

Ochil House Review

In 2019-2020, a range of self-evaluation activities identified a need for a focused approach to improvement work in Ochil House Provision in Wallace High School. Subsequently an improvement plan was developed based on three key areas:

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

At that time, it was agreed that the following themes required an ongoing focus:-

- **Communication** - with parents and carers, which should be undertaken in a way that allows parents and carers to feel engaged and included in their child's education. This also involves a focus on Staged Intervention meetings, outcomes and targets and transition points.
- **Learning and Teaching** – with the aim of partners informing inclusive practice in Ochil House; nurture principles to be applied; and a clear curricular rationale to be applied for each individual young person.

During session 2020-2021 a new leadership structure for Ochil House was implemented with the headteacher of Castleview Primary School taking on a strategic lead role for the provision, working alongside the Principal Teacher for Ochil House and the Senior Management Team at Wallace High School. That headteacher retired earlier this year and a new headteacher has been appointed who will continue in the strategic lead role in Ochil House provision.

Informed over the past year by parents, carers and staff views, feedback from partners and observations, and in light of the context of COVID since March 2020, it was agreed that a review of the progress of improvement activities should now take place.

The task of the review team was to consider progress made in the previously identified priorities of curriculum, partnerships and communication to identify improvement priorities for session 2022/23.

The review

The majority of the review took place on Tuesday 13th September, with some activity taking place before and after. The eight strong review team included school staff, partners from allied health professionals, educational psychology, ASN outreach and the ASN and Wellbeing Team were all present in Ochil House on the review day.

The team worked together to consider written information relating to individual pupils, observing lessons and consulting with pupils, teachers, support staff, Allied Health Professionals, parents and carers, Wallace High School staff and pupils.

Review Activities

Pupil consultation	The Children's Rights officer consulted with 5 Ochil House pupils, using visuals where necessary to ensure the young people could have their say. She also spoke to a group of 6 S6 pupils from the mainstream school.
Parents	9 parents contributed their views via telephone
Teacher consultation	The Wallace High School Headteacher met with Ochil House teaching staff.
Staff Questionnaires	19 staff members completed questionnaires based on HGIOS challenge questions.
Allied Health Professionals	The Allied Health representative on the review team met a group of colleagues to allow them to share their views.
Class Observations	All five classes were observed during the course of the day.
Documentation	Samples of documentation reflecting Staged Intervention processes were collected and reviewed along with other school documents.

Outcome

Pupil Consultation / Ochil House Pupils

The pupils who took part in the consultation were generally very positive about Ochil House. All 5 pupils said that they believed that the grown-ups listened to them and that they liked it when different teachers came to their classroom. 4 of the 5 said they had enough choice in school and that grown-ups were kind to them. 3 said they go outside as part of the school day, while 1 said they didn't and another said they didn't go outside as much as they would like. When asked what they liked best in school the responses were Maths, Art, the work, playtime and home time.

They were asked 'if you were the Headteacher, what would you change about school?' The responses were:

- I wouldn't change anything,
- I would have a pizza day (ham and cheese),
- I would have a class for building Lego sets (Ninjago),
- The hard work.

Pupil Consultation / Wallace High School S6 Pupils

The Wallace High School S6 pupils consulted said everyone knows that Ochil House is part of Wallace High School but it currently feels it is like an area that's quite cut off from the rest of the school due to the impact of Covid when there had to be separation to keep people safe. They said that lunchtime used to be great for being together and there was a much nicer atmosphere when all pupils were together. The pupils reflected that they don't know the names of the people who are in Ochil House as they did before. They said that Ochil House pupils could be better represented around the school and that many opportunities could be taken to allow Ochil House pupils to be included in the life of the school.

Parents and Carers

Most parents and carers said their children were happy and enjoyed school and that they were confident their children were well cared for and loved. They believed the staff worked hard to support their children. Some said they trusted school staff to ensure their vulnerable children were safe at all times.

Some parents and carers stated they would like more information regarding the content of the curriculum and of the school day as their children were not able to share this with them and some were unclear as to what the curriculum consisted of. Most of the parents and carers said they knew their child required an individualised approach in their curriculum

Some parents and carers expressed a wish for their children to have more mainstream experiences and access to after school activities. Almost all of the parents and carers expressed a wish for their children to have greater opportunities for PE and sports. Resources were mentioned with a view that the outside space required to be upgraded.

One parent/carer said she was very happy with the level of communication while a number of others said they would like more communication. From the responses, it would appear that communication continues to be inconsistent within the provision.

Some parents and carers raised concerns regarding the wider process of transition to adult services and their worries around the next steps for their children.

Teaching Staff Consultation

It was clear that teaching staff felt the happiness of the young people, care and love, nurture and pastoral care was an important feature of their practice and that their SQA work in achieving national qualifications is supporting equality of opportunity and inclusion.

They shared a desire for greater capacity to work and communicate with the support staff but that the current structure of the day and week limits collegiality or true working together and the Covid context has exacerbated the issue and staff absence continues to place pressure on them.

Staff said they understand the challenge of working with young people with a diverse range of complex learning needs and also appreciate the pressure parents and carers experience in ensuring the individual needs of their children are met, especially as they move towards their school leaving date. They said they are aware that as young people get older the pressures and worries of parents and carers can increase and sometimes expectations placed on school encompass areas over which staff have no control. Staff said that pupils would benefit from improved access to curricular areas and in particular PE.

