

"Working together to inspire learning and achievement in Highland Communities"



Standards and Quality Report
The Highland Council
Education, Culture and Sport Service

National Centre Of Excellence In Traditional Music **September 2014**

Our school vision, values and aims

I am pleased to present this annual Standards and Quality Report Summary for Parents, which aims to summarise our achievements in 2013-14 and provide a brief overview of the future direction for our Centre. The report is in line with the Highland Council's policies on Quality Improvement, and is based on self-evaluations and interaction with students, staff, tutors, parents and key partners.

We strive to serve our students, and in turn the Scottish traditional music community, by creating a stream of talented performers and teachers through the provision of top quality tuition and participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities related to traditional music, including a busy performance and recording schedule.

Since our inception, we have aimed to prepare those of our students who choose it for further study or a career in music. However, our overall vision has always been to ensure that all of our leavers, no matter which path they choose, are able to contribute towards ensuring that their tradition survives and thrives by taking their music with them wherever they go in life.

The aims of the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music are specifically designed to help us achieve success in meeting the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence. We are fortunate in that music is a subject which, if successfully taught and learned, produces young people who achieve well in all four capacities, namely Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Effective Contributors, and Responsible Citizens.

We have six general aims, within which are more specific aims reflecting the main activities of the Centre. We always welcome comments on these aims from parents and other partners. These aims are:

1. To provide our students with the best possible quality of tuition and an all-round, in-depth experience of all aspects of Scottish traditional music.
2. To enable students who desire it to attain their personal goals in traditional music by providing a pathway to potential careers in traditional music.
3. To liaise closely with our host school, Plockton High School, in order to provide all students with the greatest possible career choice and to enable them to achieve their full potential.
4. To give our students an awareness of the concept of tradition and of their place within it.
5. To broaden and enrich our students' experience by fostering links with the local community, and with the wider community of traditional music in Scotland.
6. To enable our tutors to develop their own careers and to become recognised as the leading practitioners in their field.

I share these aims with our students at the start of this session, and I believe this gives them an awareness of why our curriculum and activities are structured as they are and leads to a shared ethos sense of purpose throughout the NCETM community.

This report reviews our performance using the recommended five core quality indicators, and also informs our Strategic Improvement Plan. The two documents work together to enable us to identify our key strengths and the main areas for improvement. Since the publication of last year's report we have made some significant improvements in several of our improvement projects, especially in terms of our students' learning needs and experiences, but we still have some work to do in our evidence gathering procedures and in feeding back the results of our improvement projects to stakeholders, and these will be our main targets for improvement in the coming session.

We are fortunate to work with a range of high quality partners in the education and traditional music communities, and in the coming session we will strengthen our links with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland by taking part in their major curriculum review, on which our students will be consulted. We will also be opening up a new partnership with the Riverside Music Complex in Glasgow, which provides HNC and HND courses in Music Performance and Sound Production.

We are committed to promoting achievement and ensuring that our students fulfil their musical and personal potential, and our strong partnership with parents lies at the heart of that commitment. I thank all of our parents, past and present, for their continuing and vital support.

Dougie Pincock, Director.
September 2014.

The Core Areas of our Practice

This report summarises the strengths of our school, our recent improvements and what needs to improve further. We gather this information throughout the year in a variety of ways so we can make sure our report is as accurate as possible. We take time to compare what we do with national examples of best practice. We visit classes to share standards in learning and teaching. We look at children and young people's work to see how they are progressing. We make use of factual data and information including attainment results responding and adapting our teaching in line with children's needs. We assess using our own expertise, and our students peer assess and self-assess. We gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We use all of this information to arrive at our view of the quality of education we provide.

Our Key Strengths

We provide a high quality vocational experience for our students in all aspects of the music industry.

We have a very good ethos of commitment to improvement throughout our community.

Our students have achieved consistently high levels of attainment in performance standards, academic achievement, and pathways to positive destinations.

Our students are well motivated and very involved in directing their own learning.

We provide a very good range of performance experience and training in ancillary skills.

Our students are well supported, educationally and pastorally, in collaboration with the Residence and the school.

Our Improvements Last Session

Improvements through Self-Evaluation – We improved the quality of our evidence gathering & the participation of our tutors in Self Evaluation by introducing lesson visits by the Director, and a half-term review for all students.

Learners' Experiences – We shared the Aims of the Centre with all learners at the start of the session, and we introduced a system of students setting their own learning aims for the whole session.

Curriculum – We use the students' transition into the Centre to raise their awareness of the Centre's aims and their own learning needs.

Meeting Learning Needs – We introduced a system of termly targets for students which were monitored and reviewed by the tutors.

