



Extended Learning and Achievement Visit (ELAV) Report Breadalbane Academy 31 May & 1 June 2018 (Nursery, Primary and Secondary, All-Through School)

BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers from Education and Children's Services visited Breadalbane Academy on **31 May & 1 June 2018**. The themes for the review were achievement, learning and leadership. These themes were subject to scrutiny through core Quality Indicators from *How good is our school* (4th edition).

At the time of the visit the school roll was as follows: Nursery 41, Primary 203 and Secondary 436; 680 in total. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) consisted of the Headteacher; two Secondary Depute Headteachers (one Depute Headteacher School Improvement, one Depute Headteacher Support for Staff and Pupils), one Depute Headteacher Primary and a Business Manager. Attendance in session 2016-17 was 92% in the Secondary and 95% in the Primary which is in line with the Perth and Kinross Council schools' average and is above the national average.

Information was gathered from class visits, scrutiny of a range of data sources, professional dialogue with SLT and staff, focus groups with pupils and parents and the school's self-evaluation and school improvement documentation.

ACHIEVEMENT

Most children moving into primary one had met all developmental milestones. In the primary, overall, pupils are making good progress in their attainment. The majority of learners in primary one had achieved expected levels in line with national expectations in listening and talking, reading and writing, with most achieving expected levels in numeracy. Almost all children in primary four achieved expected levels in reading, with most primary four learners achieving expected levels for listening and talking and numeracy with the majority achieving expected levels for writing. At primary seven, the majority of learners had achieved expected levels in writing, with most achieving expected levels in listening and talking, reading and numeracy.

Attainment data in the primary shows an improvement in attainment across all levels over time. Identified individuals and groups of pupils are being supported in developing their skills in areas of literacy and numeracy with early indications of having a positive impact on learners' confidence and abilities.

Overall, pupils in the secondary are making very good progress in their attainment and achievement. In S3, at the end of the broad and general education, in the session 2016/17, 95% of young people in S3 had achieved at the third level in literacy and 95% in numeracy. 77% of S3 pupils had achieved at fourth level in literacy and 64% in numeracy. The school's performance in literacy and numeracy at S3 is significantly higher than the Perth and Kinross Council average. The school has robust tracking, monitoring and moderation processes, their use of assessment information and benchmarks, together with teacher professionalism validates these processes.

Leavers achieved above the virtual comparator* (VC) in literacy and numeracy at Level 4 and just below the VC at level 5 on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. There is a consistent pattern of conversion from S3 attainment to National 4 and National 5 in S4 literacy & numeracy.

*The virtual comparator consists of a sample group of school leavers from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the school leavers from the school in question.

There is a range of information available to primary staff regarding pupil progress over time. Diagnostic assessments, along with ongoing literacy and numeracy assessments provide support for teachers to plan appropriately for learning and teaching. The Perth and Kinross tracking and monitoring spreadsheet is being used to track and record progress. In continuing to raise attainment, across the primary there should be a planned increase and engagement in moderation activities to continue to build a shared understanding of expectations for progress and achievement. Across the school, approaches to data analysis and intervention should be reviewed, considering how best to develop these processes to capitalise on the opportunities presented by the all-through structure to support meeting the needs of all.

The school has a clear vision for improving attainment for all. In the nursery and primary, there are planned opportunities to engage in wider achievement activities in class, through interdisciplinary learning. For example: Primary six pupils visited Dun Coillich to plant trees to support the rejuvenation of this area. They also participate in the John Muir Award and have worked with Primary 5 and Academy 9 to learn about Civil Engineering. The secondary has taken a comprehensive approach to developing its wider achievement offering. Staff have audited their current provision using the Perth & Kinross Wider Achievement Standard and aligned their approach with national policy of Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (DYW) and the National Improvement Framework priority of improving employability skills and pathways to sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people. Secondary pupils told us that activities included in the school's vision for universal outdoor education, such as the hill climb, have been highly valued by pupils. They also reported that employer partner curricular contributions are engaging and provide added relevance and enjoyment to their learning. A particularly effective example is the all-through Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) programme, which the visit team considered to be outstanding. There is now an opportunity to consider that the wider achievement offer is from nursery through to senior phase, profiling and tracking the development of the skills for learning, life and work.

