



‘Welcome to education at the edge of the world!’

Our Journey To Excellence

Change

At the start of the academic year North West Sutherland Schools went through a transformative evaluation project - focusing on Learning and Teaching, The Curriculum and our Values and Vision. As a school we spoke to parents/carers, the wider community, teachers and most importantly our pupils. It was very clear from the feedback that our secondary school curriculum was not fit for purpose and pupils lacked ownership of their school. So we started on a journey... change is never easy but to prepare all young people for their future, we need to set our sights on transformation, not reform. Reform focuses on incremental improvements to a system that is no longer fit for purpose. Whereas transformation creates and moves us towards a new purpose and vision for young people's learning. This is our journey to excellence.

Curriculum Reform

During the beginning of the consultation on curriculum reform it became very clear that the current curriculum or timetable was not fit for purpose. As a small rural school we have issues in what we can offer and the availability of staff sometimes dictates how we can deliver something. Our mission was we should be a sector leading school for Scotland in how to offer a curriculum

We need to improve attainment across our subjects and this can only be done by offering a diverse and engaging curriculum that meets the needs of the real world. We need to raise the aspirations of our young people to enable them to see their future and we need you, as families, to support us with working on the attendance of pupils. School should be an engaging and motivating environment to learn in where young people are excited to attend each day. North West Sutherland Schools can be, and is, a place of excellence and an excellent place to be and I hope you support us in moving forward with our curriculum rationale.

What's new ?

Placing year groups together to help create better opportunities for learning and teaching. S1/S2, S3/S4 and S5/S6.

Enabling young people to take leadership of their own learning; classes in Digital Learning, Metacognition and Mental Health.

Looking at the subjects needed within the community to sustain and how can we deliver this within school? (Hospitality, Rural Skills, Travel and Tourism and Child Care)

Challenging the more able pupils whilst supporting those who need it.

Moving to a PROJECT BASED LEARNING approach in S1 and S2

Enabling pupils to DEVELOP SKILLS, APPLY SKILLS and LEAD SKILLS throughout their journey.

Project Based Learning

Project based learning is an educational approach in which the content of the curriculum is delivered through hands-on projects which have relevance to real life. It aims to motivate students by giving them more choice and responsibility for their learning and allowing them to experience how the skills and knowledge they are learning in their courses can be applied within projects which benefit the students and the wider community.

The main benefit of moving to a project-based learning approach is that students are able to experience how the skills they are developing in class are transferrable and relevant to their lives. Each project has a set timescale and is geared towards a real audience; this places greater responsibility on the students to ensure that the work they are producing reflects their best efforts. In turn, as they make choices throughout the projects, work together in cooperative teams and directly influence the outcomes of the learning, their confidence grows and they are more able to articulate what they have been learning and how they could apply these skills to a future project beyond school.

Project based learning isn't just about 'doing' projects; it is about teaching students the skills they will need to become problem solvers, cooperative individuals, critical thinkers, independent learners and good communicators. It teaches students how to learn and be successful in their future as well as teaching the content they need to know to pass exams.

S1 & S2 (BGE)

S1 and S2 pupils begin their high school journey in the Broad General Education where the year groups will be placed together to give pupils (and teachers) a better learning environment to engage with; where group work can take place more readily and Project Based Learning will form the key learning strategy for their curriculum. Throughout their two years they will be focusing on DEVELOPING SKILLS and APPLY SKILLS through a variety of learning experiences that will help form their understanding of their community and the world.

Subjects that create part of their curriculum include: English, Maths, Science, Rural Skills, Physical Education, PSE, Humanitarian Education, Spanish, Art, Music, Drama, Film, Business Management, Craft and Design and Travel and Tourism. A booster class in Numeracy and Literacy will also take place to challenge and support pupils in these areas.

These two years are really for young people to gain a wider variety within the curriculum as well as developing skills in metacognition and digital learning. The journey for them to become leaders of their own learning starts here.

S3 & S4 (BGE into SP)

in S3 pupils will select their course options and do a 2 year course to help with their attainment and development of skills. Assessment and Examinations will be kept for S4 with S3 enabling pupils to make mistakes and gain a deeper understanding in a safe and secure way. Pupils will have compulsory exam subjects in English, Maths and Scottish Studies as well as choosing another 4 subjects (total 7). Core subjects of Physical Education, PSE and Humanitarian Education will continue from S1 and S2. S3 will be about **DEVELOPING SKILLS** and S4 will be about **APPLYING SKILLS**.

Courses on Offer include:

- Biology
- Business Studies
- Music
- Craft and Design
- Film
- Chemistry
- Geography
- Spanish
- Art
- Sport and Fitness
- Fashion and Textiles
- Child Care
- Hospitality
- Rural Skills
- Maritime Skills
- Travel & Tourism
- History
- Physics
- P.E.

S5 & S6 (Senior Phase)

We want to be able to provide an educational journey for young people that match their interests and learning styles as well as preparing them for the world of work or further or higher education. In S5 and S6 - as well as being offered the catalogue of courses at school they will also be able to study courses via UHI or the new Highland Digital School - enabling pupils to **LEAD THEIR OWN LEARNING**.

Some new courses on offer include:

- Apps for Maths
- Leadership Award
- Fashion and Textiles
- Media Studies
- German
- Scots Language
- Hospitality
- Rural Skills
- Criminology

Moving Forward

The journey moving forward is exciting. Our pupils have a stronger voice in the school through the Pupil Parliament, staff are embracing change to offer a deeper and richer curriculum offer and we are very much looking at our place within the local community - enabling young people to be the change they want to see.

Our new high school values of CARE replace RESPECT and now stand for

COURAGE ASPIRATION RESPECT EQUALITY

With the campus Vision being:

'We learn through PLAY, We learn to be SAFE, We learn to CARE'