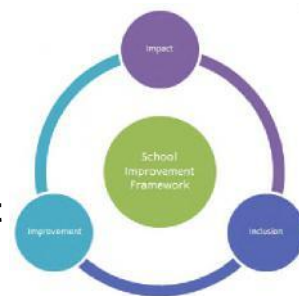




## Perth and Kinross Council Education and Children's Services

### Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Inchtute Primary School 6 December 2016



## BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit was to support the school in the process of self-evaluation. It was conducted by Officers from Education and Children's Services. The themes subject to scrutiny were based on core Quality Indicators from 'How good is our school?' (4<sup>th</sup> edition) 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.

Information was gathered from visits to classes, scrutiny of data, records and children's work, discussions with children, parents, staff and displays of children's work around the school.

Inchtute Primary School is led by a Senior Management Team (SMT) of a Headteacher and a Depute Headteacher. At the time of the visit the school had a pupil roll of 209 organised across nine classes and a nursery with a total of 63 children across the morning and afternoon sessions. The school has an attendance level of 97.51% which is above the Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) and national average.

## ACHIEVEMENT

Children at Inchtute Primary School enjoy a positive school ethos. Across all areas of the school staff provide caring and nurturing learning environments. Staff members support children to feel safe and secure and almost all children demonstrate a readiness to learn.

Attainment data shows that at Primaries 1 and 4 almost all children were making very good progress in terms of national expectations in literacy and numeracy, at Primary 7 almost all children were making very good progress in listening and talking, reading and numeracy and most children were making very good progress in writing.

The new system to track and monitor pupil attainment over time in listening, talking, reading and writing is proving to be a useful tool for analysis of pupil progress against predicted targets. It provides the Senior Management Team a focus for discussions with teachers about the attainment levels and progress of children in their class. They work together to identify particular needs so that children are better supported and motivated to reach their full potential. Planning and recording should be reviewed in accordance with local and national guidance. This would support tackling bureaucracy, improve procedures for engaging in moderation and agreeing standards across the school.

Children at Inchtute Primary have the opportunity to develop their confidence and self-esteem and celebrate their wider achievements in class and during assemblies. They

are encouraged to talk about their achievements from clubs and activities both in school and outwith. These are shared through a display board and in regular newsletters to parents. The newly introduced house system has had a positive effect, giving a sense of belonging and identity within the existing positive ethos.

The school is beginning to use wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) and adopt that language in classes, helping to develop an understanding of the vocabulary. The school should continue the positive work started in each class and at assemblies, through a whole school approach to developing health and wellbeing.

Parents consulted expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school. They appreciate the genuine interest and care that all staff have for their children and commented favourably on the school's responsiveness when issues have been raised.

## **LEARNING**

The environment for learning is generously proportioned for the school roll. The open plan layout is utilised effectively to create a purposeful learning environment.

In the learning episodes observed, children were treated respectfully. In all lessons observed learning intentions and success criteria were shared and revisited with learners; explanations and instructions were clear and built on previous learning and real life experiences. In the best lessons observed, careful questioning by the teacher was effective in extending learning and children were actively involved in tasks that developed understanding and improved skills. Learners were motivated, when involved, in creating their own success criteria. In the majority of lessons there were high expectations and aspirations for all learners with differentiation, support and challenge evident which maximised learners' progress. Across the school almost all children engaged well in their learning activities.

Teaching staff reported a positive impact of engagement in Tapestry Teacher Learning Communities and welcomed the opportunity for professional dialogue and classroom research. This had reinforced Assessment for Learning strategies in their practice and helped develop consistency in learning and teaching approaches across the school. A variety of strategies were observed to actively engage learners such as "no hands" and the use of "lolly sticks".

Across the school the children write for a variety of purposes and were motivated by real life experiences connected to interdisciplinary learning. The frequency of opportunities for developing writing now needs to be increased. The intended learning within all written tasks must be made explicit to the children. Written teacher feedback should be more detailed and linked to learning. Involving children in their learning continues to be a focus for the school. Learning Profiles from Primary 1-7 were beginning to involve children in reviewing their learning. This needs to be reviewed to ensure a progressive system across the whole school that allows learners the opportunity to engage more regularly in dialogue and reflection as part of their daily routine.

Staff have identified that learning and teaching approaches in numeracy and mathematics should be reviewed and developed over this session. The school should build on the early developments being made in this area to ensure effective practice in

the teaching of numeracy and mathematics throughout the school.

