



EDINBURGH  
**STEINER**  
SCHOOL

**Standards and Quality Report  
2020**

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## **Vision statement**

Edinburgh Steiner School aspires to develop responsible, creative and freethinking young people, who will contribute to society and a sustainable environment with vision and purpose.

## **Mission statement**

Inspired by the pedagogical insights of Rudolf Steiner, we commit daily to awakening the mind, will and spirit of each individual pupil.

### **1. School aims**

- To provide a high quality pedagogical service and a welcoming, secure, happy and caring environment for all
- To recognise and support each stage of child development and to deliver an age-appropriate curriculum that underpins this
- To recognise that rhythm, kinaesthetic learning and movement are integral parts of the curriculum
- To address the learning needs of all pupils
- To acknowledge the importance of non-formal and informal learning
- To encourage personal, social and moral development for the children and staff in the school
- To provide a child-friendly, aesthetically beautiful environment, where learners are encouraged to know and love the world and where each child's innate abilities are allowed to blossom
- To enable children to take responsibility for their own learning in an environment of peace and mutual respect
- To develop self-reliance, rigour and resilience
- To embrace all people regardless of race, religion or gender
- To work in partnership with parents/carers to foster a sense of community
- To support and encourage staff development and CPD and demonstrate a commitment to improvement in all areas
- To continue to foster links with outside agencies, mainstream schools and the wider community

## **The school in context**

Edinburgh Steiner School is located in the Southwest of Edinburgh and was opened in 1939.

The School's client group mainly comprises people from multicultural, professional backgrounds from a broad catchment area.

The School is situated in four different buildings, plus a purpose-built hall and Kindergarten; a former coach house has recently been renovated to provide new classrooms and craft spaces.

The Kindergarten is registered to accommodate 60 children from 2 to 7 years old. The Playgroup, now called 'Seedlings' was registered in 2020. In November 2020 the Kindergarten roll was 29. The roll in Seedlings was 12. There were 13 children who have an ASP in kindergarten and Seedlings. These were as follows:

- 5 children with ASPs for EAL
- 4 children with ASPs for Social/emotional/behavioural issues
- 1 child with ASPs for EAL + Social/emotional/behavioural issues
- 2 children with an ASP for Speech and language development
- 1 child with an ASP for Allergy/intolerance/medical needs

In November 2020, the main school had 12 classes (year groups) varying in size from 11 to 21 pupils, which provide education for young people aged 6-18 years. The school roll was 247. Being a small school, teachers, pupils and parents know and appreciate one another. There is mutual support and recognition of both strengths and weaknesses.

Teachers and other staff work autonomously within a framework of guidance and support provided by the ethos and curriculum of the international Steiner/Waldorf framework. Key decisions are made by consensus at a weekly meeting of the College of Teachers—a committee that performs the traditional function of a principal teacher. Decisions are then acted upon by a rotating Management Group, supported by a Management Team. Colleagues feel free to help and challenge one another, and frequently do so. The effect of this is a sense of greater participation and ownership of issues and decisions.

The School has a broad-based curriculum where head, heart and hand are addressed in equal measure. Pupils are not judged solely on academic achievements, but are equally valued for their social, moral, spiritual and practical abilities.

Parents are encouraged to be committed to the School and be pro-active: by being Class Convenors, serving on the Board of Trustees, taking part in workweeks, Christmas Market, concerts, clubs and wider school issues such as cycling proficiency.

## **Factors affecting the development of the school**

- The ethos of the school is based on the premise that people are as important as policies, if not more so.
- Formal literacy and numeracy programmes do not begin until the child is six and a half-years-old (Class 1). The School does not select pupils on the basis of academic ability.
- ICT does not normally feature in the School's curriculum or teaching methodology until the late Middle School and Upper School.

