



**PHS Parent Council  
18 March 2026**

**Attendees**

Ellie Johnstone, PC Chair (Chair)  
Kevin Ryalls, Head Teacher (HT)  
Karen Mooney, Deputy Head Teacher

Claire Barrett, PC Secretary  
Tristan Compton, PC Vice Chair & Trustee, FoPHS  
Gillian Moran, PC Events Lead

**Apologies:**

6 parents joined the Parent Council meeting. **Parent comments and questions are shown in bold italics with answers given below. Actions are in red.**

**Chair’s Update**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. A reminder was given that the PC Chair and PC Secretary are leaving their posts after the next meeting in May and these roles are available for next session. There may be a need to publicise more widely.

**Action: HT agreed to publicise in his Friday HT update (Chair will provide info).**

The Parent Council Chairs Update meeting was held recently with SBC with the following points highlighted:

- Recruitment for PCs continues to be a challenge. The Chair is trying to work with SBC to improve the support given for Parent Council.
- A pupil counselling service has been provided in Midlothian and will be available in SBC area soon. Referrals can be made by staff and parents.
- The new model for Additional Support Needs was shared, bringing together all staff in the cluster for better connection and collaboration. Sounds ambitious and promising.

HT confirmed that enhanced provision is much improved, particularly with transition from P7 to S1, within the Tweeddale cluster.

**Head Teacher update on Attainment**

HT advised that Depute HT Jeremy Lee will attend the May meeting to talk about Attainment in more detail. In the meantime the HT shared a table on Leaver information, and explained how the results are measured against the Virtual Comparator (VC), ie schools with the same demographic as PHS. These attainment figures are based on Leavers information and not just the qualifications in August. The table shows the percentages for the last 3 years of PHS versus the Virtual Comparator. The figures in the table are % of leavers attaining 5 qualifications at Level 3 – 6 and 1 qualification at Level 7. The 3 numbers are for 2023, 2024, and 2025.

The attainment picture in PHS is very positive.

	5@3	5@4	5@5	5@6	1@7	3@7
PHS	85/89/93	84/87/90	70/73/80	42/54/61	33/42/43	11/9/12
VC	95/93/92	91/91/89	76/79/79	51/52/56	34/36/37	6/6/8

- The figures demonstrate increases in the lower levels (eg Level 3, 4) but not at the expense of the higher levels (Level 6 and 7).
- PHS is now above the VC for Literacy & numeracy, ie English and Maths.
- Positive Destination – a bit up on last year. Leavers who do not have a positive destination are tracked, and followed up. Entry to Higher Ed (Level 7 HND and above, not just Uni) increased to 56%, this is a huge increase.
- Lowest 20%: this was lowest area and the school has had more focus on this with a huge effort and significant improvement in this area.

Meeting Learners’ Needs has been a great focus, staff have a better understanding of pupils’ needs and pupils are backing this up, and this info is being used to respond to those needs in staff planning. If there’s a change, that is linked smoothly from Pastoral, in the IT system.

There was a discussion re whether S6 is being used better for achievement, ie not wasting this year – the stats would suggest they are but this is unconfirmed.

*NB: following this meeting, the Times league tables have been published. In the State Secondary table, PHS has the 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest improvement in the country – up 41 places to rank 41. In 2023 PHS was 104<sup>th</sup>.*

## Update on Learning & Teaching

Deput HT Karen Mooney joined the meeting to update on Learning, Teaching and Assessment. This aligns to the 'One Peebles Vision and Values' of 'Grow' and 'Contribute'. The presentation demonstrated a clear improvement and strong practice in LT&A, and the meeting discussed how the culture has changed to include more challenge.

The slides can be viewed at the **end** of these minutes, but to summarise:

**Data** is now used extensively to inform and improve on L&T, including: HMIE Quality Indicators, Lesson Evaluation Tool (LET) matched staff and pupil surveys, Line manager observations, Faculty learning visits, Staff surveys, focus groups, and improvement reports.

**Key Whole School Messages:** There is strong alignment between staff and pupil perceptions, and the data shows overall improvement over time particularly in high expectations and learner engagement with identified strengths including: Clear routines and strong lesson starts, Calm, respectful learning environments, Positive relationships, High expectations for behaviour and contribution.

