



# Whole school and community approach to learning for sustainability (LfS)

## Self-evaluation and improvement framework

## Introduction

How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS4?) aims to support the growth of a culture of self-improvement across Scottish education. It outlines a range of key national objectives including supporting practitioners and school leaders at all levels to “increase learning for sustainability”. This LfS self-evaluation and improvement framework is closely aligned with HGIOS4? and is intended to complement wider conversations around whole school evaluation and improvement.

The adjacent diagram illustrates how an “inwards, outwards, forwards” approach remains at the heart of effective self-evaluation. Through this approach you will look inwards to analyse your work, look outwards to find out more about what is working well for others locally and nationally and look forwards to gauge what continuous improvement might look like in the longer term. The different stages of this reflective cycle provide all stakeholders with an opportunity to work towards a coherent whole school and community approach to learning for sustainability.

### Using the LfS self-evaluation and improvement framework

- This framework can be used to stimulate dialogue and action towards a whole school and community approach to learning for sustainability.
- The progression statements from ‘Starting the journey’ through to ‘Features of highly effective practice’ have been organised for consideration under the three main categories from HGIOS4?: *Leadership and Management*, *Learning Provision*, *Successes and Achievements*.
- Each category has a suggested group of linked Quality Indicators (QIs) from HGIOS4? so they can be easily matched to existing improvement priorities for your establishment. The categories within this framework can be used flexibly and either addressed collectively or one or two at a time.
- Challenge questions are provided to support professional dialogue. The final page of the framework provides a pro-forma to record your self-evaluation and actions against your chosen focus.



Learning for sustainability (LfS) is an approach to learning, life and work. It enables learners, educators, schools and their wider communities to build a socially-just, sustainable and equitable society. An effective whole school and community approach to LfS weaves together global citizenship,

sustainable development education, outdoor learning and children's rights to create coherent, rewarding and transformative learning experiences. LfS is fully embedded in the [General Teaching Council for Scotland's Professional Standards](#) and is recognised as an entitlement for all learners.



The above word cloud captures a range of LfS themes, contexts and approaches. It provides a useful reference point for staff discussion and reflection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	STARTING THE JOURNEY	BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE (LEVEL 5)
<p><b>Self-evaluation for self-improvement</b></p> <p>HGIOS4? QI links 1.1, 2.6</p>	<p>We have identified LfS as an area for improvement in our establishment. Through dialogue and engagement activities we are starting to raise awareness of LfS and its relevance to our learners.</p> <p>We are looking inwards at current LfS practice and have taken some steps to look outwards to learn from others.</p> <p>We have looked forwards and know what we need to do next. Planning is underway to gather baseline information and evidence to provide a clear picture of our starting point and how we might measure our impact.</p>	<p>We have developed a vision for LfS and how it can be used to meet the needs of learners. An increasing number of staff, learners and stakeholders have an understanding of LfS.</p> <p>Through evaluation and consultation with stakeholders we have reviewed progress against our initial action plan. Our community has a shared understanding of our on-going improvement needs. We have improved how we are looking outwards to learn from others and challenge our practice.</p> <p>Where necessary, LfS is included in our establishment improvement plan, providing a clear way forward. We have started to gather evidence and information to monitor and track progress in relation to LfS.</p>	<p>We have a strong and well-established vision for LfS and its relevance to learners. Our LfS provision is underpinned by a clear rationale. Almost all staff, learners and stakeholders have a good understanding of LfS. LfS has a high profile in our school.</p> <p>Improvement planning approaches in relation to LfS are embedded in the culture of the establishment. All staff, parents and partners are fully involved. Learners are put at the centre of this process and have a strong voice in all developments. We are looking outwards more effectively and systematically, including within our school cluster, to address our improvement needs and ensure we have a coherent and progressive approach to LfS. We draw on research and data from Scotland and beyond to inform developments.</p> <p>Planning for LfS is well embedded in the culture of our establishment. We are focussed on continuous improvement and gather a wide range of evidence to demonstrate the impact of LfS on learners' successes and achievements. We reach out to other establishments to share ideas, practice and support mutual improvement.</p>

**Challenge questions:** How well do all stakeholders know and understand what is meant by the term learning for sustainability? How do we ensure improvement for the learner is central to our LfS self-evaluation activity? How well are we doing in global citizenship, sustainable development education and outdoor learning? How does provision in these three areas of LfS compare? How do we know? How well do we involve all stakeholders, including learners, in self-evaluation of LfS and planning for improvement? How well is evidence from self-evaluation being used to drive forward change?