## Attendance, attainment and progress (2019-2020)

2019-20											
	Total Periods*	Present		Late		Authorised Absence		Unauthorised Absence		Kindy Rest Day	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Kindergarten</b>	2413	2165	89.7	103	4.3	180	8.5	26	1.1	324	11.8
<b>Class 1</b>	1377	1247	90.6	11	0.8	106	9.4	24	1.7		
<b>Class 2</b>	1422	1338	94.1	143	10	79	5.6	1	0.1		
<b>Class 3</b>	1815	1755	96.7	65	3.6	55	3.3	5	0.3		
<b>Class 4</b>	1223	1136	92.9	63	5.2	82	7.1	5	0.4		
<b>Class 5</b>	1501	1416	94.3	64	4.3	84	5.7	1	0.1		
<b>Class 6</b>	2219	2095	94.4	88	4	117	5.6	7	0.3		
<b>Class 7</b>	1653	1566	94.7	46	2.8	84	5.3	3	0.2		
<b>Class 8</b>	996	945	94.9	62	6.2	39	3.9	0	0		
<b>Class 9</b>	1320	1224	92.7	52	3.9	88	7.3	8	0.6		
<b>Class 10</b>	2361	2095	88.7	317	13	209	9.7	21	0.9		
<b>Class 11</b>	1314	1166	88.7	91	6.9	111	8.9	6	0.5		
<b>Class 12</b>	1162	1054	90.7	55	4.7	105	9.3	3	0.3		
<b>TOTAL</b>	20776	<b>19202</b>	<b>92.4</b>	<b>1160</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1339</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>0.5</b>		

\* 'total periods' refers to the total number of possible registration periods for that year group at the time of reporting. This is based on the amount of days in the academic year and the number of pupils in the Class.

## SQA Exam results 2020

Edinburgh Steiner School									
Year Group	Total Pupils in Year	Examination	Number of Candidates	Total Present'ns	A	B	C	D	U
Class 12	15	Adv Highers	5	6	5	1	0	0	0
		Highers	13	51	29	12	8	2	0
Class 11	12	National 5	9	15	8	4	3	0	0
					Pass	Fail			
Class 10	19	National 4	10	17	17	0			
		National 5	18	54	28	9	11	4	2

Edinburgh Steiner School's Higher exam results in 2020 were excellent, even before they were revised slightly—and then only in candidates' favour—following the Scottish Government's abandonment of the 'algorithm' which was initially used to moderate teachers' estimated grades. The headline A-C pass rate for Highers was 96.1%, well above the revised national (Scottish) average pass rate of 78.9%, and significantly above the ESS Higher pass rate of 81.6% in 2018—a result which was itself unusually low, in this and other schools, probably due to changes in the way Highers were assessed in 2018. Every candidate achieved a course award (at least a 'D'). This year's results fit a pattern of steady improvement, and consolidate the 5-year running mean, which this year rises to over 90% for the first time. It was encouraging to note that the percentage rate of 'A' grades remained very high (56.9%), in line with recent years. The ESS percentage of A and B grades at Higher (80.4%) was also historically high. National 5 results remained very good, with an A-C pass rate of over 91% (against a national pass rate of 81.1%) and over 50% of all ESS results at National 5 were graded 'A', in line with recent years.

Edinburgh Steiner School's GCSE results in the three sciences (based on the new, more demanding, GCSE exams) remain excellent, with a 5-year (2016-2020) mean pass rate of 86% (pass is equivalent to a level '4' under the new system, or a 'C' under the old system). The national (U.K.) average pass rate was 69% for the same five-year period.

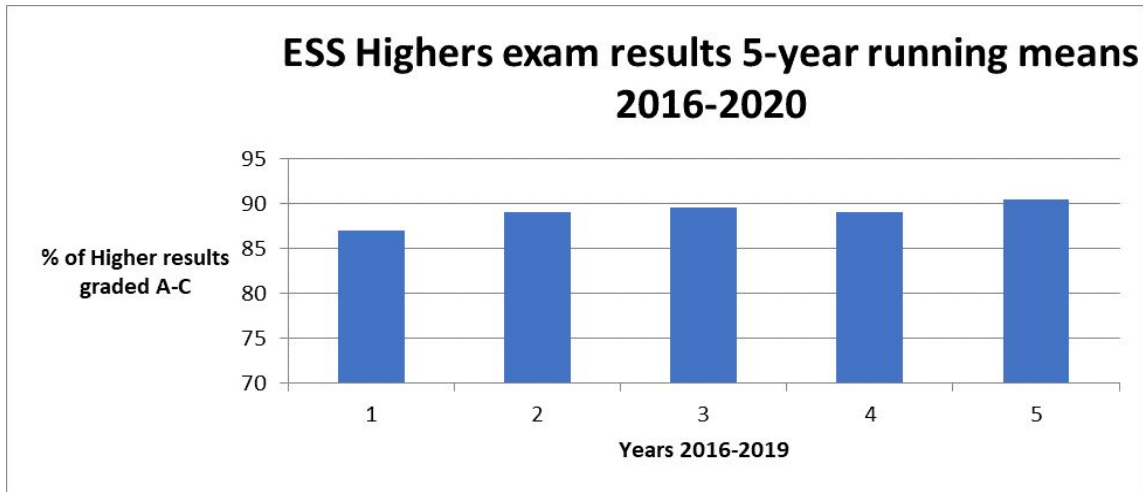


Figure 1: Higher exam results 5-year running means (i.e. year 5, 2020, is compiled by averaging the results from 2016-2020 inclusive)