**Two priority areas have** been identified for improvement:

- Checks for understanding are not yet consistently frequent, and responses do not always lead to adaptation of teaching.
- Feedback is happening regularly, but its quality, precision, and opportunities for pupil action remain inconsistent.

**External Validation** - Inspection evidence from Hyndland Secondary School (January 2025) is being used as a comparator, where some best practice can be replicated at PHS. A visit will be organised and the PC Chair can also attend.

### ***What can you say about the approach to staff inconsistency in L&T, and where there are issues?***

No department stood out as significantly different from others and that's the first time, so that's encouraging. But there is still inconsistency present. PTs are aware of their role in being direct and challenging – radical candour is the approach and staff are aware. But there is also support through coaching, line manager observations and PT 1:1s. All of these make it more apparent when support is needed. There are many more conversations about performance than there were, as well as pupil focus groups.

Parent Council acknowledged the presentation and welcomed the approach and the culture change. Maybe this hasn't been explained as well to the pupils and parents that this is going on, how data is being used, how this candid feedback is used? This point was taken.

## Consultation on phones in schools

Primary School Parents Rosanna and Heather joined the meeting to discuss the survey they launched on use of phones in schools. This was sent to all Tweeddale primary schools. Rosanna, a GP, noticed a rise in self-harm in young people, and this group with primary children formed to collect information, to be non-judgemental, to engage and collaborate with PHS Parent Council and to get community opinion on the issue.

The meeting discussed if a ban at primary or secondary would be a good idea? The example of Portobello High was discussed, which has a 100% ban on phones in school. 90% of respondents to the survey supported this type of ban at primary, 56% at secondary. 59% of parents were interested in understanding the alternatives. The no1 reason for no ban is to keep in contact.

The HT outlined the current policy – every lesson, phone goes in tray or in bag (50/50) Teachers don't report that this is being disobeyed. Young people are allowed them at social times in school. It is being looked at and the school is interested in the approach in Edinburgh. There is a real worry about use of phones at night – in Whatsapp groups (*see assembly with PC Carsley*).

There was a long discussion around the survey, use of smart phones, use of social media, school responsibility and parental responsibility around this. Education for parents too would be useful. Phones are needed and many yp are 16/17/18 so already using them for work etc. General consensus that a ban on phones in secondary is not really the answer, social media (Whatsapp groups etc) are the issue.

**ACTIONS** – It was agreed that more education is required as well as engagement with parents, staff and pupils. The Safer Scotland app is a good resource. The Survey is still open – the next PC meeting might explore further the 'What parents feel they need to know' section. HT will put on the Head Teachers' agenda too.

## New Building Improvements

**Storage space for students – can we revisit the possibility of lockers?**

There will be no lockers at PHS. Music and PE departments have areas for storage of equipment.

Furniture – there was an instance of a bench in the canteen breaking. This was a one-off and has been dealt with. The issue of some stools not being tall enough for some tables will be fixed, it just takes time.

Toilets allocation – this was raised as the nearest toilet ‘block’ to reception was assigned Male only but these toilets will now be gender neutral. The meeting discussed whether this alienated Females as they would be less likely to use Gender Neutral toilets. The school can decide which ‘blocks’ are assigned to which gender and this can be changed as required/agreed.