The secondary has a well-considered and systematic approach to DYW and are beginning to build further upon this in the primary. They have established a wide range of strategic partnerships and business relationships with numerous local employers who are co-delivering with departments and classes as an integral part of the curriculum. In addition to this, partners are offering a wide range of work experience opportunities to support learners in the senior phase which are in the main flexible, relevant, ongoing placements. The employer partners we spoke to were extremely positive about the school staff and their willingness to work together to improve outcomes for learners. 95% of young people who left the school in 2017 entered into a positive destination. This is in line with the VC and above the national average. The secondary is performing significantly above the VC in relation to the 'Attainment for All' benchmark in Insight for the highest 20% and the middle 60% of learners, the lowest attaining 20% of learners are performing in line with the VC.

Pupils across the school indicated that they feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Partners feel welcomed and valued. They appreciate

having the opportunity to plan with the school in order to extend the range and effectiveness of supports to meet identified need.

Child protection, additional support needs and safeguarding policies are in place which reflect the most recent legislation and are scrutinised on a regular basis. The school needs to ensure it systematically updates and reviews relevant documentation. There are very positive relationships between staff and children and a good understanding of the barriers to learning. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place, where appropriate, to ensure young people are safe and secure whilst at school. Support staff work effectively as a team to provide personalised support for individual children and groups of learners.

In general, the parents we spoke to were satisfied with the level and quality of communication between them and school staff. In the primary, almost all parents said they feel well informed **about their child's learning**. In the secondary, parents said that they would like more frequent information **about their child's progress and** suggested that the school look at new ways of sharing learning with parents. They praised the planned use of digital technology to enhance parental engagement. Almost all parents we spoke to have a high level of confidence that they could contact the school if required and that any concerns would be addressed appropriately. The school is well placed to continue its current approach to increasing and improving strong, positive parent-school partnerships both within and outwith the Parent Council.

LEARNING

There is a sense of belonging and a warm, positive ethos across the school learning environment. Pupils are enthusiastic, polite and engaged in their learning. They interact positively with their peers and staff in a respectful manner. Almost all of the pupils we spoke to were positive about school and motivated to do well. They felt very satisfied with their experiences as learners. In promoting health and wellbeing strategies such as the responsibilities of all, the language of restorative approaches and the wellbeing indicators, the school needs to ensure all staff have a shared understanding of their collective responsibility for this and to ensure restorative approaches are evident in all interactions.

In the nursery, children were observed to be happy, confident and independent in their learning. Positive relationships are evident between staff and children and their families. Staff have **created a calm and nurturing environment that supports children's learning. There is good use of the outdoor environment and local community to extend children's learning experiences.** All children are fully engaged in their learning which is planned to reflect their own interests. Loose parts play is supporting children to explore and discover. Staff make good use of open-ended questions to provide challenge and encourage thinking skills.

Across the primary, almost all learners understand the purpose of their learning and have this shared with them through the effective use of clear learning intentions and success criteria. In the most engaging lessons, success criteria were created with the learners and referenced throughout the lesson to ensure appropriate pace and challenge. In most lessons, pupils were engaged in and motivated by their learning. Teachers should ensure that planned learning experiences are differentiated appropriately to ensure all pupils are challenged by their learning and that the pace of lessons promotes pupil engagement. In almost all observed lessons, explanations and instructions were clear and built on previous learning. Overall teachers used skilful questioning and discussions. Children in Gaelic Medium Education benefit from high

quality learning experiences and demonstrate very good ability in Gaelic language and are proud of their Gaelic identity.

