

FIRRHILL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025-26

Updated August 2025



"Providing learning opportunities of the highest quality"

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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2025-26 Firrhill High School Improvement Plan

Excellence for all, excellence by all

The tasks which are included are there because they enable the outcomes for learners to be achieved. It is the outcomes which lie at the heart of the process and our efforts should be directed towards enabling all pupils to achieve them consistently.

The SIP is laid out under three overarching priorities:

Excellence in Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Ensuring an Ethos of Inclusion

Building Capacity, Improving Consistency, Fostering Creativity

In each of these priorities the relevant Quality Indicators from HGIOIS²⁴ are cross-referenced. There is an updated 4 year programme for the review of all 15 QIs.

A reminder that the 4 'key' QIs are as follows:

- 1.3** Leadership of change
- 2.3** Learning, teaching and assessment
- 3.1** Improving wellbeing, equality and inclusion
- 3.2** Raising attainment and achievement

Each of these QIs is reviewed twice each year (along with 1.5 Management of resources to promote equity which is reviewed once a year). All the other QIs are reviewed over the four year period. QI 2.1 will be reviewed annually as part of our review of QI 3.1. QI 2.2 is formally reviewed once on the four year cycle but we report annually on the curriculum. Similarly the parental engagement element of QI 2.7 is reported on annually but the whole QI is formally reviewed once in the four year cycle.

Within each priority specific tasks associated with that aspect of improvement are listed along with timelines, responsibilities and the intended outcomes for learners.

There is no column to record progress or evaluate tasks. Rather than try and squeeze that into this document a separate document will be used to record progress on tasks and this would sit alongside the SIP as a record of work done and progress made against the improvement priorities.

2025-26 Introduction

As we approach the end of the current session and, in particular, the change to the new 25/26 timetable it is time to share the School Improvement Plan for 25/26.

While there is much that will be familiar to long-standing members of staff there are some significant and important differences to the plan for the coming year.

Mostly those are connected with Priority 1 and, in particular, the first two tasks in that section. These are much more detailed than in past SIPs and that is to enable colleagues to be able to identify the aspects of school improvement identified in those sections that align with your interests and development goals so that you can join the group that will be developing that aspect of school performance over the next twelve months.

These groups will be cross-faculty in nature and will seek to make use of the huge reservoir of knowledge, experience and innovative ideas that exists across the staff of the school. This work will begin in the double-length collegiate afternoon on Friday 23rd May and more information will be coming to you about the afternoon activities soon.

Although this marks a change in the approach to improvement for next session it does not mark a radical departure from the processes of evidence-driven, staged and iterative improvement. In other words, although there will be an invitation to be radical in your thinking and ambition for our young people we will not be reckless in pursuing change for the sake of change.

This year will see a continuation of the development of a more integrated Pupil Support provision as we further enhance and embed the collaboration across the Pupil Support faculty but also engage with existing and new partners and adapt and make use of the changes that are coming to the ASL service across the city. The existing strong partnerships and flexibility of provision place us in a strong position to make the very best of this new organisational arrangement.

Class Charts is included in the improvement plan in the hope that the few remaining points that need agreement will be resolved soon and the facility to start using Class Charts again will be restored. If those few remaining points cannot be resolved this aspect of the plan will, of course, be removed.

Our work to ensure greater equity among our pupils and to ensure that our Armed Forces, Care Experienced and ASN pupils achieve in line with their peers remains at the core of all that we do and each element of this plan, whether explicitly stated or not, forms an important part of our collective intent in that regard.

No plan can predict every possible challenge that will present itself over the next twelve months but the direction of travel for the school and for the staff and our pupils towards excellence for all and excellence by all is both clear and will maintain as we navigate whatever challenges we may face.