The meeting closed at: 9.25pm

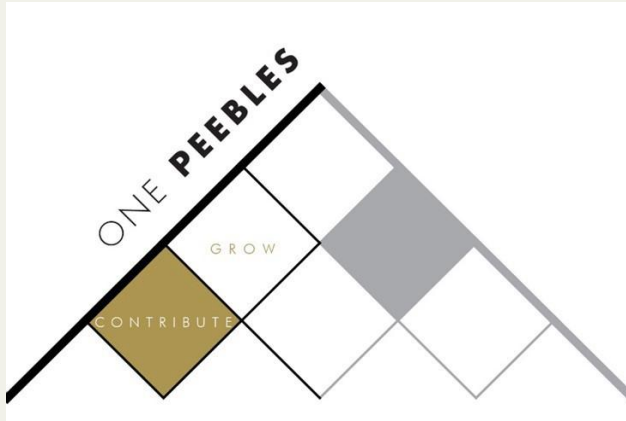
**Next Meeting: 11 May**



## 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

One Peebles Vision: our community where we belong, grow, and achieve

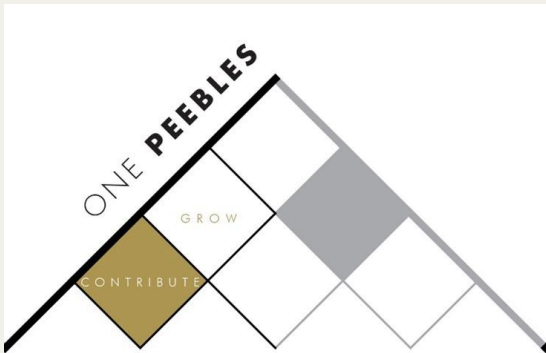
One Peebles Values: Work hard, Show kindness, Contribute



## 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

One Peebles Vision: our community where we belong, grow, and achieve

One Peebles Values: Work hard, Show kindness, Contribute



1. 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment - link to One Peebles Vision and Values.
2. Quality Improvement Data Overview
3. LET (Lesson Evaluation Tool Surveys) Pupil and Staff Matched Surveys - Most Recent Data and Findings
4. Current staff individual, faculty and whole school areas of focus
5. Next Steps



SBC HMIE  
Qs - LTA  
Section  
March -  
closes 23rd

PHS LET  
Matched  
Surveys



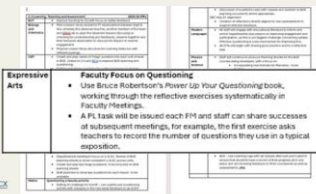
SBC HMIE  
Qs - LTA  
Section

Data

Line Manager  
Observations

Faculty  
Improvement  
Reports  
(informed by  
whole school QI  
activities and  
faculty level  
additional  
activities)

PHS Faculty  
Learning Visits  
Observations,  
Focus Groups and  
Surveys





## 2.3 Lesson Evaluation Tool

**Peebles High School Teaching & Learning Lesson Evaluation Tool**

**One Peebles** A tool to support continuous improvement in teaching & learning

"If we create a culture where every teacher believes they need to improve... not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better, there is no limit to what we can achieve" Dylan William

**Teacher's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Period:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer of applicable:** \_\_\_\_\_

FRS Learning Structure Element	Look Out For...	✓	Notes
<b>Daily Review</b> A short review of previous learning at the beginning of each lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for learners to reflect on and lead their learning (e.g. learners supported to reflect on Daily Review and identify what they will do next to address learning gaps)</li> </ul>		
<b>Learning Interactions</b> A classroom environment where the purpose of a lesson is made explicit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning interactions communicated using "show", "discuss" or "do" or</li> <li>Clear communication accessible to learners throughout the lesson</li> <li>Revisited during lesson and in plenary</li> </ul>		
<b>Success Criteria</b> Statements which state clear what evidence of learning needs to be produced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear Success Criteria shared prior of lesson (e.g. written, demonstrated, draw, explain, name, state... and/or effective use of models)</li> <li>SC communicated accessible to learners throughout the lesson</li> <li>Used to support self assessment and/or peer assessment</li> </ul>		
<b>New Material</b> The new knowledge or skills to be taught and learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New material is broken down into manageable chunks</li> <li>A variety of effective teaching approaches are used</li> <li>Frequent checks for understanding</li> <li>Content is appropriately challenging, matching the needs of learners</li> </ul>		
<b>Practice</b> Opportunities for learners to practice their knowledge understanding or skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate strategies to support and challenge (including adaptive teaching) are employed as learners practice using their knowledge/skills</li> <li>Appropriate opportunities for learner choice</li> <li>The teacher tracks progress of all pupils (e.g. circulating, class, Apple Classroom, traffic lights, show me boards etc.)</li> <li>Feedback is specific and supports progress in learning</li> </ul>		
<b>Probe &amp; Reflect</b> Opportunities for learners to evaluate progress of their learning and lead their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With reference to Success Criteria</li> <li>Opportunities for independent practice to evaluate progress</li> <li>Frequent checks for understanding of all learners</li> </ul>		
<b>Plenary</b> Opportunities for learners to reflect on their learning and lead their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With reference to Success Criteria</li> <li>Plenary enables learners to evaluate progress in their learning and lead their learning (e.g. learners supported to reflect on the extent to which they have met success criteria and identify their next steps)</li> </ul>		