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Our Priorities For Improvement for Next Session
<p>Improvements through Self – Evaluation We need to further improve our consistency and regularity of information and evidence gathering</p> <p>Improvements in Performance We will continue to develop our methods of taking in views to inform improvements in provision</p> <p>Learners’ Experiences We will further increase our use of self-assessment and peer assessment.</p> <p>The Curriculum We will increase the focus on the individual development of each student.</p> <p>Meeting Learning Needs We need to improve the consistency and regularity of monitoring and reviewing targets set to ensure that they are sufficiently challenging and well-used.</p> <p>Additional Priorities We will improve the extent to which the school engages with the local community, and we will work on developing other partnerships in the wider education community.</p>

1. How well do young people learn and achieve?
<p>1.1.Improvements in performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Standards of attainment over time</i> • <i>Overall quality of learners’ achievement</i> • <i>Impact of the school improvement plan</i> <p>2.1 Learners’ experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The extent to which learners are motivated and actively involved in their own learning and development</i>
<p>What we do well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Our students have achieved consistently high levels of attainment in i) performance standards, ii) academic achievement, and iii) students’ exit pathways. ➤ We have high expectations of our students. ➤ We provide an enhanced experience for S6 students through the NC course. ➤ Our students exemplify well the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. ➤ Our students have a high quality of achievement both during and after their time here. ➤ Our students are well motivated and very involved in directing their own learning. ➤ Our students work to targets set by both themselves and their tutors through i) daily self-

assessment through practice logs; and ii) termly self-assessment through assessment recordings.

- We have improved awareness amongst students of their own learning needs by involving them in termly target setting for their individual lessons.
- We provide good feedback through lessons, tutor reports and annual reviews.
- We foster a very strong development of the four capacities of CfE in all students, and our students help to develop this in others around them, leading to a strong feeling of inclusion in the school community.
- Our students feel that their views are acted upon.
- We treat our learners with a respect which is mutual, and our students consequently feel nurtured and valued.

What we need to work on:

- Increase the impact our Improvement Plan has on improving achievements
- Continue to develop our methods of taking in views to inform improvements in provision
- Explore further the meaning of Excellence in our context and the evidence for our students' achievement of it (e.g. continuing to look for appropriate methods of external assessment).
- We can still further formalise our use of peer assessment.

2. How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

5.1 The Curriculum

- *The rationale and design of the curriculum*
- *The development of the curriculum*
- *Programmes and courses*
- *Transitions*

5.3 Meeting learning needs

- *Tasks, activities and resources*
- *Identification of learning needs*
- *The roles of teachers and specialist staff*
- *Meeting and implementing the requirements of legislation*

What we do well:

- Each student has their curriculum tailored to meet their needs, encompassing breadth, depth and choice of learning.
- We provide a very good range of performance experience and training in ancillary skills.
- We provide an enhanced experience for S6 students through the NC course.
- We encourage and promote the wider achievements of our students.
- We link well with the school and ensure provision for students is well balanced.
- We now use students' transition into the Centre to raise their awareness of our aims and their learning needs, and share with them the values and rationale of our curriculum.
- We have a good balance of individual and group learning, which provides support and challenge.
- We have a good overall knowledge of students through communication with Residence and school. Our students are well supported, educationally and pastorally, in collaboration with the Residence and the school.
- Our students' learning experience is closely tailored to their individual needs thanks to the one-on-one lessons.

- We regularly evaluate learners' needs and set focussed individual learning programmes at the start of each term.

What we need to work on:

- We could increase our formal links with the school's Music Department to complement each other's curricula.
- Continue to monitor and review targets set to ensure that they are sufficiently challenging and well-used.

3. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

5.9 Improvements through self-evaluation

- *Commitment to self-evaluation*
- *Management of self-evaluation*
- *School improvement*

What we do well:

- We have a very positive ethos of commitment to improvement throughout our community.
- Our students and tutors are all involved in continuous self-assessment, which helps us to improve the experience of the Centre for all concerned.
- Regular tutor meetings enable tutors to share opinions and experiences and develop their own skills.

What we need to work on:

- Improve our consistency and regularity of information and evidence gathering
- Increase the number of formal opportunities for pupil voices to be heard
- Increase opportunities for tutors to be involved in self-evaluation and share best practice
- We need to formalise information gathering and consultations with both pupils and parents, and ensure the availability of the results of these consultations.

4. How well does the school engage with the community?

4.1 The school's success in working with and engaging with the local community

- *The extent to which the school engages with the local community.*

4.2 The school's success in working with and engaging with the wider community

The extent to which the school

- *encourages and supports creativity and innovation and learns from, and adopts, leading-edge practice;*
- *influences wider policy or practice;*
- *anticipates and responds rapidly and flexibly to change;*
- *engages in global issues.*

What we do well:

- We have excellent relations with local community, mainly through our extensive performance programme.

What we need to work on:

- We could increase our involvement with local primary schools by arranging more student visits.

5.7 Partnerships with learners and parents

The extent to which the school

- *engages parents in their children's learning and the life of the school;*
- *consults and communicates with learners and parents*
- *engages in dialogue with learners and parents about the work of the school*

What we do well:

- We have continuous direct informal contact with parents. Parents know that we are available and accessible to discuss their child's needs and progress.

What we need to work on:

- Keeping parents better informed of their child's overall progress and success, perhaps by including a "Director's Comments" section in the termly tutor reports.

8.1 Partnerships with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers

- *Clarity of purposes and aims*
- *Working across agencies and disciplines*
- *Staff roles in partnerships*

What we do well:

- We have increased our range of active partnerships across the educational and employment sectors, mainly with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the University of the Highlands and Islands.

What we need to work on:

- We will further develop activities with tertiary education establishments, focussing this session on the Riverside Music Complex.