Graham Hamilton
May 2025

Priority 1	Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Overall Responsibility	Headteacher
Measurable Outcomes:	Literacy & Numeracy results line with/better than Virtual Comparator (VC) by end of S4 & S5 Achieve stretch targets in BGE, SIMD-related attainment targets and VC targets in Senior Phase (see appendix 1) At least 80% of lessons demonstrate appropriate levels of differentiated challenge		
NIF Priority 1 – Improvement in Attainment/Achievement, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy NIF Priority 2 – Closing The Attainment Gap Between The Most And Least Disadvantaged Children		QIs/Themes 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement 1.2 Leadership of learning 1.3 Leadership of change 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment 2.4 Personalised support 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	
Tasks	By When	By Whom	Outcome for Learner
Development of the FHSLC Framework through focused working groups and relevant professional learning. Developing and embedding high quality practice across all areas of the school in the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing, sharing and embedding approaches to feedback the enable pupils to effectively assess their own progress and to plan appropriate next steps in their learning High Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating, exemplifying and sharing effective and proportionate approaches to establishing and maintaining a culture of high expectations for every pupil Supporting Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building upon and strengthening existing partnership frameworks with parents, outside agencies and the wider community to enhance and extend the learning undertaken by all pupils Learning from Mistakes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating across the school a classroom climate where mistakes are welcomed and utilised as drivers for learning and improvement – removing the fear of getting it wrong 	May 2026	All curricular staff	Empowering all staff to work collaboratively to improve outcomes for pupils. To utilise the broad range of staff ideas and expertise to develop impactful approaches to improve outcomes for pupils. To reduce workload and increase impact. To embed the FHSLC framework as a powerful tool for both professional development and improving outcomes for pupils.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making challenging tasks and learning a routine and integral part of every lesson for every pupil - utilising our knowledge of each pupil to create realistic goals to build purpose and a sense of achievement across all aspects of learning 			
<p>Development of the Pupil Support Faculty structures, processes and lines of communication to more fully integrate the functions of the PSL team, the SfL team, The Wellbeing team and the ongoing introduction of our ESP . Developing and embedding high quality practice following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lines of communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To review, revise and renew the processes and protocols of communication within the faculty to ensure that there is clarity about the lines of communication between the many elements that provide support for pupils • Information sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To review and revise current approaches to ensure our approaches enable relevant information about pupils to be shared in a timely manner with all those who need to know (including the pupil and parents/carers) consistent with local and national requirements • Tracking and monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building upon current processes within the faculty and between the faculty and others to enable consistent, accurate and up to date information to be available to drive decision making in the best interests of pupils • Measuring impact and outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reviewing existing approaches and developing new metrics to accurately measure the impact of planned interventions and the outcomes for pupils across a range of achievements • Pathway development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To build upon current excellent practice to further develop, embed and refine the pathways available to all pupils to improve the quality and equity of pupil outcomes 	May 2026	All Pupil Support Staff	<p>Empowering staff to work collaboratively to review, refine and improve current practice and processes under the defined areas of focus.</p> <p>To align approaches across the different elements of the faculty and to further strengthen the connections between the Pupil Support faculty and Curricular faculties.</p> <p>To reduce workload and increase impact</p> <p>To more closely align faculty functions to better support pupils to improved and sustained positive destinations post-school.</p>

<p>Developing our Enhanced Support Provision (ESP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying purpose and approaches with key stakeholders • Identification of pupil cohort • Creation of physical base for provision • Appointment of staff (teaching & non-teaching) • Integration of approaches with current WBH & Sfl teams • Liaison with all faculties across the school re mainstream classes • Liaison with external agencies as required and appropriate • Integrating approaches as determined through the Pupil Support Faculty workstreams (above) 	Ongoing	<p>Sfl Leader DHT Pupil Support SMT</p> <p>All staff</p>	<p>Specific supports for pupils with significant ASN.</p> <p>Integration of base-located support and attendance in mainstream classes.</p> <p>Aligned approaches across ESP, WBH & Sfl.</p>
<p>Mentoring System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a mentoring system for identified pupil groups (as indicated in the Faculty Development Programme) to enable pupils to maximise their achievements 	Ongoing	<p>SLT Pupil Support Staff Mentors</p>	<p>To provide support from an identified member of staff to assist pupils in achieving key milestones toward their post-school ambitions</p>

