both in school and within the community.

We are certain that by developing skills - both academic and personal - that our young people will thrive throughout and beyond their school years at Braes High School.



School Context

Braes High School is a six year comprehensive school serving the communities of Avonbridge; California; Standburn; Maddiston; Shieldhill and Wallacestone. Our school roll is approximately 1015 pupils. We have a thriving Pupil Council, Parent Council and an association from parents and friends entitled Friends at Braes (FAB) who fundraise and support us at school events. We are incredibly proud of the strong parental links we have established and continue to strengthen these year on year. Given the current circumstances, the focus of Falkirk Council Children's Services' planning has been on recovery, with specific focus on the three priority areas below:

Priority 1:

Wellbeing

Priority 2:

Moving Learning Forward

Priority 3:

Transitions

While the rationale for focusing on Recovery is still evident, we are clear that our school must continue to look forward, be ambitious and continually seek to improve further. This view is based on the recognition that our young people in school deserve no less than this, and that we as colleagues wish continue our professional development.

Key priorities for improvement planning 2021-22

What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

As a school committed to critical reflection, with a well-established cycle of school improvement and self-evaluation activity, we are confident in our ability to continually build on and enhance the experiences and outcomes for our young people. These processes, combined with our investment in professional learning for all those who work with young people in our school give succor to this assertion. Similarly, the combination of quantitative data outlining continuing improvements in the outcomes for our learners, our analysis of areas in which we can improve further, and qualitative observations from an array of evidence sources, also supports our belief in our capacity to develop further as a school. In addition, the contributions of those who work with us, colleagues from our local authority and Education Scotland, parents/carers and community partners reinforces our aspiration to continually develop. Finally, the positive ethos within our school, resting heavily on the positive attitudes of our pupils, allows us to conclude that we have the ingredients necessary to ensure the young people of Braes High School grow and learn in an ambitious and critically reflective school.

NIF Quality Indicators

Quality Indicator	School self-evaluation	Inspection evaluation
1.3 Leadership of Change	5	
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	5	
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	5	
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	5	



Priority 1 - Wellbeing

NIF Priority - School Leadership, Teacher Professionalism, Parental Engagement, Assessment of Children's Progress, School Improvement, Performance Information

HGIOS4 QIs – 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 1.2, 1.3

Progress and Impact

1. Relaunch of Rights Respecting Schools activity

Ensuring the principles of RRS and the vision and values of Braes were central to the re-launching of our in-school provision in August 2020, focussing on issues of equity and pupil leadership. The RRS Ambassadors worked in a collegiate fashion alongside others to launch the Festival of Kindness. Work was undertaken to support local and nearby communities thus:

- Falkirk Foodbank
- Onwards & Upwards – Pop-Up Shop
- Christmas Present Drive

RRS Ambassadors and Media Leaders created a video for the newly created Falkirk Council's CYP Leadership Programme, focusing on the importance of pupil leadership and the UNCRC. This work is part of Falkirk Council's *Learning for Sustainability* agenda. In addition, RRS Lead in Braes, Fiona Malcolm, will now work with Falkirk Council Children's Services to broaden awareness of RRS and the UNCRC, supporting fellow professionals in their developments in this area.

2. Reintroduction of opportunities for achievement

Recognising the importance of ensuring our young people are able to develop, thrive and enjoy learning and progress in a variety of different arena, significant emphasis was placed on ensuring that a wide array of opportunities for wider achievement were available to pupil on their return to school in August. Whilst restrictions and procedures had to be taken into account, staff and pupils worked together to ensure young people were able to pursue their interests and talents in sporting, cultural and community-based activities across the session.

For example, as guidance was developed across the session, young people participated in a wide range of sporting activities, including basketball, rugby, trampolining, football, general fitness sessions and multi-sport activities. Acknowledging that our young people have a wide range of interests, a range of non-sporting activities was also a crucial part of our school recovery programme.