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	STARTING THE JOURNEY	BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE (LEVEL 5)
<p><b>Leadership of learning</b></p> <p>HGIOS4? QI links 1.2, 2.7</p>	<p>Some staff have benefitted from career-long professional learning (CLPL) opportunities addressing LfS themes and approaches. There is some awareness of key LfS policies and documentation.</p> <p>Our coordinators work with pupil groups, such as the Pupil Council, to develop opportunities in relation to outdoor learning, sustainable development education and global citizenship. Pupil groups have yet to explore ways of working together in a coordinated way.</p>	<p>An increasing number of our staff are engaged in a programme of career-long professional learning which supports collaborative and collegiate working. CLPL builds confidence and capacity around pedagogical approaches that support LfS. We can identify where this CLPL has begun to improve outcomes for learners. In some cases, professional review and development (PRD) activities have started to include a focus on LfS.</p> <p>More of our staff share the responsibility for working with pupil groups to increase participation and help learners lead their own learning. Strategic links are starting to be made between the work of pupil groups and other planned LfS experiences.</p>	<p>We have a learning culture within our school aligned to the values and actions within the GTCS professional standards. Staff work collegiately to learn from each other and critically engage with research and practice from a range of sources. Staff demonstrate high levels of motivation, and professional commitment to LfS and understand the contribution LfS makes to key national priorities such as raising attainment and achievement, tackling inequity and to Developing Scotland's Young Workforce. The effectiveness of our CLPL is evidenced by a range of reliable data demonstrating improved outcomes for learners. This may be demonstrated in some instances through Masters-level learning, seeking GTCS accreditation, participating in leadership programmes, or building capacity of colleagues through mentoring approaches.</p> <p>There is leadership at all levels in relation to LfS. LfS is fully supported and coordinated at SMT level and there is a strategic balance across the different aspects of global citizenship, sustainable development education, outdoor learning, participation and learner voice. All of our LfS activities are recognised as contributions towards a coherent and holistic whole school approach to learning for sustainability.</p>

**Challenge questions:** How well do we support staff to access CLPL that builds confidence in LfS? To what extent are we utilising existing expertise to build LfS capacity across our establishment? How do we know that our professional learning in LfS is improving outcomes for learners? How well do we promote a culture of professional enquiry? How effectively are staff applying relevant findings from research to improve their LfS provision? To what extent are we encouraging learners to lead their own learning across a range of LfS contexts? How effectively do we ensure that LfS activities across our school are connected to other strategic priorities?

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	STARTING THE JOURNEY	BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE (LEVEL 5)
<p><b>Leadership of change</b></p>	<p>Our staff are aware of some LfS themes and can identify what these look like in their context. There is good practice in some aspects of LfS including global citizenship, outdoor learning and sustainable development education. A coherent unifying vision for LfS has yet to be developed.</p> <p>Some of our policies reflect LfS themes and some attempt has been made to make decision-making processes more inclusive.</p>	<p>Staff awareness and understanding of LfS is increasing. We are making strategic connections between LfS and our other priorities. LfS is helping to build positive relationships across all levels in our establishment. More stakeholders, including parents, can explain how the school culture is enabling LfS.</p> <p>We have made a commitment to increase stakeholder participation in decision-making and developing policies. Some staff and learners are able to explain which policies support LfS and how these are embedded in the life of the school. There is an increasing awareness of children's rights and how they are recognised.</p>	<p>Our LfS culture is fully embedded in our establishment and all stakeholders are fully involved in decision-making and planning. A positive, open and participative ethos is exemplified in a warm, respectful and caring atmosphere and a strong community spirit. This is impacting on the wellbeing of learners, staff and the wider community. Staff and stakeholders have a strong personal commitment to LfS and a values-based approach. There is a shared vision of an effective whole school and community approach to LfS and a collective ambition to make this a reality.</p> <p>LfS themes are reflected through policies and inclusive decision making processes, from ethical purchasing to CLPL provision. This CLPL provision provides structured opportunities for practitioners to engage with the <a href="#">GTCS professional standards</a>, including those that require a commitment to "democracy and social justice through fair, transparent, inclusive and sustainable policies and practices."</p>
<p><b>Leadership and management of staff</b></p> <p>HGIOS4? QI links 1.3, 1.4, 2.7</p>	<p>Driving forward the LfS agenda is largely left to one or two practitioners, co-ordinators or champions.</p>	<p>An increasing number of staff, learners and stakeholders are providing leadership in relation to LfS. More stakeholders, including learners, can demonstrate their on-going involvement in shaping an LfS culture through planning, consultation and partnership working.</p>	<p>Shared leadership regarding LfS is supported at all levels. The agenda has a high profile and is recognised as a priority by all and "just what we do here." Staff have ownership of the LfS vision and think critically and share practice effectively through networks. Staff engage effectively with a range of partners to ensure all learners receive their entitlement to LfS.</p>