In the secondary, learning was very well-paced and suitably challenging. Active learning and group work was observed in most lessons and the best lessons included peer support, well-planned learning intentions and success criteria which were shared, referred to and built on previous learning and real life experiences. Learners had opportunities to achieve within the activities and were given regular feedback and further activities which progressed their learning and motivated them as individuals. Although it was evident that teachers knew their pupils and their needs well, it was not always clear how they were differentiating accordingly. Consistent approaches to differentiation and feedback should therefore be a focus moving forward.

A few pupils in the secondary told us that they felt they were listened to but were not always sure of actions taken to improve their experiences. The school should take steps to ensure that all pupils participate in planning their learning and consider how feedback can be improved to ensure progress and support in learning.

In most lessons across the school, learners' responses are valued, encouraged and built upon. Regular time should be built into lessons to allow learners and young people to reflect on and discuss their progress and skills development. The Perth and Kinross Skills Framework would support the development of a whole school approach to this. This regular reflection will promote a shared language for skills development, provide learners and young people with a greater understanding of their next steps and develop an awareness of their personal skills and qualities.

LEADERSHIP

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team are ambitious in their vision for the school, demonstrating strong leadership and the capacity to lead change and work with teams to achieve this. There is a clear shared vision for the school which has evolved through ongoing reflection and debate across the school and community. As a result, the wider staff feel ownership of this vision. Across the school, an ethos of collegiate working and professional engagement is evident. Staff are engaged and enthusiastic to share their skills and expertise to support school improvement. Teacher leadership and the work of working groups is a strength. The school is now well placed to collectively plan and evaluate professional learning, focusing on the impact on learning and looking outward to determine a clear model of professional learning for all staff.

All staff we spoke to understand their role in school self-evaluation and improvement. The school uses a range of approaches to ensure all staff, partners and other stakeholders are actively involved in ongoing self-evaluation activities for example the 'Big Question', departmental self-evaluation exercises and the well-attended strategic planning morning, to which all stakeholders are invited. Pupil Council and Parent Council participation is a strong feature of the school's approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. There is scope now to engage parents and pupils from across the wider school community in making a regular contribution to self-evaluation and school improvement to ensure their views are heard and they can inform change and improvement.

The Pupils involved in both primary and secondary Pupil Councils, the Senior Pupil Leadership and Prefect Teams talked about the numerous opportunities for leadership available to them. They told us about the sense of achievement and added value they received from being involved in being given responsibilities and having opportunities to contribute to school improvement. The school now needs to focus on the role learners can play in leading learning. This links to the

development of pupils' ability to discuss and articulate their learning and skills. The school should now support children and young people to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop the resilience and confidence required to lead their own learning and that of others.

Conclusion

Breadalbane Academy all-through school provides a safe and respectful learning environment in which young people are encouraged to attain, achieve and develop skills for learning, life and work.

Strengths

- The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team have a clear ambition and vision for the direction of school improvement
- The children and young people are engaging, enthusiastic, polite and respectful
- There have been significant improvements in the approaches to self-evaluation
- Staff are empowered to lead learning across the school
- The school has a positive ethos and staff know children and families very well
- There is evidence of strong partnership working at all levels
- Partners are supporting the school in providing a rich curricular contribution to children and young people
- The school's work in STEM is an outstanding example of all-through working to provide rich learning experiences and skills development

Areas for development in session 2018-19:

- Develop a rationale for all-through working, capitalising on the opportunities the setting presents
- Further develop and embed approaches to Health and Wellbeing
- Support all children and young people to lead learning and to have the language and understanding to evaluate and articulate their own learning and skills development
- Ensure the good practice in feedback and differentiation identified is shared collegiately to develop consistent approaches across the school
- Provide opportunities for all children and parents to be involved in self-evaluation and improvement planning and in making a difference to the life and work of the school

As part of the normal ELAV follow up procedures, ECS officers will return within a year to evaluate the school's progress towards taking forward the recommendations for improvement.

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