Largely, these activities focused on re-establishing the school's positive ethos, and our key value of respect. For example, the leadership shown by the pupil-led Equalities group in promoting events and awareness of anti-discrimination issues was notable. Aply supporting this emphasis on imbuing a strong sense of citizenship among Braes pupils, was the work of the Rights Respecting Schools group, and our Eco/Fairtrade group, which promoted ecological awareness and co-ordinated community litter picks in the local area.

In addition, recognising the need for bespoke support for particular young people, and the collegiate interest of Braes pupils in supporting one another, our Young Carers Group restarted well, while a member of staff with a particular interest in raising awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences instituted a group focused on the 'Science of Wellbeing'. Latterly, our pupils have had the opportunity to work with our new school based Police Officer in the newly formed Braes Police Youth Volunteers, again allowing them to demonstrate their commitment to others and their local community.

This theme was further enhanced through the work of Braes Youth Theatre, who although unable to conduct in-person performances, took to the virtual stage to deliver powerful performances themed around issues of equality, gender and anti-discrimination, well appreciated by online audiences.

Developing opportunities for pupil leadership was also a significant focus in our recovery. Of note has been the work of the Junior Pupil Leadership Captains, who have worked creatively to support their school community despite the circumstances. For example, their work in developing reflections and advice on their transition experiences, and lockdown experiences, was borne of an understanding that the incoming S1 for session 2020/21 would not have the 'normal' transition experience.

This empathetic approach was echoed by the work of the Pupil Council, who trained their focus on supporting the recovery of the school community. As well as contributing to the evolution of arrangements to support the reopening of school in line with procedures, the Pupil Council continued to have a strong voice in supporting school and local authority developments. Among these achievements were :

- Designing a new Pupil Council logo
- Initiating a change to the school day for junior pupils
- Working with staff to contribute to the planning for school Interhouse Events
- Contributing ideas for the Junior Award Ceremony
- Consulting with the Senior Management Team on improvements needed in and around school and agreeing budget spending
- Purchasing outdoor furniture for pupil use at interval and lunch
- Consulting with Falkirk Council on the new GIRFEC logo
- Contributing funds to the new Zebra crossing.

Opportunities for wider achievement also took into account the need to continue to progress our young people's academic and curricular learning. Therefore, activities such as the Numeracy Group, the STEM Leaders group, the Media group played a significant role in stimulating interest and learning in these areas, while the re-establishment of a variety of reading groups in our school library helped invigorate the drive to further establish a 'reading culture' across the school, evidenced by the achievement of accreditation from the Scottish Book Trust as a silver level Reading School.

In our recovery plan, the emphasis has been on three main aims ; physical safety, health and wellbeing and progressing learning./ The quick, well promoted and consistent nature of this programme of wider achievement activity has been integral to rebuilding our school's identity and ethos. This is evidenced clearly by multiple examples of pupil leadership, positive rapport between staff and pupils, participation of young people in such activity, the extent to which young people volunteer to be involved in such pursuits, and the overall positive atmosphere and ethos within the school.

3. Talk to Me re-launch

Talk to Me, developed in partnership with NHS Forth Valley, is an early intervention mental health programme that aims to reduce risk and identifies Braes High School as a community where students and staff can talk freely and find support with any mental health concerns.

Post COVID and with an awareness of the impact of lockdowns and restrictions on young people, we are working to adapt and focus our training and support, for staff, parents and carers, and pupil volunteers, to ensure that we as a community possess the skills to support our young people and work together to promote positive mental health.

4. MVP re-launch

A major part of our ongoing drive with wider achievement includes the MVP (Mentors in Violence Protection) course. We re-launched this course at the start of the academic session.

