



# Ochil House

## Standards and Quality – Improvement Evaluation 2020



# Introduction

In the 2019-2020 session a range of self-evaluation activities identified a need for a more focused approach to improvement work in Ochil House Provision in Wallace High School. Its position within a mainstream secondary school had led to previous improvement being framed within the needs of the school's plan and a few areas of specific improvement were emerging that suggested a more bespoke approach was required. Along with this, gradual changes to the provision over recent years have meant that it has grown significantly and has increasingly been asked to meet the needs of a wider range of young people. There are also many developments taking place strategically within the Schools, Learning and Education Service which could be implemented within Ochil House through the planned, focused approach.

A range of self-evaluation activity had influenced the understanding of the areas for improvement.

- Parents' views shared with the school and with the parent reference group
- Improvement discussions held at regular ASN leadership Network meetings
- Feedback from partner agencies
- Teacher and support staff self-evaluation activities

A group was formed of Educational Psychology, Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and ASN Outreach representatives. They held a series of meetings to support the review and development of Ochil House's Improvement Plan. Developing a plan focused on three areas-

- Priority 1 – Curriculum
- Priority 2 – Partnership
- Priority 3 – Communication

Following close work with the team in school, the improvement plan was refined, and the following themes were also identified:

3.1 – Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion - Ochil House will implement nurturing approaches to support young people to feel safe and engaged with learning. Our school community has a shared understanding of wellbeing and in the dignity and worth of every individual.

2.2 – Curriculum - Ochil House will develop a coherent life skills programme to promote and develop independence for the young people in Ochil House. All staff and partners provide very good opportunities to develop children and young people's skills for learning, life and work in motivating contexts for learning.

2.7 – Partnerships – The team at Ochil House, along with partners, will develop their shared vision, values and aims which put the needs of all learners at the core of partnership working.

Unfortunately, 2020 brought with it the unique challenge of Covid-19 and the school closure which delayed some areas of this improvement work and brought new priorities for risk assessment and health and safety focused activity. However, the priorities remain and have been fine-tuned through the process of learning that the team have been involved in.

# Curriculum

## Focus Area and Names of leads involved

Curriculum

Leads: Linda Donaldson PT Ochil House, Fiona MacCuish PT ASN Outreach, Muriel MacKenzie Educational Psychologist

## Improvement work to date

*Please give short narrative of improvement work to date and outcomes / impact*

- Two training sessions were delivered in November 2019 and February 2020 to the whole staff group. The training was on Nurture Principle 1 *Learning is understood developmentally* and Nurture Principle 5 *All behaviour is communication*. Building on team members who had already accessed Nurture Ambassador training.
- This approach supported the team to assess the learning needs of each young person more closely and respond more flexibly to supporting them to regulate and maximise learning opportunities.
- The timetable was reviewed and opportunities to include further development of life skills and independence were identified. This discussion was then continued with the Circle Inclusive Classroom Scale as the structure for this work. Through this work with staff in November they identified strengths and areas for development.
- A planned focus group for parents to inform this work was not able to take place due to lockdown but will be carried out after the October holidays.
- New ideas were developed to increase opportunities to develop life skills and independence both within Ochil House and in the wider school.
- Following feedback from support staff, it was agreed that a more formal arrangement would be put in place for information sharing - staff would meet in August to share transition information for incoming young people and regular time would be built in to ensure all staff are fully informed about the needs of young people and the strategies used to support them. SLAs reported this was helpful to them.
- An agreed approach to planning for progression of learning was in the early stages of development.

## Agreed Next Steps

- A Nurture Implementation group will be set up to work towards embedding aspects of the 2 Nurture Principles within Ochil House.
- A review of planning formats by staff to ensure continuity and progression between classes.
- Parent focus groups and collection of views of young people with a specific focus on life skills curriculum development.
- Curriculum rationale development to continue, informed by focus groups, young people's views, staff input.

