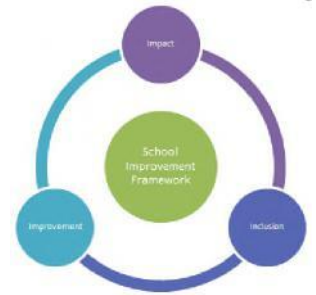




Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Grandtully Primary School 16 December 2016



BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers from across Education and Children's Services (ECS) visited Grandtully Primary School on 16th December 2016. 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) and by using the most recent Education Scotland Advice Note. It outlines the raised expectations in relation to all schools' implementation of all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence.

At the time of visit Grandtully Primary School had a pupil roll of 18 organised in one multi composite class. The school is led by the headteacher who is supported by a principal teacher. The headteacher leads Grandtully as part of a shared headship with Kenmore Primary School.

The school has an attendance level of 96.2% which is above the Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) and national average.

Information was gathered from class visits, scrutiny of data and evidence of children's learning, discussions with children, parents/carers and staff, and displays of children's work around the school.

ACHIEVEMENT

Children at Grandtully Primary School are very proud of their school and present as articulate, confident and enthusiastic learners. They report that they feel safe and well cared for at school and that adults know them well.

Attainment data reviewed in the areas of literacy and mathematics indicates that most learners are meeting or exceeding national standards in listening and talking, reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, attainment trends in literacy and numeracy indicate a continually improving picture.

Teachers meet regularly with the headteacher to look closely at assessment data and evidence of learning, attainment levels and predictions particularly for those children requiring additional support or challenge. Together they are able to talk about the strategies, interventions and resources which have impacted positively on learning. These rigorous discussions are leading to early identification of barriers to learning and effective and targeted approaches for individuals.

The school has had a focus on reading for enjoyment and has recently developed book groups, created and run by the pupils. These groups have supported the development of reciprocal reading strategies. Primary 4 and 5 are embracing the First Minister's Reading Challenge which is extending children's skills in reviewing and recommending books to others and self-challenge. The impact of a "reading culture" is reflected in children's extended pieces of writing which are well presented and engaging to read.

Health and wellbeing has a high priority in the school. All staff know children extremely well individually. It is evident in all aspects of their work that children's wellbeing and achievement are at the heart of all they do. Children are active and energetic in their learning in and out-with school. Teaching and non-teaching staff work together to provide a varied and motivating range of physical exercise sessions and outdoor learning experiences. The children talk knowledgeably about wellbeing and each has their own wellbeing folder and web.

Children at Grandtully experience a rich curriculum which is planned to provide them with a sense of identity and to equip them with the skills for their future lives. The school works very effectively with partners to enhance and extend learning opportunities. For example: a partnership has been formed with the Film Society at the Birks Cinema, where the school won the 'Young Indies Film Competition' this year. The school has also made links with schools and classes across Scotland for different projects and now have plans to make global links.

Children are encouraged and supported to talk about achievements gained from out of school activities. The school website, Twitter feed and class displays are used to celebrate and recognise successes and achievements. There are regular opportunities for children to engage in activities which are supported by partners and the community. Children are also extremely positive about the range of opportunities they have to develop their interests and talents through sports, competitions and Learning Showcase performances. They talk very positively about 'Genius Hour' where they take responsibility for their learning, supported by staff and parents.

LEARNING

Grandtully Primary School's grounds are expansive and very well used. Children have access to a variety of play areas which support creative play and outdoor learning very well. Class teachers are skilled in planning lessons outside and in the local community which extend and enhance learning in all curricular areas.

The classroom is an extremely well organised, stimulating learning environment. It provides children with a motivating and supportive space in which to learn. Children's learning is displayed very effectively throughout the school. Displays make clear how children's ideas and creativity are being used and are enhanced with the use of children's writing and artwork to reinforce key learning points.

In all lessons, explanations and instructions are clear and they build upon previous learning and real life experiences. A range of creative and innovative teaching approaches are used, including very good use of ICT to extend learning. Lessons are well planned and motivating for all children. They take very good cognisance of children's interests and prior learning. The level of support and challenge is appropriate, with very good differentiation of tasks for all levels.