- 18 Pupils trained when they returned to school in August 2020
- Pupils agreed it was key that they got into classes with their peers due to isolation and/or extended periods in possibly unsafe environments through lockdown
- Pupils delivered lessons to S1s in person (as this was believed to be vital in supporting younger pupils) though had to adapt lessons to ensure they could attend classes. This meant they had to be creative and adapt lessons well
- Mentors joined S1 Tutor Groups on Teams to be there in case someone needed to chat to them
- Positive impact on mentors as they still gained the chance to develop leadership skills and build on confidence from leading lessons to their peers. Had to learn to adapt and be creative as no tasks could be hands on due to COVID restrictions.
- All Mentors managed to achieve their leadership qualifications

6. Engagement and input of parent/carer groups

Having a strong parent/carer voice helping drive and shape developments in Braes High School has been a long-term focus. Although inevitably this session, our Parent Council focused in part on how the school reopened, instituted mitigations, and dealt with modifications to learning provision as the session progressed, the voice of parents/carers has helped influence school strategy in many different ways too. The impact of this has been evident in the focus of the Parent Council on matters concerning the curriculum, family learning and wellbeing.

For example, the Parent Council worked alongside a Braes teacher to produce a guide for parents/carers outlining the content, approaches to assessment, learning and teaching of courses within the broad, general education. The views and advice of the Parent Council were invaluable in ensuring the final version was accessible, clearly organised and designed to meet the needs of parents/carers.

Further impact of the Parent Council can be seen in their liaison with pupil groups. With Pupil Council members frequently attending Parent Council meetings, our pupils have benefited from the advice and encouragement of parents/carers within the group. Such is this partnership that the Parent Council have intimated finding towards projects of the Pupil's Council's choice. Likewise, the Parent Council met with pupil Digital Leaders, offering advice and positive commentary on their efforts, particularly on the work of pupils in producing 'troubleshooting' guides for families in the use of learning technology.

Another example of Parent Council impact would be their engagement with staff on teaching methodology and professional learning. Given the restricted circumstances within classrooms and learning spaces, the need to adopt a reflective and positive approach to how we deliver effective and engaging learning and teaching was evident. Consequently, Braes staff developed a suite of online professional learning inputs focusing on areas such as the delivery of feedback to learners, the effective use of IT, and ensuring active learning. Sharing this with parents/carers helped develop the programme further, as well as instilling confidence in the parent body that a constructive approach was being taken by staff, despite the apparent limitations on interaction in the classroom.

Again, the Parent Council can be seen to have impacted positively on our school's recovery via their input into discussions on how we can supporting pupils in dealing with adverse childhood experiences. Such was the interest of parents/carers in this following initial engagement with staff, that a further information session was created and made available on the school's YouTube channel for parents/carers to support family learning and awareness in this area.

A further pivotal area where the Parent Council has impacted on school recovery has been in advising on what works best for parents/carers in supporting home learning. Cognisant of the growing effective use of Microsoft Teams, the decision was taken after consultation with the Parent Council on this becoming the primary forum for the setting and overview of home learning activities. Points made by the Parent Council on the most workable approaches for families were noted and included in our revised approach.

Further engagement took place between our Parent Council and young people, when senior pupils attended to offer their views on the support available to pupils as they tackled the build up to SQA assessments. Being able to eloquently outline their views, feelings and confidence in dealing with the Alternative Certification Model, the parent body was able to take confidence from the clarity the young people had in their thinking and planning, giving reassurance to parents/carers.

A further significant develop in which parents/carers played an important role was in the roll-out of virtual parents' evenings. By participating in a trial of the software involved, parents/carers were able to offer their views on how best to structure such events, with positive feedback on the experience coming thereafter. Again, having parents/carers involved at the inception of such a development paid dividends in terms of its tailoring to meet their needs.

Crucial to parents/carers was the school's emphasis as part of our recovery on mental health and wellbeing. This was a key theme returned to throughout the session with the Parent Council, emphasising the multitude of supports available to pupils.

Although only a selection, and not including the significant focus that dealing with the current situation Parent Council discussions obviously had, the impact of the Parent Council on the ongoing strategic development is evident.