Priority 2	Ensuring an Ethos of Inclusion	Overall Responsibility	Headteacher
Measurable Outcomes:	Exclusions reduced compared to 2023/24 (and 2022/23) Achieve stretch targets for attainment of identified pupil groups (see Appendix 2) Achieve attendance targets for identified pupil groups (see Appendix 3) Firrhill continue role as Ambassador School for Rights Respecting Schools (see Appendix 5)		
NIF Priority 2 – Closing The Attainment Gap Between The Most And Least Disadvantaged Children NIF Priority 3 – Improvement in children’s and young people’s health and wellbeing		QIs/Themes 1.5 Management of resources to promote equity 2.4 Personalised support 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	
Tasks	By When	By Whom	Outcome for Learner
Implement Class Charts and Provision Map across all faculties Provision Map to replace the ASN database (rollout through the Autumn term building on work previously undertaken in the 2023-24 school year) Formal implementation for all staff May 24 (at TT change) Forma WG to lead implementation and roll out of training Training time to be incorporated into WTA Liaison with other schools currently using Class Charts	June 2025 Training August 2025 January 2026 for full implementation	Lead Teachers PS staff SLT & SMT All staff	Better tracking of pupil engagement. More effective seating to improve learning. Linking of ASN information and pupil monitoring. Improved tracking of intervention effectiveness. Better analysis of behaviour and allocation of support to address.
Integration of the Ready to Learn (RtL) intervention programme with the new ESP and also WBH & SfL. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the Pupil Support faculty development work to align the Ready to Learn programme more closely with the approaches of the WB Team and the ESP – to redefine RtL as primarily a preventative programme to prevent exclusion (while maintaining the flexibility to act as a restorative post-incident programme) 	Ongoing with regular timed reviews As identified through tracking and referral processes	PSLs / SfL Staff/external partners, as required	Early identification enables early intervention. Pupils do not disengage from school/ education and outcomes are improved. More integrated partnership working with internal processes and external partners to expand and broaden possible interventions to support pupils.

Implement the Gold: Rights Respecting report recommendations to build upon our 2022 Gold Status Award and ensure re-accreditation in 2025 (see Appendix 4)	Ongoing to September 2025	HT SSC Pupils Parents	Further embed the understanding of children's rights and their importance. Improve pupil and parental engagement with the school's improvement journey.
Produce an action plan to develop inclusive practice across Firrhill with three key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progressional Learning. - Collaboration. - Develop new inclusive pedagogy approaches. 	Throughout the year	DHT Pupil Support All Staff	Improvements in universal and targeted support to ensure all pupils are present, participating, achieving and supported at Firrhill.
Allocate PEF money to support the following initiatives to support all pupils who are underachieving or at risk of doing so – especially those from our key pupil groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSO • Intervention programme for BGE pupils through a range of providers • Homework Club • Breakfast Club • Classroom Equity Resources 	Throughout the year	HT / BM / SfLL PSLs Staff, as appropriate	Improving equity of opportunity for pupils. Focus on disengaged pupils to re-engage with school and to improve levels of attendance and attainment. Using appropriate interventions to close the attainment gap between quintile 1 and 5.

Priority 3	Building Capacity, Improving Consistency, Fostering Creativity (Wellbeing)	Overall Responsibility	Headteacher
Measurable Outcomes:	80% of staff participate in at least one non-compulsory PL opportunity during the year 100% of leavers progress to a sustained positive destination 80% of pupils respond positively to impact of pupil voice on pupil experiences		
NIF Priority 3 – Improvement in children’s and young people’s health and wellbeing NIF Priority 4 – Improvement in employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people		QIs/Themes 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement 1.2 Leadership of learning 2.4 Personalised support 2.7 Partnerships 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion 3.3 Increasing creativity and employability	
Tasks	By When	By Whom	Outcome for Learner
Continue comprehensive Professional Learning programmes to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Management • Equalities • Excellence in Assessment • Excellence in Learning • Excellence in Teaching • GTCS Standards – linked to PRD and PU • Induction of new staff • Leadership • Meta-cognitive strategies • Pupil Wellbeing • Sharing Good Practice • Skills Development • Staff Wellbeing • Supporting ASN Learners • Sustainability Continue to connect PL programme to the needs of staff as identified through PRD, the Learning & Teaching Framework	Throughout the 2025-26 school year and beyond	All staff	Improved PL and professional knowledge and understanding enables more effective classroom, faculty and whole-school practice. Build confidence in PL delivery across more staff. Quality and consistency of learning and teaching are improved enabling pupils to do better. Building greater consistency across the school in terms of learning experience and high-quality outcomes.