Children are involved in, and take responsibility for their own learning. They are lively and enthusiastic learners. Almost all children are engaged in learning and motivated to do well. They are confident in working independently and in small groups. Consideration should be given to finding creative ways to ensure there is a need for all children to contribute effectively in small independent group work, and their contribution is recognised as necessary and valued.

Children are encouraged to share their learning and talk about strategies used. In plenary sessions children reflect on their progress and consider how they know they have improved. The sharing of learning intentions and success criteria would support children in being able

to identify and evidence their progress. Through regular discussion of what success, progress and skills development looks like, children will be more confident and able to describe how they know they have improved, developing their self-evaluation skills. We discussed with staff ways in which they might collate examples of work and the children's own assessments of their learning and achievement in one place. This would support children in their learning conversations with others, including parents, and allow them to see their progress over time.

Teachers and support staff work very well together to provide well-judged assistance for children. Relationships between staff and children are extremely positive, helpful and respectful. There are effective systems in place to ensure joined up and consistent approaches from those staff supporting children with additional needs.

Pupil voice is present throughout the classes and life of the school. As well as contributing to planning, children also contribute through a Class Council referred to as 'GPS 18'. This Class Council acts as a Pupil Council, Health Group and Eco Committee and is supported to run its own agenda. One of the older children chairs this group and reports to the Parent Council termly. Not only is this Council giving opportunities for the application of skills being learnt in class but it is also a contributing factor to the strong sense of community that the school has.

Those parents we consulted with reported that the school communicates very well with them and they like the class blog which gives them "sneak peaks" of learning and highlights of the week. They are very positive about the learning experiences planned for their children. They appreciate being asked to contribute their own skills and many have supported learning by offering to do bread making, sewing, science and planning the French nativity. They particularly appreciate the efforts taken to develop the talents and personality of every child and the creative approaches the school uses to develop confidence and skills.

LEADERSHIP

The headteacher and principal teacher are well-respected by staff, children and parents. They have a clear vision for what requires to be done to take the school forward. They work together very successfully with a clear focus on school improvement, learning and teaching and getting it right for every child. They know the children and families very well and work effectively with the community and partners to provide valuable support at all levels.

There is a strong ethos of teamwork within the school and with the partner school of Kenmore Primary School. There is a positive and proactive approach to professional learning which is inclusive of all staff across schools. Staff share a desire to be innovative and creative and seek out opportunities to lead and attend professional development events. There is an evident shared accountability and responsibility for achieving the best for all children. Within this small team, there are regular activities to monitor standards of learning and teaching. All staff work effectively to continually review and refresh the school environment and approaches to learning and teaching.

Children are very clear that their ideas and contributions play an important part in planning their learning and making a difference in the school. At all stages, children are able to describe how they have influenced decisions and the responsibilities they are given to turn ideas into actions. Parents are also very proud of their contributions and can see how their feedback influences decision making in the school. The school now needs to ensure that children and parents are aware of the school improvement priorities, their important role in driving forward improvements and the impact they have.

Self-evaluation and quality assurance approaches provide accurate information to inform school improvement planning. Developments taken forward through this process are having a measureable, positive impact on learning, teaching and children's attainment.

Strengths

- The strong pupil voice and involvement in planning and decision making
- The teamwork and commitment of all staff in providing a positive, motivating and inclusive ethos;
- The rich learning experiences which encourage and promote creativity and reflect the unique setting of the school community;
- The strong partnership with parents and community links to extend and enhance learning;
- The headteacher and principal teachers' leadership and the shared responsibility of the school team in taking forward school improvement.

We discussed with staff how they might continue to improve the school in light of their own self evaluation and feedback from the Extended Learning and Achievement Visit team. The following areas for improvement were agreed:

- Further develop children's skills in self-evaluation by explicitly sharing with them learning intentions and success criteria from March 2017
- Increase the use of the PKC Skills Framework to focus planning and learning conversations on the development of skills for learning, life and work from April 2017;
- Continue to develop approaches to recording self-evaluations and evidence of progress over time in learning profiles, considering how digital technology could support this from April 2017 and;
- Fully involve children and parents in creating, evaluating and planning actions for school improvement work from April 2017.

Conclusion

Grandtully Primary School is a well led school where children are making very good progress in their learning. The clear sense of direction of the headteacher and principal teacher, support of the school team and partnership with parents and the community make the school a vibrant and positive place to learn.

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.

[HMI Report 2007](#)

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