8. Re-launch of Best of You base & The Shore

During school closure the Pupil Support Team continued to support Health and Wellbeing and learning by:

- Use of 1:1 MS Teams with Key Pupils to facilitate regular communication and check-ins
- Regular Wellbeing checks using the SHANARI indicators via a MS Form
- Virtual Best of You Base
-

The data gathered from these three approaches facilitated planning and implementation of our recovery plan for the Best of You Base, The Shore, in-class support and targeted interventions for our most vulnerable pupils on their return to school.

Best of You Base

Reduced numbers due to social distancing, additional spaces used where required (Family Learning Room, Mrs White's Office)

- Focus on mental health and wellbeing
- Support with classwork and completion of SQA assessments
- Strong communication with staff across school regarding pupil plans

The Shore

- Focus on autism-friendly safe space for pupils struggling with return to school
- Quiet space

- Individualised pupil plans shared via OTB
- Regular contact with families regarding progress and planned return to classes

In-class Support

- Case Conferences held throughout lockdown to keep teachers updated on pupil needs ensuring relevant strategies implemented as soon as pupils returned to school
- SfLAs allocated to support SQA Assessments as priority

Targeted Interventions

- Seasons for Growth group implemented upon return to school
- Reading recovery programme initiated with pupils requiring this
- Break and lunchtime space offered in HWB room, supported by Pupil Support Staff
- MS Teams Meetings with parents and partner agencies where required
- Pupils most at risk of not achieving qualifications or a positive destination targeted through Best of You Base and The Shore and an additional member of staff appointed to support these pupils to progress

9. Reintroduction of House identity activities

Our motto in Braes High School encourages young people to “Be Part Of It” and our House System forms an important part of this ethos. Young people are placed within one of four Houses; Campsie, Lomond, Ochil and Pentland and remain with this House throughout their time in school. In previous sessions we have facilitated a strong interhouse competition with young people representing their House in a wide range of activities, encouraged and supported by House Captains, our pupil leaders. Following a COVID enforced sabbatical, we are keen to revitalise our interhouse competition this session by providing a programme of diverse and inclusive activities with input from across our school community, created and implemented by each of our Departments or Faculty areas.

10. Onwards and Upwards – input with specific families/general support for all

Onwards & Upwards at Braes addresses the poverty related attainment gap by supporting our young people and their families in both targeted and universal ways. Our focus this session has been on recovery and providing support for families as we meet the challenges of learning through COVID-19. Raising attainment and increasing opportunities for our learners is at the heart of everything we do.

This year we focused on increasing awareness within our school community around the cost of the school day and of the supports available in school to maximise income for families. As well as creating a dedicated COSD section of the school website we have hosted pop-up shops, provided Braes Festive Parcels to those in need, provided Braes Backpacks full of school resources to pupils in our new S1 and developed an online programme of Family Learning that includes our highly successful Braes Slow Cooker Project. With a focus on closing the gap in the classroom our young people have been supported in Targeted Attainment Groups with dedicated Year Leads and we have provided a CLPL programme for all staff focused on closing the gap. It has been encouraging to see this work identified as effective practice by the Child Poverty Action Group.

11. Staff wellbeing

Good staff health and wellbeing promotes positivity, motivation and directly impacts on the wellbeing and attainment of our pupils. We know that we must ensure staff are provided with an environment and opportunities that encourage and enable them to lead healthy lives and make choices that support their own wellbeing. It is more important than ever, post COVID, that our workplace fosters an environment that supports staff to do this.

Therefore, throughout the session, staff wellbeing was supported by maintaining an open channel of communication between staff in the school community, recognising the time required for staff to plan and develop learning resources,, directing staff towards resources and information about specific aspects of H&WB, for example promoting self-confidence, resilience and coping skills and providing opportunities for staff to share good practice focussed on “time saving” or “what worked well” strategies.

Evidence of the impact of these strategies could be seen in the wide range of wider achievement opportunities available for young people provided by staff, the teamwork demonstrated when handling the introduction of online learning and the Alternative Certification Model, and the willingness if staff to participate voluntarily in professional learning activity.