Teaching staff reported that 1+2 French languages learning development had a positive impact on teacher confidence and pupil enjoyment and engagement. Learners have increased their range of vocabulary and confidence in using this in conversation. The recent French open day run by Primary 7 was well received by all visitors.

Children's additional support needs are identified effectively across the school. All staff have a mutual enthusiasm for meeting learners' needs and the support staff deliver specific programmes of work to support development on an ongoing basis. Teachers need to ensure that Individualised Education Programmes contain appropriate short term learning targets that are measurable. There is scope to improve recording and tracking the learning journey of individuals to support and measure impact of interventions used to support learners. There is opportunity to utilise the play assistant in the nursery more effectively to support children in the Strong Start 2 provision with toileting and handwashing.

Parents reported that they welcomed opportunities to attend school events. During the visit, Primary 1 shared their learning around the "The Wizard of Oz" with parents. The learners confidently retold the story and explained the skills they had developed on their learning journey. The event was well attended by parents who were visibly proud of their children's learning and efforts.

In the Nursery warm, responsive relationships were evident throughout to create an ethos for achievement. Staff interact sensitively with children during their play to promote curiosity and independent thinking. Some children were very engaged in a practical activity to build vocabulary around a range of body movements. Children were motivated and engaged in self-selected activities both indoors and out. "Talking and Thinking Books" are used very effectively to ensure that planning reflects children's ideas and interests. Nursery staff should now review the content of children's learning folders to record identified next steps for individual children and ensure these are appropriately planned for to secure children's progress in learning.

## **LEADERSHIP**

The Headteacher and new Depute Headteacher work well together as a team. They are committed to the successful life of the school and know the community well. They are supported by a committed team who value the effective working relationships in the school.

Staff are motivated and work collegiately together, with teaching staff taking leadership roles to improve experiences for learners and raise attainment in Mathematics and 1+2 French learning. They are committed to self-reflection and professional development. Nursery staff are supported in self-evaluation to secure improvements for children through lunch time meetings led by the DHT.

Recent work to make the school's improvement priorities more accessible and understood has been effective. The introduction of a parent friendly plan has been welcomed by parents. Children stated that the display at the heart of the school, a rocket entitled "launching to improve", has helped them to know more about what school is currently working on and their role within it.

Parents reported their satisfaction with information received from the school. They stated that the school keeps them well informed through a variety of methods. Parents receive a learning tree each term that details the focus of their child's learning. Regular communication through newsletters and social media keep parents informed on the wide ranging experiences offered to the children.

All children contribute to the life and the work of the school and report that they enjoy this opportunity for additional leadership and responsibility. Primary 1-7 pupils are all involved in the committees in one of the following areas; school improvement, eco, friendship and the community, health and citizenship.

Self-evaluation and quality assurance approaches provide information to guide school improvement planning. The school has identified the need to share and consult more across development groups and consider participating in more whole school initiatives to ensure consistent approaches. A more strategic approach is necessary to ensure that all improvements are shared consistently across the school to secure maximum impact on learners.

**Strengths:**

- Children feel safe and they enjoy a positive and inclusive school ethos.
- The commitment of the senior management team supported by a motivated staff team.
- Wide ranging opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence, self-esteem and celebrate their achievements.
- Positive impact on learners through developments in 1+2 French languages learning.
- Parental satisfaction with their knowledge of and involvement in their child's learning.

We discussed with staff how they might continue to improve the school through their self-evaluation and feedback from the Extended Learning and Achievement Visit team. To ensure a more strategic approach to improvements the following areas for improvement were agreed:

- Review planning, assessment and recording procedures to ensure that they reflect national and local guidance. (By December 2017)
- Further develop consistent approaches to developing pupil engagement in their learning by ensuring;
  - frequent, active involvement of learners in their writing skills; intended learning within all written tasks are explicit to the children with written teacher feedback more detailed and linked to learning. (By June 2017)
  - more regular pupil engagement, dialogue and reflection on their learning. (By August 2017)
  - learners' understand their health and wellbeing through use of the wellbeing indicators. (By December 2017)
- Record and track the learning journey of individuals to and measure impact of interventions to support learners. (By April 2017)

- Further develop rigorous self-evaluation processes that reflect upon the impact improvements have made on learners' achievement and attainment. (By August 2017)

## **CONCLUSION**

The Headteacher, staff, pupils and parents should continue to work together to support future improvements in order to enable all children to develop and achieve their full potential. Officers from Education and Children's Services will follow normal procedures and return for a follow up visit within 12 months.

[HMI Report 2006](#)

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