## How will this be taken forward

- Support to the Nurture Implementation Group from Educ. Psych. and ASN Outreach
- An additional staff member to attend Nurture Ambassador training
- Focus groups for parents to be planned on Teams
- Support to collate young people's views
- LD to review planning with staff.

# Communication

## Focus Area and Names of leads involved

Parental Communication Leads: Linda Donaldson, Gary Cordiner and Scott Pennock

## Improvement work to date

- Following parental feedback through school channels, ASN Reference Group and the Scottish Government's Health and Wellbeing questionnaire, it was recognised that consistent quality of parental communication was an area of improvement focus for Ochil House.
- Feedback including requests from some parents led to adjustments in the use of daily diaries to correspond about young people, which are necessarily personalised for each child. Although very individualised for young people in Ochil House and each response addresses personal expectations dynamically an agreed approach and standard of communication through this channel would remain beneficial.
- Parents requested opportunities to engage with the management team about personalised issues – consequently a structured programme of appointment drop-in sessions was planned and implemented fully (with am and pm slots to support parental access). Key issues were discussed, and action points implemented. Overall, parental feedback was positive about these sessions.
- Coffee mornings with key themed inputs for parents were also revised for this session.
- Overall, progress was made, especially regarding addressing personalised points raised in drop-in sessions. A key challenge was that the sudden and un-planned disengagement due to Covid-19 prevented some agreed action points for individual pupils being realised and the improvement work around transitions communication being delivered. This will all be picked up this session, alongside the key action points below.

## Agreed Next Steps

- Agree parental engagement protocols for this session (LD and EM post October).
- Improve communication on school website with updated core information and exemplar pathways
- Continue to develop quality of personalised information in daily diaries
- Review structure of TAC and SI meetings - agreed with parents - outcomes and targets understood and shared timeously (consistent across all groups)
- Communication at key transition points further reviewed (action compromised by Covid-19 timing) to ensure consistent protocols across stages

## How will this be taken forward

- SLT/LD confirm calendar of engagement post-October
- Updated Ochil House Handbook published on school website alongside some sample learner journeys in Ochil House and updated key information – developed with staff throughout 2020/21 session and fully updated by March 2021
- LD to review quality assurance of group daily diary feedback through staff peer QA sessions
- LD to work with EM and staff to create a parent guide to staged intervention meetings and a clear shared structure for these sessions
- Parental transition sessions (affected last year by Covid-19 19 disruption) to take place during the summer term at key transition points

# Partnership Working

## Focus Area and Names of leads involved

AHP Partnership working – Lead: Pauline Christie, Speech and Language Therapy

## Improvement work to date

- In October 2019 the AHP group completed a **scoping exercise** for all staff at OH. Via a feedback form, we asked for information on staff confidence levels and what support they needed from AHP services. We had 10 responses – 6 from SLAs and 4 from CTs. The key learning requested was to deepen their understanding of the role of AHPs, to understand the role of therapy partner and that class support and drop-ins were the staff's preferred methods to increase confidence.
- In November 2019, the 3 AHP groups (OT, Physio and SLT) jointly developed and provided **an in-service session** to the whole staff group at OH based on the learning needs identified above. Our outcomes for staff were:
  - to have an understanding of the roles of each of our AHP services
  - for staff to have an understanding of our model of service delivery in terms of universal, targeted and individualised work
  - to identify together access and availability of AHPs to staff
- Practical steps implemented from the above were the **introduction of an AHP diary within OH**— where AHPs would write in the time and purpose of upcoming visits to ensure OH staff have clear info on visits, held in a central place. The 3 AHP services also established a rota between them to provide a **weekly drop-in session** within OH where any OH staff member could access AHP services for advice, to discuss potential requests, to raise issues, for any support needs to be raised and fed back to relevant AHP. The weekly drop-in ran through term 3 until school closures due to Covid-19.
- Discussion amongst AHPs to support staff to deliver inclusive lessons which support the young people at OH to develop their skills in each area rather than for goals identified by OT, Physio or SLT to be seen as additional to what already happens in the classroom.

