



**Perth and Kinross Council
Education and Children's Services**



**Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report
Errol Primary School
8 and 9 January 2014**

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit was to support the school in the process of self-evaluation and was conducted by a Service Manager and four Quality Improvement Officers from Education and Children's Services. The themes subject to scrutiny were based on core Quality Indicators from 'How good is our school?' and reflected the most recent advice note from Education Scotland which outlines raised expectations in relation to schools' implementation of all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence.

Errol Primary School has a pupil roll of 200 pupils organised in eight classes and a Hub Nursery which currently has 47 children. Seven of the children have full time places. The acting headteacher has been in post since August 2013 and is supported by a principal teacher.

During the visit, the team gathered information from observing learning and teaching during class visits; scrutiny of data; documentation and examples of children's learning; discussions with staff, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and groups of pupils and parents/carers.

ACHIEVEMENT

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities which promote learning and the development of their skills. These include events when pupils are able to engage with children from other schools such as the St. Andrews Day of Dance, the Commonwealth Games themed Expressive Arts Day and a variety of sporting events. Parents/carers report that, this session, they are particularly pleased their children are accessing a greater range of sporting activities and competitions. Pupils also have opportunities to learn through planned activities as part of local partnerships such as, 'Take a Pride in Errol'; 'Junior Carsonians' and through Active Schools. Parents and pupils consulted spoke enthusiastically of the range of clubs and activities available.

Pupils are encouraged to record their wider achievements through their newly created learning logs. Their achievements are celebrated in a variety of ways including weekly assemblies, through displays on the special achievement boards and by being featured in the school's newsletter and on the school's new website.

Pupils throughout the school are friendly and polite and report that they enjoy being at school and feel safe and protected. The school actively promotes a nurturing approach throughout.

In the nursery, warm established relationships between staff and children are evident. Staff know the children well and their progress is carefully monitored. Children's plans are reviewed regularly by staff and parents to support pace of learning and development.

Areas for improvement

Across the school, most learners are making good progress against national expectations. However, a more consistent and rigorous approach to gathering and recording information about each pupil's progress needs to be developed. This will help staff to plan more effectively for children's next steps in learning and to identify where further challenge and support may be needed.

Attention should now be given to ensure that:

- robust arrangements for tracking learners' progress are developed and consistently used across the school so that that the school can demonstrate improvements in performance and individual learner's rate of progress
- the consistent use of Perth and Kinross indicators informs teachers' professional judgements about the progress of pupils in literacy and numeracy
- dialogue with pupils about their progress in learning enables them to have more involvement in identifying and progressing their individual and specific learning targets which are appropriately challenging

LEARNING

Pupils benefit from opportunities to learn across the four contexts of learning. Pupils described their learning as 'fun and interesting' citing P4-7 current learning theme on China and a recent film project as particularly motivating.

Learning in the early years is being enhanced through shared work where some learning activities are being planned across nursery and P1 and also P1 and P2.

Teaching and learning opportunities observed across the school were mostly active, relevant and well- paced. Learners were seen to be engaged in their learning delivered through a blend of direct teaching approaches, group work including cooperative group learning and individual tasks. Assessment for learning approaches are being used to good effect.

The curriculum at Errol Primary School has been enhanced through recent joint curricular initiatives with staff from other schools in the Local

Management Group e.g. learning opportunities in science and in the use of active approaches in mathematics.

The school has been successful in improving its approaches to identifying and supporting individual learning needs and has recently extended the range of provision to support pupils who have barriers to learning. e.g. motor skills group. There is now much greater focus on the early identification and support of learning needs by targeting children in early years' classes.

In the nursery, integrated working approaches are established and children and families are being supported to overcome any challenges or barriers.

Staff across the school know their pupils very well and seek to provide for their individual learning and support needs working in partnership with other agencies when necessary.

Areas for Improvement

Teachers are starting to plan learning together and this practice should now be promoted consistently across the school. This shared work needs to be evidenced through:

- planned and regular opportunities for teachers to engage in professional dialogue to:
 - plan and evaluate children's learning together (sometimes working in level groups to focus on progression within levels)
 - explore effective learning and teaching in order that a shared understanding of pedagogy and practice is evident across the school to ensure consistency for learners
- more planned opportunities for pupils to personalise their learning by focussing on the development of pupils' skills as described in Perth and Kinross Skills Framework
- shared approaches to planning and assessment that take full account of the totality of the curriculum. e.g. by taking account of the opportunities for learning in activities such as committees, assemblies and outings

LEADERSHIP

There has been significant change in the school's Senior Leadership Team in the last year. The acting headteacher appointed in August, has been successful in building positive relationships both in and beyond the school and is working with the principal teacher and staff to improve the school's work.

Pupils are given a range of opportunities to be involved in improving their school such as their roles in the eco group, pupil council and by being buddies. Pupils consulted are proud of their school and believe that the pupil council is effective in its role to represent them. The pupil council recently

worked to raise awareness of safety on the internet by running a poster competition.

In the nursery, well established talking/thinking approaches and use of floor books are used to capture children's ideas in identifying both what and how they would like to learn and their responses to their learning opportunities.

Teachers have been involved in leading school developments through working with colleagues from other schools to improve aspects such as writing, science and skills development.

Those parents consulted, believe that there is effective home/school communication through newsletters, homework diaries and the ease of access to teachers when required. They report that they feel there is good opportunity to be involved in the work and life of the school. Some parents help with activities including running after school clubs. The Parent Council works effectively to support the work of the school and promote partnership with parents/carers.

Areas for improvement

In order to move forward, the school needs to give higher priority to self-evaluation for improvement. This should be evidenced through:

- a process of monitoring of learning and teaching that highlights and shares positive practice and also demonstrates that key aspects for improvement have been identified and subsequently improved
- the gathering of information from a wide range of sources to inform the school's evaluation of its work to identify good practice and aspects for improvement
- mechanisms whereby the views of more pupils are heard and taken into account when evaluating aspects of the work of the school so that pupils genuinely influence decisions that affect them

CONCLUSION

The positive, welcoming and caring ethos in Errol Primary School supports its pupils well. Pupils, parents and staff have a great pride in their school and believe it has been successful in promoting a strong sense of community both in and beyond the school.

There is evidence of some progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last extended Learning and Achievement visit in January 2012 and the subsequent follow up visit in January 2013.

However, there continues to be a number of significant areas for improvement where the pace of change has been too slow or the practice not embedded sufficiently, so as to now show the necessary impact. These now need to be taken forward by the staff team in a well-planned and considered way demonstrating a clear understanding of shared accountabilities, specific remits and responsibilities. This process will be supported by officers from ECS.

A whole-school focussed approach will be required to:

- Ensure rigorous approaches to self-evaluation are in place so as to inform school improvement planning for May/June 2014.
- By April 2014 and onwards, all teachers should be engaging in shared professional dialogue when planning and evaluating learning and teaching. This is in order that learners' needs are more fully met across the school and opportunities to develop and deliver the curriculum are maximised.
- Ensure pupils' progress in learning is robustly tracked and evaluated using Perth and Kinross Indicators and other sources so as to:
 - support professional dialogue and judgements made (from May 2014)
 - inform discussions about progress in their learning with pupils and parents (from August 2014)

[Errol HMI Report](#)

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