Sustain and extend current partnerships established over the last two years. Including business (local, national & international), third sector organisations, parents, public sector bodies and other community groups, including with organisations that can address identified inequalities of access to opportunities by pupils.	Ongoing	SLT MLs DYW co-ord SDS advisor PSOs	By working with a wider range of partners we increase the opportunities available to pupils and widen the range of pupils who participate.
<p>Implement new parental engagement strategies to communicate school aims more clearly and to better involve parents in the development of school aims.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing the parental engagement calendar including increased opportunities for engagement and information sharing Building confidence in more parents/carers to support pupils at home in their learning Continue the S1 parents 'Pupil for a day' programme Continue to offer the 'Raising teens with confidence' to parents/carers. Building confidence in managing the relationships with their children and more resilient to challenge their children's behaviour. Facilities to forge more links with parents/ carers as part of the ongoing parental engagement work. Light-touch management and support for parent-led support groups 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Pupil for a day during SQA exams</p> <p>Raising Teens with Confidence to run during session</p>	<p>SLT PC DYW co-ord SDS advisor Parents Other staff, as relevant</p>	<p>Better parental engagement raises status of school and education for pupils.</p> <p>Greater engagement of parents reduces conflict and disagreement and creates a mutually supportive relationship which benefits pupils.</p> <p>Better informed parents can better support pupils' learning and improve outcomes.</p> <p>Building skills that enable parents to support better learning at home for pupils.</p>
<p>Pupil voice and feedback continues to be harnessed to improve learning and teaching.</p> <p>Build on 2024-25 work with SSC to build regular, repeated and sustainable approaches to involving pupils in the evaluation of their own learning.</p>	Ongoing	HT / SLT SSC	<p>Better feedback on quality of learning in classes. Pupils become active contributors to the processes of school improvement.</p> <p>Create a greater 'buy-in' to the school ethos and improvement through increased sense of ownership and efficacy.</p>

<p>To fully embed our HWB Strategy (https://tinyurl.com/mhwbfirrhill) for staff, pupils and parents/carers across all areas of the school. The overarching structure of Preserve, Promote and Prevent will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote a strengths-based approach to wellbeing • To re-energise the Inter-House competition to promote physical, emotional and mental wellbeing • To consolidate uptake and achievement in the Mental Health Wellbeing Award at levels 4, 5 and 6 • To undertake a whole school (and, if possible a whole Learning Community) CPR training programme (pupils and staff) 	<p>Ongoing (CPR training by June 2026)</p>	<p>HWB Group All Staff</p>	<p>Continue to develop and strengthen existing approaches to maintaining and improving HWB among all members of the school community.</p> <p>Pupils who are healthier mentally and physically are likely to attend more regularly and attain more highly.</p> <p>Improving staff HWB promotes greater resilience and enjoyment at work creating better learning environment for pupils.</p> <p>Parental engagement with good HWB practices promotes these to their children and builds resilience in supporting young people to overcome challenges.</p>
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QI	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
1.1		Jun 27		
1.2			Jun 28	
1.3	Dec 25 & Apr 26	Dec 26 & Apr 27	Dec 27 & Apr 28	Dec 28 & Apr 29
1.4	Jun 26			
1.5	Mar 26	Mar 27	Mar 28	Mar 29
2.1	Jan 26	Jan 27	Jan 28	Jan 29
2.2	Sep 25	Sep 26	Sep 27	Sep 28
2.3	Nov 25 & Mar 26	Nov 26 & Mar 27	Nov 27 & Mar 28	Nov 28 & Mar 29
2.4			May 28	
2.5	May 26			
2.6		May 27		
2.7				May 29
3.1	Sep 25 & Jan 26	Sep 26 & Jan 27	Sep 27 & Jan 28	Sep 28 & Jan 29
3.2	Oct 25 & Feb 26	Oct 26 & Feb 27	Oct 27 & Feb 28	Oct 28 & Feb 29
3.3				Jun 29

Quality Indicators

- 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 Partnerships

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

Appendix 1**Attainment Improvement Targets 2019-2026****BGE****Stretch Aims for Literacy & Numeracy (Percentage attaining level indicated by end of S3)****Literacy Third Level or better**

Quintile	1	2	3	4	5
2017	75%	77%	100%	81%	92%
2019	77%	80%	100%	83%	93%
2020	78%	82%	100%	85%	93%
2021	82%	86%	100%	92%	96%
2022	85%	90%	100%	100%	100%
2023	87%	92%	100%	100%	100%
2024	90%	95%	100%	100%	100%
2025	93%	97%	100%	100%	100%
2026	94%	98%	100%	100%	100%