Look Out For...	Notes
<b>The Learning Context</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respectful, expectations are reinforced, meet and greet, strong start (Daily Review), register, outdoor clothing, phones managed, out of class passes, end and send with corridor protocol</li> <li>Positive behaviour is supported and encouraged (first attention to best conduct, positive consequences merits, solutions, appropriate negative consequences)</li> <li>Teachers know pupils well, including individual learning needs, and plan/respond appropriately to meet needs</li> <li>A nurturing environment exists: calm, caring, respectful, inclusive, and where learning is the focus (e.g. pupils feel okay about making mistakes as teachers ensure these are seen as attempts at learning)</li> <li>Relationships are positive (pupil to pupil, staff to pupil)</li> <li>High expectations are set for all and learners are highly motivated and engaged</li> </ul>	
<b>Appropriate Pace and Challenge?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate content enhanced by the use of digital technology</li> <li>Effective use of time (amount of teacher talk, appropriate time for learning structure phase etc.)</li> <li>Interactive instruction ensures active learning-learners are engaged and thinking hard (active in the cognitive sense) rather than compliant and passive-questioning is key</li> <li>Adaptive teaching informed by frequent checks for understanding, teacher circulating and staff knowing individual learning needs</li> <li>Ensuring appropriate support (e.g. teacher support, peer support, digital resources, scaffolds, checklists, prompt use of accessibility tools etc.)</li> </ul>	
<b>Effective Questioning?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategies to ensure all learners think hard and make their thinking visible</li> <li>No hands up all hands up</li> <li>Show me boards</li> <li>Variety of questioning techniques ("open, probe, pressure, learner", "think pair share", "say it again better", "do you agree?" etc.)</li> <li>Active assessment activities (one-to-one, multiple choice, deliberate mistakes, wrong questions, self and peer questioning)</li> <li>Encouraging learners to ask questions to deepen their knowledge and understanding</li> </ul>	
<b>Effective Feedback?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verbal feedback throughout the lesson</li> <li>Individual, group and whole-class feedback</li> <li>Clear and precise strengths and next steps (what does the pupil need to do to improve and how could/should they go about doing it)</li> <li>Links to success criteria ("I can" statements, models etc.)</li> <li>Time given to allow pupils to act on feedback</li> </ul>	
<b>Learner Voice</b>	
<b>Strengths in this lesson:</b>	<b>Even Better if:</b>



## 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

There are regular routines: expectations are reinforced, meet and greet, strong start (Daily Review), register, outdoor clothing, phones managed, out of class passes. end and send with corridor pr...

Positive behaviour is supported and encouraged (first attention to best conduct, positive consequences: merits, solutions, appropriate negative consequences).

I know the pupils well, including individual learning needs, and I plan/respond appropriately to meet needs.

A nurturing environment exists: calm, caring, respectful, inclusive and where learning is the focus (e.g. pupils feel okay about making mistakes as teachers ensure these are seen as attempts at le...

Relationships are positive (pupil to pupil, staff to pupil).

High expectations are set for all and learners are highly motivated and engaged.

The lesson content is appropriate and enhanced by the use of digital technology. (Question changed Dec 2025 to remove ref to digital)

The lesson content is appropriate and enhanced by the use of digital technology. (Question changed Dec 2025 to remove reference to appropriate content)

There is interactive instruction that ensures active learning-learners are engaged in thinking hard (active in the cognitive sense) rather than compliant and passive-questioning is key.

Teaching is adaptive informed by frequent checks of understanding. I respond to the learning needs of individuals and circulate during the lesson.

There is appropriate support (e.g. teacher support, peer support, digital resources, scaffolds, checklists, accessibility tools).

There is appropriate challenge (e.g. teacher interaction to support moving learners on/deepening learning, digital resources etc.)