We to support staff wellbeing in relation to their role in school by

- Maintaining an open channel of communication between staff in the school community
- Recognising the time required for staff to plan and develop learning resources
- Directing staff towards resources and information about specific aspects of H&WB, for example promoting self-confidence, resilience and coping skills
- Providing opportunities for staff to share good practice focussed on “time saving” or “what worked well” strategies

12. Recognising Achievement and Celebrating Success

Over the past three sessions, we have been working to improve our approach to tracking, recognising and celebrating pupil achievements. As well as hosting Junior, Senior, Sports and Oscar Award Ceremonies, we collect termly data from pupils regarding achievements they have gained outside of school. We also recognise and celebrate achievements through our fortnightly Sway newsletter and termly Braes Bulletin.

For 2021 we re-branded and re-launched our Junior Awards Ceremony. A full consultation began as far back as September with S1-3 pupils, staff from across every Faculty, and parents/carers. Input from our parent council has been central to this. Whilst the feedback was overwhelmingly positive and recognised ‘Celebrating Success’ as a key strength of Braes High School, our staff working group identified how we could do even more through our Awards Ceremony. We planned to recognise academic achievements whilst broadening recognition for personal and wider achievement. With a range of awards on offer pupils could be nominated in a variety of ways; by their class teachers, their peers or families, or by filling out their own application. On the night of the Awards Ceremony, delivered virtually, we recognised all of our award winners individually through personalised slides and pupil videos. Additionally, we were very fortunate to have a number of ‘special guests’, including Judy Murray, to further inspire our young people and congratulate them for their efforts. The feedback since the awards ceremony has been positive and further showcased the talents of our young people and the strength of our school community.

13. Re-engagement with Community Councils

Acknowledging the working relationships built up with our local Community Councils, and the important role they play serving our disparate local communities, it was important for our community’s recovery that we re-established connections. As a result, the school has liaised with each of our Community Councils on a fortnightly basis, ensuring they have the most up to date information about the achievements of our young people, ongoing strategic development and how the school is handling the current circumstances. Although each individual

Community Council has carried on its activity in different ways at this time, this has ensured the more active of these groups have been able to be informed and part of the school recovery. Further exemplification of this comes from the Reddingmurhead and Wallacestone Community Council who instituted an award to the Awards Ceremony, the recipient of which would be chosen by our Pupil Council.

Next Steps

- **Continue to broaden awareness of RRS and UNCRC authority wide**
- **Further develop wider achievement opportunities and celebrate success therein**
- **Continue to develop our MVP and Talk to Me programmes**
- **Continue to work closely with families to grow engagement and ensure equity across the community**
- **Continue to develop strategies in order to further support pupil/family/staff health and wellbeing**

Moving Learning Forward

NIF Priority - School Leadership, Teacher Professionalism, Parental Engagement, Assessment of Children's Progress, School Improvement, Performance Information

HGIOS4 QIs – 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 1.5, 1.2, 1.3, 3.2

1. Learning and teaching – delivering **engaging learning** in our current circumstances, through professional learning and practitioner enquiry

CLPL

In response to the pandemic, we adapted our in-house CLPL programme and delivered it virtually. Braes has always had a healthy programme of CLPL and we wanted to ensure this continued. Term 1 our programme focused on blended learning approaches. We consulted with staff about their experiences of blended learning and 8 members of staff volunteered to offer their expertise in a variety of topic areas e.g. Active Learning in a Virtual Setting, Effective Feedback and Developing Independent Learners. The sessions were delivered virtually and allowed for professional dialogue to continue despite the circumstances. These sessions were recorded and uploaded to our staff CLPL team's page for any staff member who was unable to attend the live session. Weekly feedback from pupils and staff conveyed that these sessions had a positive impact on the learning and teaching taking place and the engagement of our pupils. Staff overall rated the effectiveness of the programme 4.6/5 and an average of 30 staff attended each session.

Term 2 focused on Closing the Attainment Gap by working closely with our Onwards and Upwards team. Moving forward, our next programme will focus on engagement and challenge in the classroom and our recovery from Covid -19.