## Agreed Next Steps

- Liaison regarding initial plans for supporting delivery of lessons.
- Revisit and plan AHP drop in session to support new approach to practice with shared goals informing inclusive lessons in OH. Could this be delivered remotely?
- Continue to develop joint target setting with staff.
- Review impact of actions to date and identify next steps.

## How will this be taken forward

AHP link to liaise with Education team around how AHPs can support / feed in to work on the curriculum.

Pauline to link with other AHPs to develop offer of how we can support curriculum development work.

Pauline to link with Linda and wider improvement group, as to next steps required.

# Service Manager's Conclusion & Update

Having reviewed the improvement activity from last year and considered the plans for 2020 – 2021, I am aware that this is a challenging year for all of us. There is a new set of tasks associated with the pandemic we are living through and this is also having an impact on our wellbeing. However, I think there are two threads coming strongly through the planned improvements for Ochil House which can still be taken forward and I know these are both important to the team, their partners and to those of you I have spoken to in recent weeks.

One is **Communication** with you as parents. This should be done in a way which supports each of you to be engaged and involved in your child's education.

The next steps mention the significance of Staged Intervention meetings, outcomes and targets and transition points along with the informal opportunities for discussion. There is also a focus group being planned to inform the improvement work.

The second is **Learning and Teaching**: with the aim for partners to be better informing inclusive practice in Ochil House; nurture principles to be providing us with a strong base; and for a clear Curriculum Rationale to develop with your help, to strengthen the Ochil House way of doing things, which is not one way, but rather a set of principles enabling a pathway for each individual young person.

To support this work a new approach to leadership has been agreed. The partners working with Ochil House will continue with their support in 2020-2021. In addition, resource has been provided in Castlevew School to enable the Headteacher, Elaine Murray, to work across both settings to build the consistency of approach from primary to secondary and to enable the improvement activity to continue successfully. This will begin to be implemented gradually after the October holiday, as the resources become available for Castlevew School.

## ASN and Wellbeing Update

The numbers of children with additional support needs and the complexity of their needs has increased over recent years against a challenging context financially across the country. Despite that, Stirling Council has maintained a successful priority to sustain and build on local resources to ensure that Stirling's children can be educated as close to home as possible. Our published improvement plans and Standards and Quality Reports have detailed many areas of improvement activity. Some examples are – maintenance of high staffing levels in our specialist educational provisions; prioritising resource, including a strong ASN Outreach Service, to support inclusion in mainstream schools; implementing a school counselling service to be available to all children and young people from 10 years and up across Stirling and developing a new primary provision for ASD in Stirling City.

Two significant business cases are currently in consideration to continue work to develop Stirling Council's Services for children with Additional Support Needs. The first is a plan to

further develop the secondary specialist ASN provision in Stirling Council. If this business case is approved it will involve development of new spaces to ensure that we have sufficient placements available in the city but also in rural Stirling, for children who have significant, complex additional support needs and require a specialist approach to access education. As these plans progress, we will look for parental feedback to inform thinking on the detail of these developments. Secondly, the delivery of ASN home to school transport is also being re-designed to ensure that we are able to continue to deliver this fully to the children and young people who require it. An approach is being explored which will maximise the use of electric vehicles, be supported by drivers who work for Stirling Council and provide increased efficiency and sustainability in the longer term.

Disability in Stirling Council has also been a focus for wider development recently. Working closely across the Children's Services Partnership, disability and transitions, in particular, have been identified as areas for improvement in Stirling's Children's Services Plan. This plan has been agreed across the community planning partnership and has been informed by children and young people and by parents and carers through a variety of routes, including the ASN Reference Group.

**Bryony Monaghan, Service Manager, ASN and Wellbeing**