### Extracts from staff survey



## 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

There is interactive instruction that ensures active learning-learners are engaged in thinking hard (active in the cognitive sense) rather than compliant and passive-questioning is key.	May-24	9.30%	36.05%	34.88%	19.77%
	Nov-24	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%
	May-25	35.7%	42.9%	21.4%	0.0%
	Dec-25	41.7%	41.7%	16.7%	0.0%
	May-24	40.70%	39.53%	18.60%	1.16%
Teaching is adaptive informed by frequent checks of understanding. I respond to the learning needs of individuals and circulate during the lesson.	Nov-24	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%
	May-25	46.4%	46.4%	7.1%	0.0%
	Dec-25	47.2%	44.4%	8.3%	0.0%
	May-24	29.07%	33.72%	30.23%	6.98%
There is appropriate support (e.g. teacher support, peer support, digital resources, scaffolds, checklists, accessibility tools).	Nov-24	12.5%	75.0%	12.5%	0.0%
	May-25	32.1%	53.6%	13.1%	1.2%
	Dec-25	27.8%	52.8%	16.7%	2.8%
	May-24	19.77%	38.37%	30.23%	11.63%
There is appropriate challenge (e.g. teacher interaction to support moving learners on/deepening learning, digital resources etc.)	Nov-24	12.5%	75.0%	12.5%	0.0%
	May-25	27.4%	52.4%	20.2%	0.0%
	Dec-25	41.7%	50.0%	8.3%	0.0%



## 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### Key Whole School Messages

#### Staff and pupil perceptions match

- Where staff say practice is strong, pupils experience it as strong
- Where staff say practice is developing, pupils feel the same

#### Strengths

- Clear routines and strong lesson starts
- Calm, respectful learning environments
- Positive relationships
- High expectations for behaviour and contribution



## 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### Key Whole School Messages (Continued)

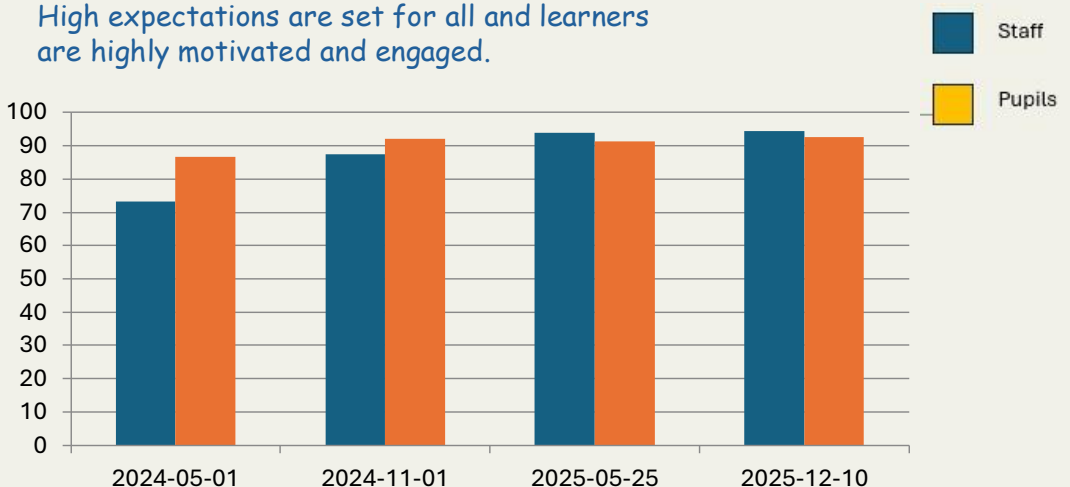
#### To improve

- Checks for understanding are not yet consistently frequent and responses to these checks don't always lead to adaptation
- Feedback is happening but quality, precision, and opportunities for pupil action on feedback are inconsistent



## 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment HGIOS

High expectations are set for all and learners are highly motivated and engaged.

