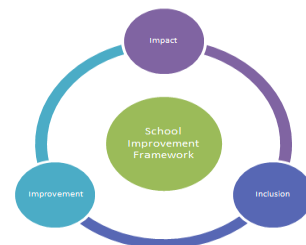




**Perth and Kinross Council
Education and Children's Services**

**Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report
Guildtown Primary School
29 and 30 January 2020**



BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers from Education and Children's Services visited Guildtown Primary School and Nursery Class on 29 and 30 January 2020. The themes for the review were Achievement, Learning and Leadership. The themes subject to scrutiny were based on core Quality Indicators from 'How good is our school?' (4th edition).

Information was gathered from visits to classes, scrutiny of data, records and children's work, discussions with children, parents and staff, and other evidence of learning

Guildtown Primary School is led by a headteacher. At the time of the visit, the school had a pupil roll of 12 children within one multi-composite primary class, and a nursery class of 2 children. The Nursery class opened very recently on 25 November 2019. Pupil attendance was 98.2% which is above the Perth and Kinross average of 95%.

ACHIEVEMENT

Guildtown Primary School's vision and values are highly visible and evident in the very positive ethos and respectful relationships across the school. Values feature as a significant part of the work of the school and encourage high expectations for all children. The shared understanding of these values provides a strong foundation for school improvement. Collectively staff understand the context of the school, they know children and families well and work well together and with partners to enrich and support learning. All children asked, said they feel safe and cared for in school and all confirm there is an adult to whom they can go and speak to should they have any concerns.

Most children are currently achieving expected levels of attainment, in line with national expectations, in mathematics, listening and talking, reading and writing. A few children exceed national expectations across the stages. All children are making good progress on prior levels of learning. Appropriate support is in place for children with additional supports needs.

The school can provide historical data showing the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels over a number of years for individuals and classes of children. However, due to the variation in the size of cohorts and a changeable school population no valid patterns in data could be drawn from the school's overall attainment data.

All teachers have high expectations for learners. Robust systems are in place to track individual children's progress over time. Class teachers and support staff meet regularly with the headteacher to look closely at assessment data and evidence of learning, attainment levels and predictions. These discussions support teachers to identify next steps and resources for individuals in their learning and are leading to the early identification of barriers to learning and effective and targeted approaches for individuals.

Children track their wider achievements in their 'Steps to Success' portfolios and these are annotated by parents and staff. Children confidently discuss their achievements gained from clubs and activities outwith school. An achievement wall is proudly displayed in the school corridor which celebrates children's accomplishments, which parents regularly support. The school plan 'contexts for learning' carefully across stages to ensure that there are a wide number of appropriate learning opportunities for children. The school are keen to consult with parents and pupils on the development of an outdoor learning homework programme to build on children's knowledge and understanding through active learning. Last session, the P7 children took part in a successful 'Steps to Perth Academy' transition programme, which helped children to feel more confident in their move to secondary school. The school plans to consult with parents and children to continue to look for ways to further develop their Steps to Success portfolios to show children's progression in learning, identify any gaps in learning and how wider achievements are impacting on skills for learning, life and work.

The Pupil Council meet on a regular basis and includes representatives from children in P3 to P7. This provides children the opportunity to develop leadership skills and take responsibility in making improvements. The school recognises that it would be beneficial for children to become more involved in a wider number of school improvements within the Pupil Council and there is also room to explore the possibility of becoming involved in initiatives such as Eco Schools, Rights, Respecting Schools or Sports Scotland Award. This would give the children opportunities to apply the skills they are learning in class, extend children's experiences and would also help contribute to building further the school community.

Parents consulted told us that their children are happy at school and that there is a warm ethos. They said that the staff are approachable and supportive of them and their children. Parents know how to access information about the work of the school. They feel that communication is effective and informative. Parents support their children in inputting information about wider achievements into their Step to Success portfolios. Parents we spoke to stated that they would like to be more involved, if possible, in activities in school.

LEARNING

Across the school children are happy, articulate and eager to learn. There is a supportive ethos resulting in very positive, respectful relationships between staff and children. Staff use praise well to promote positive relationships. The school's values are evident, in the ways that people relate to one another and on displays throughout the school. Staff should now revisit children's rights and embed them in class charters consistently across the school.

In almost all lessons, children are motivated and engaged in tasks. At the early level, the newly formed nursery class provides interesting, high quality learning experiences in welcoming, calm and motivating learning environments indoors and outdoors. They provide an effective balance of direct teaching and independent learning. Children are purposefully engaged in activities which allow them to be creative and extend their thinking. Staff interactions are of a high quality, are well judged and sensitive. They ask open ended questions and give children thinking time. Learners have ownership of their own learning.