Classroom

Live lessons on Teams ensured that learning and teaching could continue successfully during the difficult circumstances. Our learners commented that the structure of online lessons allowed them to remain focused and participate fully in lessons. We employed a range of strategies during blended learning to engage our learners. We created and adapted resources and shared these with members of our faculties to ensure a consistent approach to learning e.g. narrated PowerPoint, Microsoft forms as a form of timed assessment etc.

We ensured our learners were actively engaged by using a variety of digital resources e.g. blooket, padlet and mentimeter. Microsoft Teams offered many useful functions to track and monitor progress, give feedback and recognise success. E.g. praise function, assignments etc.

2. Recovery of learning Literacy, Numeracy, BGE progress, Senior phase progress

As we returned to face to face teaching in April 2021 after the easing of Covid restrictions, we were looking at a range of strategies to help build on young peoples' online learning and ensure that the disruption had minimal long-term impact on their ability to maximise potential.

Examples of such strategies are:

- Faculty Heads have been looking at their courses to ensure that pupils are covering what they need for the next steps of their learning, in other words, the key building blocks at every stage in the curriculum
- Faculty Heads reported that on return to class teaching in April, they were ahead with the teaching of their courses and as such, planned to use the time now in classes to address the areas which young people are less confident on and are working with small groups to consolidate

- Additional supports will be offered to ensure our young people are not disadvantaged e.g. supported study, peer supports, reading weeks, one-to-one tutoring, esgoil, online resources
- Device provision – the Connected Falkirk roll out of iPads will mean that all pupils in the Broad General Education (S1-S3) will have their iPad before summer and the seniors will be issued their iPad on return to school in August.

However, our rigorous tracking and monitoring of pupil progress indicates that our pupils are continuing to progress well and with our recovery plans, we are confident our young people will be successful in the senior phase.

CfE snapshot from latest tracking point	Braes High School June 2021
--	------------------------------------

Year	Pupil roll	% on track/ahead Reading	% on track/ahead Writing	% on track/ahead L & T	% on track/ahead Numeracy
S1	195	81%	86%	71%	83%
S2	187	98%	96%	95%	94%
S3	178	94%	94%	94%	99%

S1
Currently, of the 195 pupils, 94% are at level 2 silver or better for Literacy. Similarly, for Numeracy, 94%. Across all of the curricular areas, we have 8 pupils currently not working at level 2.

S2
Currently, of the 187 pupils, 95% are at level 3 bronze or better for Literacy. Similarly, for Numeracy, 91% are at level 3 bronze or better.

S3
Currently, of the 178 pupils, 94% are level 3 silver or better for all aspects of Literacy and 98% are at level 3 silver or better for Numeracy.

Senior Phase

We have been continuously improving attainment in literacy and numeracy, outperforming our virtual comparator and Falkirk Council. We can see from the figures below, the percentage of candidates attaining Level 4 and Level 5 has steadily improved over the past three years.

DisplayName	Year	% Level 4 L&N	% Level 5 L&N	No in Cohort
Braes High School	2021			
Braes High School	2020	100	95.76	165
Virtual Comparator	2020	92.06	77.09	1650
Falkirk	2020	96.54	82.13	1416
Braes High School	2019	98.64	93.88	147
Virtual Comparator	2019	92.04	73.74	1470
Falkirk	2019	95.47	75.29	1368
Braes High School	2018	98.36	90.71	183
Virtual Comparator	2018	94.26	76.72	1830
Falkirk	2018	95.62	76.91	1347

National Qualifications only

Whole-school picture - S4 (based on S4 cohort of 170 pupils)

% Measure	Actual 2021	Actual 2020	Actual 2019	Actual 2018	Actual 2017
5 at SCQF Level 5 or more	63	63	49	56	34
5 at SCQF Level 4 or more	97	89	92	84	88
5 at SCQF Level 3 or more	98	95	96	90	89

*CS being home schooled but is coming in on Mon afternoons to complete assessments

Whole school picture - S5 (based on S4 cohort of 186 pupils)

