



Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Kinross Primary School 5 and 6 May 2015



BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit, which was conducted by a team of six officers from Education and Children's Services, was to support the school in the process of self-evaluation. 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.

At the time of the visit Kinross Primary School had a pupil roll of 443, which was organised in 16 classes, and a 56:56 place Nursery provision which includes 8 fulltime HUB places. The school has a Nurture group supporting up to 8 children at a time; at the time of the visit 14 children were accessing additional support in the Nurture group over the course of a week.

Average attendance at Kinross Primary over session 2013-2014 was 95.84% compared to the national average of 94.9% (for 2012-2013; the most recent available statistic).

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in Kinross Primary School is made up of the headteacher and three depute headteachers (DHTs) who are free of class-commitment. At the time of the visit, the headteacher post and two DHT posts were filled on an acting basis as a result of the secondment of two substantive senior staff.

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

Across the school the majority of children are attaining in line with national expectations in mathematics, reading and writing. Following the good start in nursery, in Primary 1 most children are on track to be secure in their learning across Early Level. Staff have identified improved pace of learning at this stage as a consequence of introducing an Active Literacy approach. In Reading, attainment statistics show that at P4 and at P7 most children are on track to be secure at appropriate levels by the end of this session. Across all stages there are a few children on track to be secure in their learning at the appropriate level earlier than national expectations would indicate.

Children in Kinross Primary benefit from a strong focus on Science education. Each class engages in a weekly Science lesson delivered by a teacher specialising in this curricular area. The Science programme followed ensures progression of knowledge and skills across the stages. In addition, class based Science topics allow children opportunities for depth in learning within Science. In P7 the Space topic has been enriched by input from a parent whose work is in the field of Science education.

All children set their own targets in Health and wellbeing as part of the whole school, weekly *Reflection Time*; these are shared with parents and reviewed each term. The wellbeing indicators and wellbeing wheel are well known by children, have been shared with parents and form a focus for shared termly evaluation by staff, parents and children in the nursery class. Bounceback and the Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood programmes have both been successfully implemented this session, further developing children's understanding about wellbeing.

All primary children in Kinross have opportunities to achieve in Music. For example, last year's *K in the Park* event involved children taking part - in a choir, an instrumental group or as a soloist - with the benefit of a professional sound system, supported by a large crowd of parents and community members. In addition, the school provides children with the opportunity to engage in a range of challenges such as Stirling University Maths Challenge and the BBC 500 words story writing competition. The school was rightly proud of the fact that children representing Kinross Primary had reached the North and East final of the Rotary Club Quiz.

Kinross Primary is an inclusive school. Children consulted report that they are listened to and treated with respect; the element of choice in *Take Away Homework* is particularly valued. Children are confident that if they had any concern it would be dealt with quickly by the adults who keep them safe. The Nurture group and a number of extra-curricular clubs are used effectively to ensure that all children are included and their needs met. Every child in the school has a buddy and these links promote a range of social skills and develop the sense of shared community. Carefully planned programmes to support children at times of transition, from nursery/partner centres/playgroup into P1 and from P7 into S1, are very effective in delivering better outcomes for children.

LEARNING

In most classrooms care has been taken to create an attractive environment which supports learning and stimulates learners. Increasingly the outdoors areas of the school are used to add relevance to learning. The 'Pods' - stores of large scale 'junk' - provide planned opportunities to explore materials, design and create and are used by all classes across the school. A range of well used outdoor spaces and planned visits combine to provide all children with opportunities to learn outwith the classroom.

All teaching staff in Kinross have benefited from Tapestry Teacher Learning Communities professional learning sessions and the positive impact of that is evident across the school. In all lessons observed learning intentions were appropriate, shared with children and understood by them. In most classes, including the nursery, children were able to talk about their learning. In the majority of classes learning was differentiated according to children's ability and success criteria were used to support children's understanding of what was required to be successful in their learning.

A key school improvement outcome across this session has been to support children's ability to reflect on their learning. *Reflection Time* has been introduced – a whole-school approach with dedicated weekly time for teacher and children together to reflect on progress in learning and record thinking and planning. With the regular involvement of SLT members in leading *Learning Conversations*, all class teachers have benefited from evaluative feedback related to classroom practice, based on the views of children and which, in most cases, has informed subsequent practice. Effective processes are in place to identify, review and address barriers to learning and to meet children's needs. All staff working with targeted children and their parents provide high quality intervention and support. Evidence shows that the Willow Tree nurture group is providing very effective intervention for identified children, almost all of whom are successful in returning fulltime to their mainstream class within an appropriate timescale.

LEADERSHIP

Led very effectively by the headteacher, the SLT has adopted a well-planned, strategic and collegiate approach to identifying and securing improvements to learning and teaching at Kinross Primary. The establishment of a culture to support improvement through change, where there is a consistent message about expectations, motivation and professional standards, underpin the progress made.

Leadership by staff in collegiate development work has increased the quantity and quality of professional dialogue between teachers, impacting on classroom practice. The SLT has engaged with peers in a similar sized school in a neighbouring authority to support their own professional reflection. In promoting professional development, almost all teachers have made (or have planned) a good practice visit to another school. This is proving effective in developing staff confidence and bringing fresh ideas and thinking back to the wider school team.

Children in the upper stages see themselves as leaders who take on responsibilities, set a good example and treat all children, regardless of age, as equals. All children have opportunity to develop leadership skills as buddies, and some as prefects, House Captains, committee members and Pupil Council representatives.

Parents consulted greatly appreciate the effective processes that are in place for communicating with them and establishing a sense of community involvement and pride. The weekly whole school '*What's On in KPS?*', the fortnightly '*Bairns' Bulletin*' for nursery families and the good use made school's redesigned website are complemented by daily Twitter feeds which focus on learning. The opportunity to review their child's work prior to Parent Contact, and give prior notice of questions which are then addressed by class teachers, is particularly appreciated. Parents welcome the wide range of opportunities to become involved in the life of the school including Kinross Parent Council, the *Partners in Learning* parent group and Nursery focus groups.

Areas for improvement

- Taking account of local and national guidance, between June and November 2015 the SLT and staff should review and streamline key processes which impact on attainment:
 - planning and assessment of learning
 - predicting and tracking pupil progress in language and mathematics building on existing moderation activities within the collegiate calendar
 - consistently and effectively sharing learning with parents
- By November 2015, further develop shared understanding by staff and parents of the school's recently revised Curriculum Rationale to promote high quality learning experiences, across all contexts of the curriculum, marked by depth and challenge in every class.
- Through the school's improvement plan for session 2015-16, extend the current successful whole-school focus on higher order thinking skills to include, skills for learning, life and work.
- Develop the IT curriculum to include planned learning activities which are enhanced by the use of existing and new technologies by both staff and children

Conclusion

Kinross Primary School is a well-led and caring school community marked by teamwork and an ethos of openness and partnership. As children in the Pupil Council identified, leadership in Kinross Primary involves taking responsibility and setting a good example with equity. Across the school children are very well behaved, enthusiastic and polite. The school team is now well placed to pursue consistency of standards across the school and high quality learning for all.

[HMI Report](#)

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