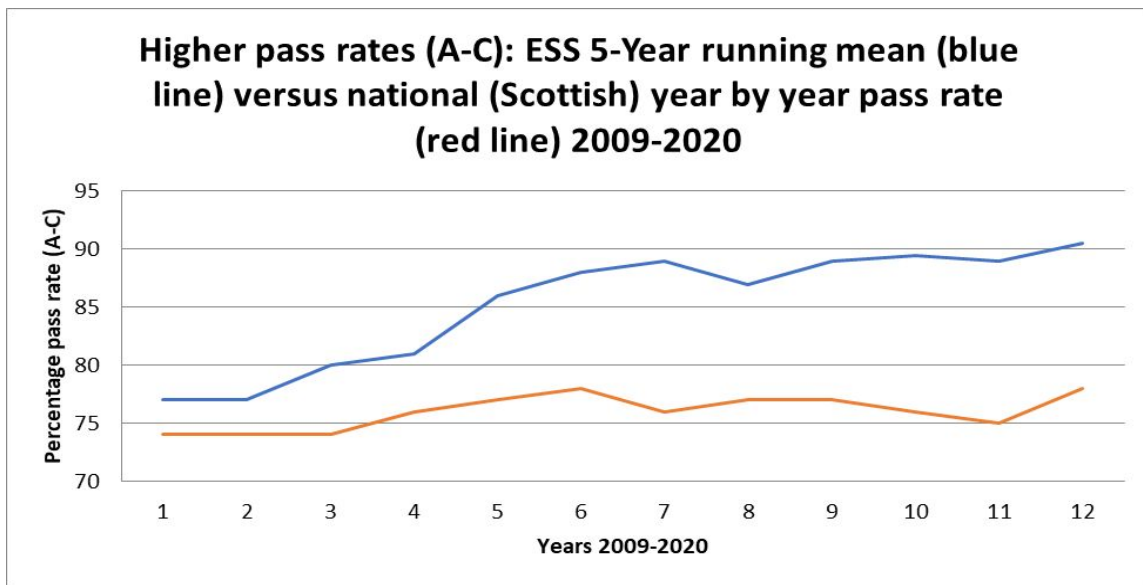
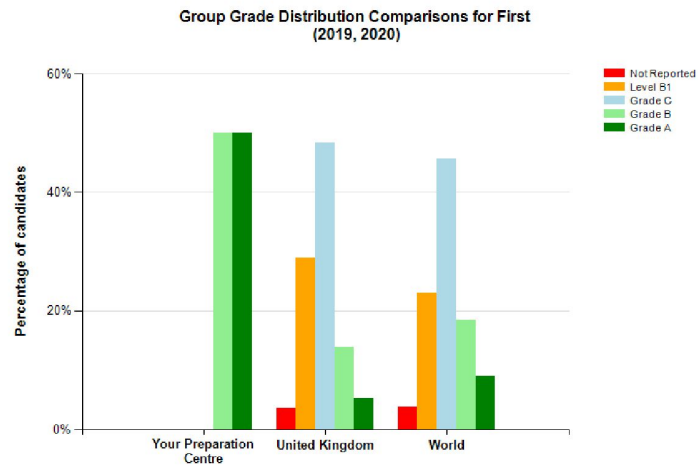
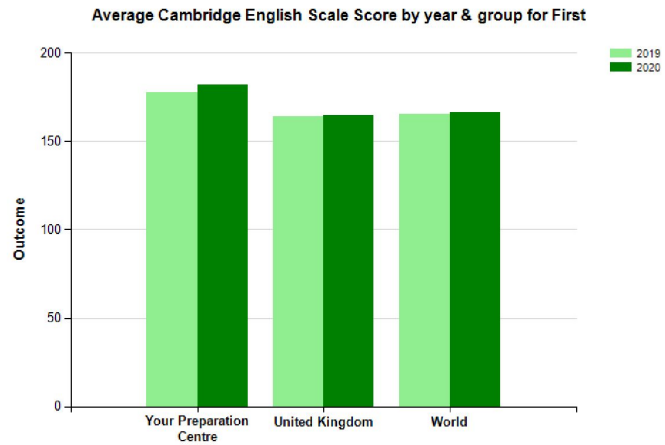