Numeracy Third Level or better

Quintile	1	2	3	4	5
2017	90%	97%	100%	100%	100%
2019	92%	99%	100%	100%	100%
2020	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2021	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2022	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2023	98%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2024	98%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2025	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2026	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Literacy Fourth Level or better

Quintile	1	2	3	4	5
2017	40%	20%	28%	28%	42%
2019	42%	27%	34%	34%	48%
2020	43%	33%	39%	39%	53%
2021	47%	44%	50%	52%	62%
2022	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%
2023	53%	65%	70%	78%	80%
2024	58%	70%	75%	83%	85%
2025	65%	75%	80%	85%	85%
2026	70%	80%	85%	87%	87%

Numeracy Fourth Level or better

Quintile	1	2	3	4	5
2017	40%	33%	28%	36%	63%
2019	42%	39%	37%	44%	66%
2020	43%	44%	45%	52%	69%
2021	47%	50%	53%	59%	70%
2022	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%
2023	53%	65%	70%	78%	80%
2024	65%	70%	75%	80%	85%
2025	70%	75%	80%	85%	85%
2026	75%	80%	85%	87%	87%

Senior Phase**Attainment by SIMD Decile/Quintile relative to SIMD D10/Q5 performance (Based on Insight tariff points)**

Decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2015	33%	63%	62%	73%	40%	59%	73%	53%	104%	
2019	60%	70%	70%	75%	75%	80%	80%	85%	90%	-
2020	65%	72%	72%	77%	77%	82%	82%	87%	92%	
2021	70%	74%	74%	79%	79%	84%	84%	89%	94%	
2022	75%	75%	75%	80%	80%	85%	85%	90%	95%	-
2023	80%	80%	80%	82%	82%	87%	87%	92%	97%	
2024	82%	82%	82%	84%	85%	89%	90%	94%	97%	
2025	84%	84%	85%	85%	87%	90%	93%	95%	97%	
2026	85%	85%	86%	86%	88%	90%	93%	95%	97%	

Quintile	1	2	3	4	1-5 Gap
2015	43%	66%	53%	61%	57%
2019	63%	72%	78%	83%	35%
2020	67%	74%	80%	85%	31%
2021	71%	76%	82%	87%	27%
2022	75%	77%	83%	88%	24%
2023	80%	81%	85%	90%	19%
2024	82%	83%	87%	92%	17%
2025	84%	85%	89%	94%	16%
2026	85%	86%	89%	94%	15%

Appendix 2**Attainment Improvement Targets for Key Pupil Groups 2017-2026**

	% of non-category tariff									
Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
FSM	54%	75%	77%	79%	82%	85%	87%	89%	90%	90%
ASN	64%	75%	77%	79%	82%	85%	87%	89%	90%	90%
Disability	56%	76%	78%	80%	82%	85%	87%	89%	90%	90%
Care Exp.	23%	27%	31%	36%	42%	50%	65%	70%	75%	75%
AF	65%	80%	82%	84%	87%	90%	92%	92%	92%	92%

Appendix 3**Attendance Improvement Targets for Key Pupil Groups 2018-2026**

	Attendance %age								
Category	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
FSM	91%	92%	93%	94%	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+
ASN	84%	87%	90%	93%	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+
Disability	93%	94%	95%	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+
Care Exp.	88%	90%	92%	94%	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+
AF	92%	93%	94%	95%	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+	95%+

Appendix 4**Maintaining Gold: Rights Respecting Status (working toward 2025 Reaccreditation)****Action Plan**

- Ensure there is a clear plan in place to ensure the sustainability of the excellent rights respecting practice. Continue to ensure that rights are explicitly linked to the curriculum, activities, and events throughout the school year.
- Continue to support children to develop and lead campaigns from a rights perspective.
- Consider participation in UNICEF UK's annual OutRight campaign.
- Continue to develop an ethos of inclusion and non-discrimination, providing opportunities to explore and celebrate diversity in all its forms including race, gender, belief, and different kinds of families so that all people feel valued and included.
- Continue to act as ambassadors for rights and the RRSA through your networks and in collaboration with the LA and local schools.