**Challenge questions:** How effectively have we involved the whole school community in aligning our vision, values and aims with LfS? How effective are we at building a culture of inclusion and participation and supporting the development of positive relationship and ethos? To what extent does LfS feature in the PRD process for all staff? To what extent does our staff induction and mentoring process for recently appointed teachers offer opportunities to learn about and lead on LfS? How well does our school promote stakeholder engagement in relation to LfS policies?

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	STARTING THE JOURNEY	BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE (LEVEL 5)
<p><b>Management of resources to promote equity</b></p> <p>HGIOS4? QI links 1.5,2.1, 2.2, 2.5 2.7</p>	<p>We are beginning to explore how our school buildings and grounds can support learning for sustainability. Some work has been done to improve environmental practice in relation to waste minimisation and energy and water usage.</p> <p>Some effort has been made to improve our school grounds. The outdoor environment is beginning to support daily contact with nature.</p> <p>We have a school travel plan and provide some bike racks/shelters to support active travel.</p>	<p>An increasing range of initiatives are being supported to make our school campus more sustainable. Data is being gathered to demonstrate the positive impact these are making. We are increasingly using these activities to provide greater depth and relevance in our curriculum and to build the skills and leadership of our learners.</p> <p>We have developed more spaces within the campus to support learning about local and global issues. Our grounds are beginning to help learners communicate, negotiate, cooperate, problem solve and manage risk. We have started planting and growing in the school grounds or in local community facilities. More of our staff are planning and delivering outdoor learning.</p> <p>Access to the outdoors is available for a range of learning activities including regular visits to local places within walking/ cycling distance of the campus. We are working with a range of stakeholders and partners to encourage active travel and are beginning to see improvements.</p>	<p>We have evidence and data to demonstrate improvements to the sustainability of our school building and grounds. We have learner-led action plans in place to drive further progress. We are making connections between our local LfS work and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We consider ethical and environmental issues in relation to procurement and use of resources.</p> <p>Our grounds are varied and provide stimulating opportunities for learning, developing skills and engaging with nature. We have increased biodiversity and planting and growing food is well established. This is enhancing parental and community engagement. Our outdoor learning practice aims to tackle inequity and is informed by research. Where possible, we are making use of local greenspaces and community resources to extend outdoor learning opportunities.</p> <p>Our school travel plan is linked to our curriculum. We have gathered data to show that active travel has increased. Our learners are leading local action planning to increase use of cycle routes and walkways. Public transport is regularly used for activities and learning visits further afield.</p>

**Challenge questions:** To what extent are all stakeholders involved in creating a more sustainable school? How well do we utilise our school buildings and grounds to support learning and develop leadership and skills of learners? To what extent do our school grounds promote wellbeing and support parental and community engagement? How well do we use our local community to deliver high-quality outdoor learning? How well are we promoting active travel to the wider school community? To what extent does our use of resources and our procurement practices support our vision for LfS?