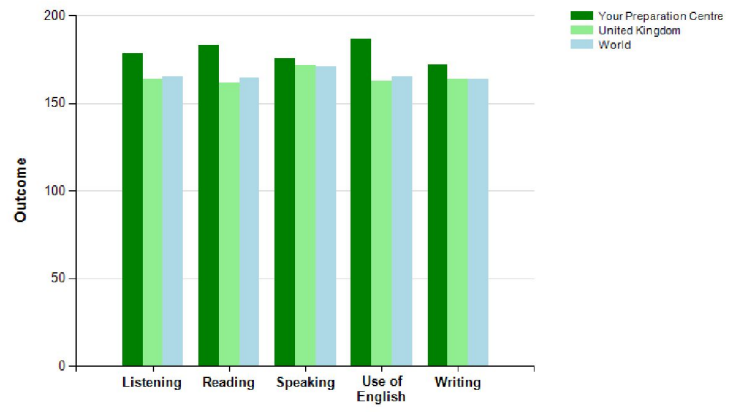
Figure 2: trend against national pass rate: blue line, ESS Higher exam A-C pass rate, year by year 5-year running mean; red line, national pass rate by individual year

## Exam results (EAL) 2019-2020

- In the charts below, 'your presentation centre' is Edinburgh Steiner School



Group Skills Comparisons for your preparation centre  
Year(s): 2019, 2020



# **Progress and achievement**

## **Early Years (including Kindergarten)**

- From August, 2020 all-day care, from 8.40 until 5pm, Monday to Friday, has been available in our EY setting, for children from aged 2 years.
- Our Seedlings setting (previously Playgroup), for children from 2 - 3 and a half years, has seen numbers rise from 2 or 3 families to 12 families since this change was introduced.
- Both the Seedlings group and Kindergarten groups have extended their opening times from 08.40 until 15.10. This means that all children who previously moved to afternoon care at 1pm, when Kindergarten and Seedlings closed, can now remain with their own teacher until 15.10. This provides better consistency of care. Children only move into afternoon care if they are staying beyond 15.10.
- Our Seedlings group leader has almost completed her statutory Early Learning and Child Care qualification, required for full registration with the Scottish Social Services Council. She has also joined the North of England Steiner Waldorf Early Years course, and will complete this qualification in 2022.
- The Staff Development group have put in place mentoring for all EY staff. The effectiveness of this mentoring is regularly monitored. EY assistants are mentored by the teacher with whom they work most closely, while teachers are mentored by the EY Co-ordinator, or by teachers in other areas of the school.
- The weekly EY meeting has been re-organised, and is more focussed and effective. The pedagogical part of the meeting is now always attended by the Early Years pupil support lead, to help staff in developing strategies which best support individual pupil learning and development. The business part of the meeting is now chaired separately by the School Co-ordinator.
- A self-evaluation review of the Early Years department has been initiated by the EY co-ordinator. This review looks in particular at the departmental response to the Covid 19 virus, including hygiene and safety measures for pupils and staff; wellbeing of pupils and staff, and responses of parents to our provision during this time.
- It has been decided to undertake a review of the roles, responsibilities and performance of the EY department within the School, with the aim of increasing co-operation, understanding and trust between the EY staff and the Management Group, and between EY staff and all other school staff. All staff members will be asked to participate in this review.
- A review and revision of the EY Co-ordinator job description by the Management Team and the EY Co-ordinator has resulted in a clearer definition of the boundaries of the role and closer links with the Management Team.

- Further steps have been taken to establish better links between the three Scottish Steiner Waldorf kindergarten settings, to enable sharing of practice, particularly in relation to record keeping.
- Adjustments to practice and to cleaning and hygiene practices have been implemented in line with Covid requirements.
- The School collaborated with Upstart Scotland through an online talk by founder Sue Palmer, campaigning for a statutory kindergarten stage for all under 7 years olds living in Scotland.
- Applications to ESS Early Years increased during the first lockdown. Of new enquiries for Kindergarten, 87.5% are from families with a child starting P1 in August 2021, showing a growing demand for a delayed start to formal learning.