In the primary class, almost all children talk confidently about what they can do and what their next steps should be. Learners have learning targets for literacy and numeracy. Learners should be encouraged to reflect on what they are learning and the skills they are developing throughout lessons more frequently. Children work very well together in pairs and in groups. Most work very well independently and respond very positively when given responsibility for their own learning.

There is scope to provide learners with more opportunities to lead their own learning, make choices and decisions about what and how they will learn.

Overall the quality of teaching is very high. In almost all lessons, teachers plan interesting learning experiences, using a variety of approaches, which support the learning of the multi-composite group of learners. They share the purpose of learning effectively and most children know what to do to be successful. Across the school, teachers provide effective support and challenge in differentiated tasks. Well organised learning activities are supported by well-established routines and high expectations for learners. The school should develop its approaches to learning and teaching to ensure all children experience an appropriate pace of learning.

In almost all lessons, teachers provide effective verbal feedback. High quality, evaluative written feedback is also provided to help children understand how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve across a period of time. Learning targets are discussed in regular learning conversations and evidenced in Steps to Success folders. In promoting learner leadership, learners should be encouraged to provide each other with peer assessment and to engage in regular self-assessment. They should begin to talk about skills for learning, life and work and relate their skills development to the world of work.

The school uses a variety of assessments to inform how well children are learning and progressing in literacy and numeracy. Assessment information is gathered across the year, identified at the point of planning and discussed termly by all staff. The school uses curriculum pathways and National Benchmarks to plan and to inform assessments. Staff correctly identify the development of moderation approaches as a priority for improvement. Staff should plan to engage in regular moderation activities with other local schools and small schools to ensure teachers are confident in making judgements of achievement of a level and that these judgements are accurate.

Teachers and support staff work very well together to provide high quality, well-judged support for children with identified learning needs. Staff have a very good understanding of learning needs and work well together to plan highly effective, individualised interventions for all learners. Support staff provide highly skilled and attuned teaching, are responsive and communicate very well with teachers and parents. Staff should consider ways of recording the planning, interventions and assessment implemented in an ongoing, detailed and manageable format to allow tracking, monitoring and review.

LEADERSHIP

The headteacher and staff are committed to the school and its community. The headteacher has high aspirations and expectations for all and these are effectively communicated and shared. She ensures relationships are strong and has worked hard to develop effective partnerships with all staff and partners. The headteacher is well-respected by staff, children and parents.

The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and works effectively with learners, staff and parents to allow all stakeholders to participate in improvement. She engages in self-evaluation and looks outwards to improve outcomes for learners within the school. The headteacher identifies appropriate training and development opportunities for staff to support school improvement. Almost all staff have the opportunity to lead aspects of improvement and are supported to develop their skills and experience to do this. The school engaged in curriculum development work with the other schools in the local management group. The focus was on learning and teaching in Numeracy and Mathematics. This development work for staff was highly effective and has resulted in increased skill and confidence in teaching in this area. The headteacher also has strong links with the Single

Teacher Network which is developing approaches to allow learners to develop online skills and links, further supporting improvement. Learners have the opportunity to participate in leadership groups and we shared with the staff team ways in which learner leadership could be developed further.

Strengths

- Children are polite, respectful and highly motivated and engaged by their learning. The school values are visible, learnt and understood.
- The continual focus on developing and maintaining positive relationships, which has resulted in a caring and respectful ethos and supportive relationships.
- All staff, led by the headteacher, have consistently high expectations and aspirations for all learners.
- High quality learning and teaching, providing interesting, relevant and appropriately challenging learning opportunities.
- Effective collaboration with partners to enhance learning outcomes for learners. Particularly effective partnership working across the Local Management Group to enhance learning and teaching in numeracy.
- Staff know children and their learning well and plan effectively for individuals, providing high quality support and learning for children with additional support needs.

Areas for improvement

- Increase opportunities for moderation to support teachers' confidence in judgement of achievement of a level.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to lead their own learning. Learners should have more opportunity to make choices and decisions about their learning and to regularly engage in self and peer assessment, using learning intentions and success criteria.
- There should be an increased focus on developing the young workforce and skills for learning, life and work.
- Develop approaches to outdoor learning to enhance learning across the curriculum.

Considering the recent COVID-19 school closures and the need for focussed recovery planning on return to school, these actions should be taken forward within a suitable timescale and context as agreed between the Head Teacher and the school's Quality Improvement Officer.

Children, staff and parents at Guildtown Primary evidence a pride in their school. Building on the key strengths identified, the school should now address the areas for improvement, including them in the planned improvements for session 2020-21. Education officers visit the school again within a year of the publication of this report to validate the school's own report on how well it has taken forward the main areas for improvement.

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