% Measure	Actual 2021	Actual 2020	Actual 2019	Actual 2018	Actual 2017
5 at SCQF Level 6 or more	30	23	24	16	18
3 at SCQF Level 6 or more	63	49	46	34	39
1 at SCQF Level 6 or more	76	65	64	63	64

- An additional 5 young people are doing 4@L6 and Yr1 FA, taking it to 46%
- 4 pupils have no Highers

Whole school picture - S6 (based on S4 cohort of 186 pupils)

% Measure	Estimate 2021	Actual 2020	Actual 2019	Actual 2018	Actual 2017
1 at SCQF Level 7 or more	25	17	16	22	26
5 at SCQF Level 6 or more	44	42	29	36	38
3 at SCQF Level 6 or more	54	53	46	51	49

3. Redesign of parents' evenings & reconfiguration of Tracking calendar

In response to Covid and the necessary restricted access to school buildings, we introduced virtual parents' evenings for all year groups. It became clear in November 2020 that in order to deliver our usual standard of tracking and monitoring for pupils and parents, we would need to amend our calendar to facilitate the introduction of this "virtual" approach.

This allowed us to carry out training sessions for parents and staff prior to running our virtual evenings during lockdown from January to March 2021. The feedback from these events has been extremely positive with comments such as:

"We were extremely impressed with Parents' Night. It was very efficient and went like clockwork for us"

"It was great knowing exactly when your appointment would start and not having to rush from one teacher to the next and then potentially having to queue when you got there. I'm not the best with IT but it was really simple to use, from the booking process all the way through to joining the appointments on the day"

4. Online Family Learning resources

Findings from a whole school parent/carer survey suggested there could be more universal support for Family Learning within the school. A staff-led Family Learning Working Group identified curricular areas and skills for each department as a focus for these resources. Each department had a target of producing one Family learning video by Christmas 2020. We now have 15 curricular resources in our Family Learning YouTube playlist.

A series of iMovie professional learning sessions was delivered for staff to support colleagues in creating their own home learning videos. A positive impact was evident from the views of parents/carers and pupils. Viewing statistics from YouTube videos gave further positive evidence. This will be an ongoing task for faculties and it's hoped to become a regular platform for our Family Learning resources for BGE and certificated subjects as an accessible resource for all.

5. Digital learning – capitalising on new skills and experience

Over the past five sessions, staff have demonstrated a real commitment towards building their own capacity with using digital technologies to enhance learning and teaching. Despite a further school closure due to Covid-19, we were fully equipped to support our young people and families with resources and support. Our strategic Blended and Home Learning planning allowed for a seamless transition from in-school learning to a home-learning whereby young people experienced as close to a normal school curriculum as possible. Our objective and strategy was to build staff capacity through implementation of a clear policy and expectations aligned with authority and Education Scotland guidance; enhance staff CPD to improve pupil experience within an online classroom and to remove barriers to home and blended learning. As a result of the work and progress made with improving Digital Learning, all staff are now making use of technology to support learning at home and further embed these skills into their classroom practice.

Our suite of digital professional learning opportunities included a Blended Learning Academy, to help challenge and debunk anxieties surrounding online learning; a Digital Learning Professional Learning programme, whereby weekly inputs were available for staff to attend and trial digital approaches. As well as this, staff have shown further commitment towards improving their capacity by becoming Level 1 certified Google for Education Educators, who will support and share good practice across the curriculum. As a result of this work, pupil and

parent feedback rated their online learning experience 4/5 stars and provided useful suggestions in order to further improve digital learning, all of which have been actioned.

In terms of investment in technology, we have upgraded a range of hardware to improve performance; increased monitor sizes in key practical subjects; upgraded digital signage to celebrate success. As well as this, working closely with Connected Falkirk, we have successfully deployed all staff with 1:1 devices and by September 2021 all young people will be equipped with their own 1:1 devices.