## **Lower School**

- Class 8 pupils overcame huge challenges to present their independent Class 8 Projects 'virtually' during the first phase of lockdown in spring 2020. A wide variety of fascinating projects were nevertheless completed and presented, including topics such as horse-training, garden design, dance, and origami.
- Lower School pupils continued a long tradition of supporting various local, national and international charities, including Re-Act (Refugee Action Scotland); Edinburgh North West Foodbank; Comic Relief (with sustainable, handmade Red Noses), Save the Children (Eco Christmas Jumper Day), North Merchiston Community Gardens; Garvald Edinburgh; Garvald West Linton.
- School-supported violinist, Sally Tsang, a Class 8 pupil, will join the National Youth Orchestra Scotland (NYOS). An original piano piece of hers provides the soundtrack to the School's new short documentary film, professionally recorded in the School Hall by former pupil Edward Miller of Edinburgh funk band, JBiA
- As part of the School's Continuous Professional Development programme, Class 3's Class Teacher attended a course entitled Zero Carbon Britain to investigate how the School's curriculum can respond to the needs of the next generation in heading towards zero carbon. He is now working with his pupils, parents and the School to collaborate.
- An online curriculum was delivered in response to Lockdown, including a strong face-to-face element, in an age-appropriate framework.
- Class 1 is trialling a new (to our school) approach to engaging with initial literacy, coming out of Stockmar's curriculum, on the principle of 'whole to the parts.' This can be reviewed next year.
- 'New' Class 8 embarked on one of the few outdoor excursions of autumn 2020. For several days, and working in collaboration with Youth Vision (a non-profit organisation working with communities in Edinburgh), the Class travelled to Harlaw Reservoir in the Pentland Hills to conduct their 'lime kiln' experimental chemistry Main Lesson. The pupils made a

beautiful lime kiln, which was then lit, and burned to a high temperature. The resulting lime was used to create whitewash. Edinburgh District Conservation Architect, Peter Ranson commented on the lime kiln project: "I am impressed to see a school where pupils are getting hands on experience of the lime process, how to make limestone mortars, and their importance in sustainable conservation of our built heritage. I am not aware of another school incorporating the knowledge and traditional skills required for the conservation, repair and maintenance of the historic built environment into their curriculum."

- The Covid crisis had a particular impact on the transition of Kindergarten pupils into Class 1 in 2020. Although 15 of the 16 children moved up from one of the three Kindergarten groups, the closure of the School at the end of March meant the pupils missed their 'transition days,' when new Class 1 are brought together regularly to form a bond. These activities (games, crafts, exploring the School campus) usually take place over April, May and June. To maintain the fledgling bond the children have been developing, the Class was set the task of letter writing as part of their literacy work: the whole Class sent handwritten and drawn birthday cards to those turning 7 during lockdown.
- In March 2020, Class 8 (now Class 9) performed an exuberant and innovatively staged version of spy thriller *The 39 Steps* as their Class 8 play, a production which featured some dazzling sound, lighting and special effects. Every member of the Class participated in some aspect of the production.

## **Upper School**

- The Student Council continued to meet throughout 2020, attaining greater independence and conducting some its work virtually. The Chair of Student Council met with College in December 2020.
- Upper School pupils successfully participated in the 'Young Writers' Competition. In 2020, all 18 of the School's entries (from Classes 7-10) were selected for publication.
- The new Upper School Projects Group collaborated on a Digital Advent Calendar which was launched in December 2020 and accessed through the School's website. Part of this project involved a charitable tie-in with a local charity, Streetwork.
- The pupil-led *Environment Action Group* was increasingly active during 2020. Among their numerous campaigning activities, individual members of the Group wrote letters to the school community which were featured in Tuesday Notice and contained advice for parents, pupils and teachers about measures we can all take to support a sustainable approach to living and working.

- Increasing numbers of Upper School pupils, particularly in Class 11, volunteered to help pupils in the Lower School, for example by reading with them. This programme, formalised in 2020 and organised by Class Guardians and the Pupil Support Department, encourages pupils in Class 11, and sometimes in Class 12, who have more than four 'free' periods on their timetable, to foster a sense of community by becoming visible role models for younger pupils.
- During the first Covid lockdown, Class 12 rose to the challenge, adapting and performing *Around the World in 80 Days* as a 'radio play' which was then streamed to the school community via the internet.