LEARNING PROVISION	STARTING THE JOURNEY	BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE (LEVEL 5)
<p><b>Curriculum</b></p>	<p>LfS themes have been embedded in a few obvious curriculum areas as a result of the commitment of a small number of dedicated practitioners. Some attempt has been made to connect learning across a small number of subjects or curriculum areas. LfS is typically delivered through one-off focus days or themed weeks.</p> <p>Learners in some classes or pupil groups are developing skills for learning, life and work through LfS activities. Planning processes in relation to progression have yet to include LfS.</p>	<p>Stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to the design and development of the curriculum. The curriculum rationale increasingly reflects LfS themes and approaches such as a commitment to children's rights. We are linking global citizenship, sustainable development education and outdoor learning in a more systematic way. LfS contexts are supporting interdisciplinary learning.</p> <p>We are integrating LfS more effectively into our planning to meet the needs and aspirations of our learners and enhance their skills development. We are considering progression in relation to LfS activities.</p>	<p>The development of our curriculum is underpinned by a whole school approach to LfS. LfS themes and approaches are embedded in the four contexts for learning. All practitioners demonstrate LfS in their practice and all learners receive their entitlement to learning for sustainability. Outdoor learning is a regular, curriculum-led experience for all learners. Learners engage in motivating and relevant interdisciplinary activities relating to LfS themes.</p> <p>Cluster planning ensures effective progression in LfS. Learning pathways are enhanced through the use of outdoor spaces and community partnerships. LfS is being used to promote skills for learning, life and work including leadership and higher order thinking skills.</p>
<p><b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b></p> <p>HGIOS4? QI links 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2</p>	<p>There is some evidence of high-quality learning experiences relating to LfS in our school but a consistent approach is yet to emerge. Young people are predominately consulted through the Pupil Council. Learners have some opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and wider community.</p>	<p>We are taking steps to ensure LfS is being used more consistently to enhance learning and engagement. Awareness and understanding of children's rights are increasing and we are giving more responsibility and choice to young people. We are exploring new methods and approaches to ensure learning experiences reflect LfS themes and are challenging, enjoyable and promote resilience and independent learning. We are gathering evidence of learners' achievements.</p>	<p>The ethos and culture of our school reflects a commitment to children's rights, effective participation and positive relationships. Our teaching is aligned to our vision and values and underpinned by the GTCS professional standards. Learners are given opportunities to lead learning and topical LfS themes and approaches are used to create engaging, responsive and motivating learning experiences. Our learners contribute effectively to the life of the school and wider community. Learners' LfS achievements in and out of school are recorded, recognised and accredited, where appropriate.</p>

**Challenge questions:** To what extent are we meeting our learners' entitlement to LfS? How effectively is our establishment joining up the different aspects of LfS in our curriculum? How well are we employing LfS pedagogies to raise attainment and tackle inequity? How well is LfS being used to support progression in learning across transitions? To what extent are we using our outdoor and community spaces to enhance learning? How well do our approaches to profiling include LfS experiences?

LEARNING PROVISION	STARTING THE JOURNEY	BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE (LEVEL 5)
<p><b>Partnerships</b></p> <p>HGIOS4? QI links 2.5, 2.7</p>	<p>Our school has partnerships with a number of local organisations, businesses and national third sector organisations including charity and voluntary groups.</p> <p>Some parents are involved in our LfS work through the parent council or volunteering for one-off events</p>	<p>The school is using partnerships to more effectively progress LfS learning and activities. There is increasing evidence of how community partnerships are enhancing the curriculum and learning about the wider world. We are developing a shared vision, values and aims with our partners to improve outcomes for learners.</p> <p>An increasing number of parents are contributing to our establishment's LfS activities on a more regular basis, through initiatives such as volunteering to develop the school grounds, supporting community engagement and trips or sharing their professional expertise with learners.</p>	<p>Our school effectively engages with partners to promote a coherent whole school approach to LfS. We have a clear strategy for growing existing partnerships and establishing new ones to support LfS and fully connect young people to their communities. Partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect and partners are involved at the start of planning processes. The school is recognised as being open to new ideas and is highly regarded for the active role it plays in community engagement, personal development and active citizenship. Our partnership working is strengthening leadership at all levels in our school. Connections have been made between formal learning and community-based learning and development.</p> <p>LfS activities have significantly enhanced parental and community engagement. Relationships between staff, learners, parents and wider community groups are wholly positive and mutually beneficial. Our school understands and plays a significant role in the life of the community, resulting in an improved community spirit.</p>

**Challenge questions:** What opportunities do our learners and staff have to work with others to contribute effectively to their communities as active citizens? To what extent do we involve parents in our LfS activities? How well do we seek out and respond positively to potential partnerships which will help us meet the entitlement of every learner to LfS? How well do we identify priorities, communicate, plan, monitor and evaluate our work with partners? Are we clear what added value each partnership brings?

SUCSESSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS	STARTING THE JOURNEY	BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE (LEVEL 5)
<p><b>Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion</b></p>	<p>Some learners have the opportunity to engage in activities such as charity fundraising, conservation work, campaigning and awareness raising through committees, clubs and societies. Pupil councils and focus groups are in operation but we have yet to consider how their work relates to LfS across the whole school.</p>	<p>We have considered the needs of learners to ensure more are included and benefit from LfS experiences. LfS is increasingly embedded in our curriculum. This is building confidence and removing barriers to learning. We are developing our outdoor spaces to promote wellbeing and inclusion.</p>	<p>LfS activities support our ethos and culture of participation and inclusion. This is linked to Getting It Right For Every Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. There is a strong focus on learner voice in decision-making and planning. We value and celebrate diversity and challenge discrimination and prejudice. Outdoor spaces are used effectively to promote positive relationships and wellbeing. Positive relationships build a strong sense of community.</p>
<p><b>Raising attainment and achievement</b></p>	<p>LfS activities are improving outcomes for some learners particularly through participation of pupil groups or as a result of a small number of committed practitioners. Some learners are being given an opportunity for personal achievement in LfS.</p>	<p>An increasing number of learners are benefitting from improved outcomes as a result of LfS experiences and active community participation. LfS is beginning to raise attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. We are more explicitly recognising the impact of LfS in relation to learners' skills, capabilities and attributes.</p>	<p>LfS activities and learning are helping to achieve the best possible outcomes for all learners. Motivating and engaging LfS experiences are raising attainment and promoting a culture of achievement. Learners' achievements are tracked, recognised and accredited where appropriate. Particular attention is given to removing barriers to learning and raising attainment of our most disadvantaged learners. Learners contribute to the school and society as global citizens.</p>
<p><b>Creativity and employability</b></p> <p>HGIOS4? QI links 3.1, 3.2, 3.3</p>	<p>Staff are beginning to engage children and young people in meaningful discussion about their skills development in relation to LfS activities.</p>	<p>LfS is supporting creativity and skills development. Learners can make the links between their LfS achievements and the development of skills for learning, life and work. We are improving how LfS achievements are recorded in learner profiles. We are beginning to explore how LfS can help develop our young workforce.</p>	<p>LfS methodologies support creativity and encourage learners to think critically, be imaginative, open-minded and solution-focussed. Information about careers linked to the breadth of the LfS agenda is embedded within learning and teaching. Learners continue to develop an international mind-set to help them thrive in an increasingly globalised world.</p>

**Challenge questions:** To what extent are we using LfS to promote inclusion and wellbeing? How well do we recognise and value the personal achievements of all learners? How good are we at recognising and realising children's rights through participation? How well do we understand and promote career opportunities linked to LfS? To what extent do we use our school buildings and grounds (and developments/ renovations of the school estate) to develop LfS-related skills for learning, life and work? To what extent have we linked our LfS to the [Career Education Standard 3 - 18?](#)

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SELF-EVALUATION**

**ACTIONS**

**Focus area:** (e.g. Leadership of change)  
**Questions:** Where are we? How do we know? What do we need to do to improve?

**LEARNING PROVISION SELF-EVALUATION**

**ACTIONS**

**Focus area:** (e.g. Curriculum)  
**Questions:** Where are we? How do we know? What do we need to do to improve?

**SUCSESSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS SELF-EVALUATION**

**ACTIONS**

**Focus area:** (e.g. Raising Attainment and Achievement)  
**Questions:** Where are we? How do we know? What do we need to do to improve?