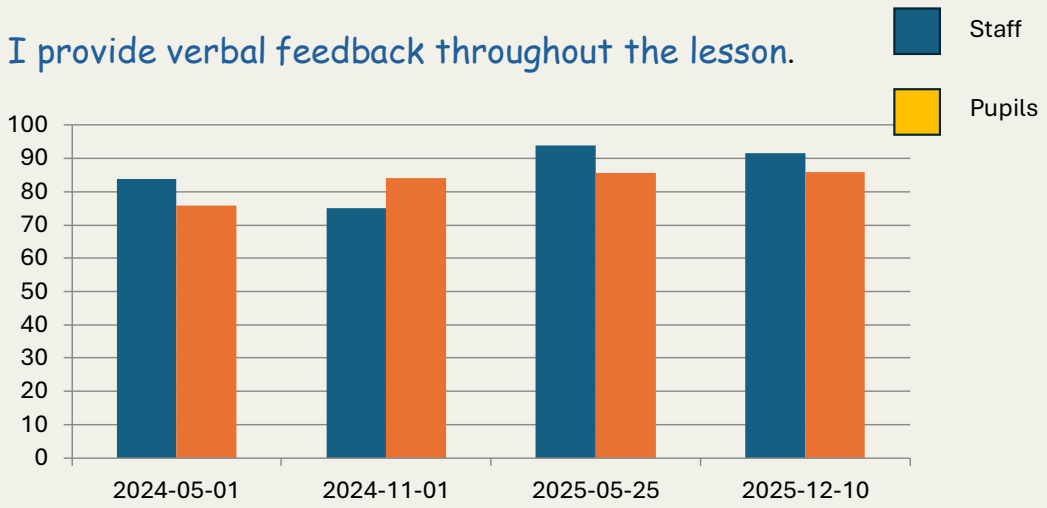


Overall trend: improving over time  
Staff vs pupil gap: 2.0% (staff higher)  
Consistency improving but variation remains



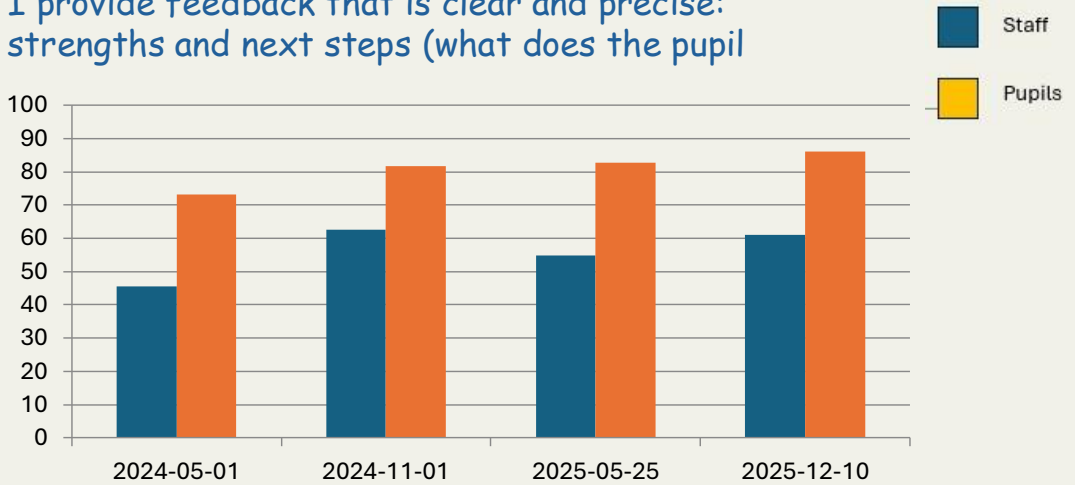
## 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment HGIOS

I provide verbal feedback throughout the lesson.



## 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

I provide feedback that is clear and precise: strengths and next steps (what does the pupil)



Overall trend: improving over time  
Staff vs pupil gap: 25.0% (pupil higher)



## Grow and Contribute - A vision for improvement of 2.3

- In our One Peebles community, growing and contributing go hand in hand.
- Learners grow through active engagement in their learning, reflecting on their progress, and responding to high-quality feedback that helps them understand their next steps. They contribute by sharing ideas, supporting each other, and meeting our core expectations for positive behaviour and engagement with learning, helping to create a respectful and productive learning environment where everyone can achieve.
- Staff grow professionally through collaboration, reflection, and professional learning that strengthens practice and has a clear impact on learners. By sharing expertise and contributing to our collective development, we continually improve teaching and learning across our community.
- Parents are well informed about learning, progress, and next steps, enabling meaningful conversations at home and encouraging learners to take ownership — *ask your child*. Through approaches such as learning conversation driven reporting, we strengthen shared understanding, reduce unnecessary enquiries, and build a partnership where everyone plays an active role.