## **Whole school**

- A number of 'safe spaces' were designated by the Pupil Support Department for pupils who, for example, become anxious and need supported 'time out' during lessons. Clear and consistent procedures were also developed (and will continue to be refined) for access to, and use of, these safe spaces.
- The School embarked on an ambitious project to produce a number of new films about the School and its unique education. Phase 1, a range of short films covering different aspects Edinburgh Steiner School, has now been completed. In the absence of regular Open Tours on campus, these films represent an invaluable resource to showcase the School, especially to prospective parents. Pupils and alumni were heavily involved in this project, especially in the composition and/or performance of the music. Phase 2 will see the existing films augmented with new footage and a separate film produced about ESTEC (the in-house teacher training course).
- Existing plans to improve digital literacy (see the school's Improvement Plan 2020-2021), including school-wide connectivity via WiFi and a virtual learning platform were accelerated as a result of the Covi-19 crisis. All pupils now have access to some form of virtual learning and teachers have been trained to harness the benefits of virtual and remote learning. To enhance the experience of pupils, aspects of this approach will be retained (in an age-appropriate way) even after the crisis has passed.
- In the absence of a campus-based Christmas Market in 2020, teachers and parents worked together to deliver a virtual 'Christmas Celebration' which raised a four-figure sum for charity. This year, half of all proceeds went to Edinburgh-based charities Health in Mind and The Yard.
- The Pupil Support Department provided a comprehensive programme of all-staff training in the needs of *all* pupils. This training addressed neurodiversity, barriers to learning, and strategies to support pupils affected by social and emotional challenges. The increasing number of pupils affected by one or more of these issues—and the requirement that meeting

the needs of pupils is the responsibility of all members of staff—makes this collaborative effort an ongoing priority for continuous professional development.

- As part of the ongoing improvements and refurbishments of building on the school campus, a spacious vestibule was added to the original entrance to Woodlands. This feature will allow the door looking out onto the lawn to be used on a day-to-day basis, save on heating costs, and improve the flow of people around the building. It will also free up much needed space.
- In response to the necessity of social distancing restrictions during lockdown, members of the teaching faculty produced and performed the annual Shepherds' Play remotely, making use of mostly outside settings around the school campus. The play was then streamed to the school community via the internet at the start of the Christmas holidays, preserving this much-loved tradition.
- As part of the digital literacy strategy, the School purchased a number of Chromebooks, for use in Middle and Upper School lessons, and to lend out to pupils to ensure they were able to access education virtually during periods of lockdown.
- Following recognition by the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) of the post graduate qualification in Steiner education offered by The Edinburgh Steiner Teacher Education Course (ESTEC), almost all teachers are now registered with GTCS. This process will be completed with the registration of all teachers (and future teachers) by June 2021.
- The School continued to develop a growing presence on social media, with coordinated links between items in the Tuesday Notice and sites such as Facebook. During 2020, an increasing number of events, including plays, assemblies and interviews with former pupils were available to stream via the School's website.
- During 2020, the Estates Group completed a number of medium-sized projects, including the sanding of classroom floors, painting and redecorating of the common areas in Woodlands; security systems on the front gate; improvements to the fabric and outside spaces in the Early Years; the refurbishment of pupils' desks; and the installation of WiFi throughout the campus.
- In the week of the School's 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary, the School interviewed former pupil, philanthropist and international actor/producer, Sam Heughan about his school days. The interview has been viewed over 100,000 times.
- Three brothers (all of them ESS alumni), broke three world records sailing the Atlantic.
- Two Waldorf dolls acquisitions, donated by the School, joined the world-renowned V&A Museum of Childhood for its upcoming exhibition to mark the museum's 150th anniversary.
- A third bike shed was opened at Craigneen. The provision of these facilities helps the School promote cycling by pupils and staff.

- The School community donated 565kg of food to Edinburgh NorthWest Food Bank.

## **Summary of key priorities (Improvement Plan)**

- Conduct and implement a school-wide 'pedagogical review'. Initiated following a series of discussions at meetings of the College of Teachers, this review includes a wide range of interconnected factors, including whole-school timetabling, curriculum and staffing.
- Develop a sustainable and meaningful alternative for pupils in Classes 9 and 10 who do not take French or German exam subjects. A number of pupils (averaging between 3 and 6 per Class) do not take French or German as an exam subject in Classes 9 or 10.
- Introduce 'settling in' reviews for all new Playgroup and Kindergarten pupils (as distinct from 'trial' reviews). A checklist of areas of wellbeing to ensure all new pupils are observed and supported.
- Embed age-appropriate digital literacy. Following the recommendations of the Digital Literacy Group (DLG), a Working Group established by The College of Teachers in 2019, the School is committed to developing an infrastructure which will deliver programme for age-appropriate digital literacy, including preparing pupils to understand and use responsibly computer and media-based technologies with confidence.

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