We are incredibly proud of the work and investment we have made into improving Digital Learning and, as a result, have achieved four prestigious awards: our first Digital Schools Award; Digital Schools Award with special recognitions for Computational Thinking; Cyber Resilience Internet Safety Badge and, finally, the first ever Digital School Cluster Award.

7. Engage with SQA as to revised assessment approaches

As a result of the ongoing worldwide pandemic our “normal” SQA procedures were once again disrupted with the implementation of the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) in order to ensure our pupils achieved fair and representative results for the work they have completed. We created and completed an assessment window (see below) to ensure robust evidence could be gathered in order to produce provisional grades for pupils which are fair and representative. All staff also completed authority wide moderation and SQA training to ensure standards across the authority and nationally.

These are in line with the **Alternative Certification Model** set out by SQA which can be found by clicking this link: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/96760.html>

As pupils completed assessments and evidence was gathered for the production of provisional grades we remained committed to ensure a ‘no surprises’ approach to communication with regards to these provisional grades with pupils and parents. Class teachers and Faculty Heads of departments informed pupils of the progress they were making and areas for further development.

As a school we feel that the process has been smooth and we will complete the last stage of the ACM by addressing any requests for appeal and processing accordingly

Next Steps

- **Continue to develop and widen opportunities for staff to engage with continued professional learning with the aim of having a continued positive impact on pupil achievement**
- **Further focus on Literacy, Numeracy and HWB skills in the BGE**
- **Continue to expand use of digital devices including the development of digital learning strategies**

Transitions

NIF Priority - School Leadership, Teacher Professionalism, Parental Engagement, Assessment of Children's Progress, School Improvement, Performance Information

HGIOS4 QIs – 2.6, 2.2, 2.7, 3.3, 1.2, 1.3

1. Focus on **positive destinations** for current leavers

In Braes High School, our focus is to ensure that young people are supported to attain and achieve to the very best of their ability and to allow young people to progress to a positive destination beyond school in further or higher education, training or employment.

Working with partners including Skills Development Scotland, Community Learning and Development, Forth Valley College, UCAS and Educational Training, Braes High School creates a strong and focussed learner journey for young people, creating opportunities for our pupils to consider future destinations and careers:

- Career Management Skills
- Targeted and relevant careers information
- Annual course choice and careers fair
- Personalised course choice
- Individual careers interviews with Skills Development Scotland
- Employability and skills development courses
- Forth Valley College school partnership courses
- UCAS and further education applications and support

3. Relaunch of **Cluster Professional Learning & Practitioner Enquiry** (J Wilkinson/IL/D Ironside)

Professional Learning and Practitioner Enquiry is the main driver of the next stage of our Cluster's ongoing development. As professionals, we know that teacher efficacy has the most significant influence on the learning experiences and outcomes of young people. Teachers within Braes High School are intrinsically motivated to be critically reflective and to engage with new and emerging ideas about teaching and learning. Our staff have shown considerable commitment to the principles of Practitioner Enquiry as outlined in the General Teaching Council for Scotland's *Standard for Full Registration (SFR)* and *Standard for Career Long Professional Learning (SCLPL)*. (2021)

The Professional Learning offer to Braes staff

Recognising the expectations outlined by GTCS for teachers, and the entitlement of all teachers to opportunities for collaboration and enquiry, the offer for Braes teachers is designed to meet key elements of the GTCS Standards in that it enables teachers to :

- ✓ "commit to lifelong enquiry, learning, professional development and leadership"
- ✓ "engage critically in enquiry, research and evaluation"
- ✓ "read, analyse and critically evaluate a range of appropriate educational and research literature"
- ✓ "systematically engage with research and literature to challenge and inform professional practice"
- ✓ "create, contribute to, and lead a collegiate culture, through collaborative enquiry" (GTCS SFR, GTCS SCLPL, 2012)

As a cluster we are committed to a collaborative approach to further improve practice and ultimately outcomes for all of our learners.

Next Steps

- **Continue to monitor and support our senior pupils towards positive post school destinations**
- **Further develop our programme of Practitioner Enquiry as an improvement methodology across the cluster**