## 2.3 Pupils say... Parents say... Staff say...

### Pupils say...

- I understand what I am learning and what I need to do next.
- I use feedback to improve my work and can show how I've improved.
- I can explain my progress and my next steps confidently.
- I am actively involved in my learning and take responsibility for it.
- I share ideas, support others, and contribute positively in class.
- I meet expectations for behaviour and help create a focused learning environment.

### Parents say...

- I understand how my child is progressing and what their next steps are
- My child can clearly explain their learning and what they are working on
- I feel informed and confident supporting my child's learning.
- I am involved in the learning process by talking to my child and engaging with opportunities to learn together.



## 2.3 Pupils say... Parents say... Staff say...

### Staff say...

- I provide high-quality feedback that clearly identifies next steps.
- I build time into lessons for learners to reflect and respond to feedback.
- I support learners to understand and explain their progress.
- I create opportunities for learners to take ownership and lead aspects of their learning.
- I use questioning and coaching approaches to deepen thinking.
- I work collaboratively with colleagues to improve my practice and its impact.
- I engage in professional learning that strengthens teaching and contributes to our collective development.
- I involve pupils and parents in evaluation and improvement.



## 2.3 Hyndland Secondary

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- The outstanding culture and environment for learning across the school supports young people to be **empowered partners in their learning.**
- Teachers who work collaboratively to ensure **approaches to learner engagement and learner conversations are very high quality, consistent and well planned.** Teachers deliver excellent innovative classroom experiences which empower young people to take lead roles in their learning.

**2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

**Excellent**

*Hyndland Secondary School, Inspection Letter,  
January 2025 (Hyndland Secondary School  
inspection report, Glasgow City Council  
21/01/25)*



## Extract from Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF)

All teachers carry out regularly planned learning conversations and this purposeful approach to high-quality discussions is a major strength across the school. **Almost all young people value these discussions highly.** Importantly, these focused learning conversations assist learners to identify their progress in learning, agree next steps, and agree their targets for success. Young people take responsibility for recording and logging these conversations on a digital platform. **Parents comment on how helpful these discussions are to their own understanding of their child's progress.** In the strongest practice, learner conversation targets are revisited with teachers to analyse their impact and inform next steps. This robust approach helps to ensure **almost all learners feel they are supported to understand their progress and to achieve the best possible outcomes.**

Extract from Hyndland Summarised Inspection Findings (Hyndland Secondary School summarised inspection findings, Glasgow City Council 21/01/25)

Please get in touch around any of the issues raised at [phspc@outlook.com](mailto:phspc@outlook.com)

### Helpful Info/Reminders

Parent Council Meeting Dates for 2025/26	Post Holders
11 May 2026	Chair – Ellie Johnstone
	Vice Chair – Tristan Compton
	Secretary – Claire Barrett
	Communications Officer –
	Event Coordinator – Gillian Moran
	Friends of Peebles High School SCIO representative
	Property Working Group Lead – Tristan Compton
	Taskforce Coordinator – post vacant

We welcome interested parents & carers on the Parent Council as general members or working group members. We simply ask that you try to attend meetings regularly. If you would like to be an ordinary member or join a specific working group, please email your details to: [phspc@outlook.com](mailto:phspc@outlook.com)

Any parent or carer interested in supporting the Friends of PHS charity with running fundraising activities should get in touch at <mailto:FriendsOfPHS@outlook.com>

**Website:** [phsparents.org.uk](http://phsparents.org.uk)      **Facebook:**      **PHS Parents** – can contact us via Messenger  
**Twitter:**      [@PHSparents](https://twitter.com/PHSparents)      [@PeeblesHigh](https://twitter.com/PeeblesHigh)