Staff Questionnaires

There was general positivity about working at Ochil House, despite the impact of the last two years with many positive comments around learners' achievements, particularly with national

qualifications and the desire to provide opportunities. However, there was a sense that staffing levels made it difficult to provide the individualised approach required.

Almost all staff indicated a need for more opportunities to work together as a team. There were some very clear statements regarding strength in class team working but an identified gap in terms of whole school working. Many staff felt very positive about their own class teams and there was a notable desire to have opportunities to work together more.

Resources were seen as an area needing enhancement with staff comments suggesting that Ochil House could be better resourced for class activities and that storage/accessing resources could be improved.

The responses indicated that staff teams are keen to improve transition, largely into Ochil House but also across stages with Covid stated to have had an impact on this.

A large number of responses indicated a need to improve the Ochil House garden to make it an engaging and appropriate space that all learners could access and enjoy.

A large number of staff felt that improvements should be made around supporting learners and staff where incidents have been recorded.

Allied Health Professionals (AHPs)

The AHPs believe that positive relationships exist between staff and pupils. They stated a willingness to participate in development work with Ochil House staff, however accepted that planned development work did not continue as a result of Covid. They reported that some Ochil House staff seek advice from the AHPs to support their work with pupils and believe they can play a greater role to support and to assist in the professional development of staff.

There is a view that the provision would benefit from the further development of a life skills curriculum and individualised educational plans, appropriately differentiated to meet the individual developmental needs of pupils. They believe Ochil House should continue to develop a communication rich environment, including the use of visuals and schedules, with interactions pitched at the correct level for the developmental stage of the young people.

Consideration should be given to preparing pupils for transition to adult services. Taking a person centred planning approach would aid this process.

It was felt that consideration should be given to physical resources i.e. soft play area and the learning environment, including the outdoor space to ensure a suitable environment is provided for outdoor learning and regulation. Also it was felt that it would be helpful for pupils to have increased access to physical activities.

Class Observations

There is a diverse range of learner needs with three classes consisting of learners with severe and complex support needs sited in the Ochil House base whilst a further two classes are located within the mainstream school.

Most learners seemed happy, secure and settled in class. A wide range of fun activities were observed in some classes. Classrooms generally provided a safe base but most of them and the other learning spaces, appeared to be very cluttered. Organisation of resources needs improvement and some resources could not be located when staff required them.

Good examples of learning and teaching were observed in some classrooms. During some observations the purpose of the learning was not always clear and at times the learning intentions were not evident.

The provision would benefit from developing a total communication environment and using visuals consistently to support communication including to manage transitions throughout the day.

Documentation

Samples of documentation reflecting Staged Intervention processes were collected and reviewed along with other school documents. The provision would benefit from greater consistency in documentation and a standardised approach applied.

Recommendations

Wallace High School and the Ochil House staff team are committed to the young people in their care. A number of issues, as well as the pressure of the pandemic, have impacted on planned developments and the capacity to ensure consistency of approach in the provision. Consideration needs to be given to the organisation of the provision to ensure there is adequate capacity to support the development.

As a result of this review it is recommended that:

Resources

- Time needs to be found within the school week to allow the staff team to work collegiately to facilitate improvement in Ochil House. Systems should be developed to facilitate consistency of approach in the work with young people and their families.

Curriculum

- Looking inwards, a curriculum rationale should be developed to ensure the diverse range of needs presented by young people are considered. There should be a clear focus on ensuring the curriculum meets each individual's learning needs. There needs to be greater consistency in approaches to learning and teaching including standardising the use of visuals to support the communication environment. Curriculum delivery should include good access to a range of Health and Wellbeing activities.
- Looking forward, the Principal Teacher, along with the Senior Leadership Team should develop and lead a person centred planning approach for individual learners to assist in identifying appropriate developmental pathways for each pupil to incorporate both a life skills curriculum and opportunities for attainment. This should form the basis of developing individual learning pathways. Parents and carers should be involved in decisions around curricular choices at key stages and should be supported to understand what their child's curriculum entails.
- Looking outwards, visits by staff to other establishments for young people with severe and complex needs should be facilitated.

Communication

- Consideration needs to be given to all aspects of communication but in particular, how and when Ochil House staff communicate with parents and carers. A standard system needs to be developed to improve consistency of approach such as developing a communication strategy for parents and carers. Processes and resources should be reviewed to ensure there is appropriate support for reviews and meetings with parents and carers.

Partnership working

- There needs to be a clearer understanding of the professional roles of everyone working in Ochil House and an ethos of mutual respect and improved communication should be developed. Opportunities should be explored to bring together the range of partners and Ochil House staff to participate in development opportunities.

Next steps

This report will be shared with staff, parents and carers, and relevant stakeholders.

An action plan of improvement activities, based on the recommendations from the review will be developed, with targets set and progress reviewed regularly.

The review team will continue to work alongside the Ochil House team throughout the 2022-2023 academic session.

Consultation with young people and their parents and carers will be ongoing, and progress made towards the improvement activities will be shared.

A full evaluation of progress will be made at the end of this session.

Date of Review Report – November 2022

Review Team members:

Scott Pennock	- Head Teacher, Wallace High School
Jaki Robinson	- Strategic Lead for Ochil House and Head Teacher of Castlevieview
Linda Donaldson	- Principal Teacher, Ochil House
Yvonne Wright	- Lead Officer, ASN and Wellbeing
Heather McLean	- Depute Principal Psychologist
Sarah Mayberry	- Allied Health Professionals
Fiona Moffat	- Children's Rights Officer
Fiona McCuish	- Principal Teacher, ASN Outreach