



Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Longforgan Primary School 15 and 16 March 2018



BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit was to support the school in the process of self-evaluation. The visit was conducted by three Quality Improvement Officers and one Education Support Officer from Education and Children's Services and two peer headteachers. 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. In Longforgan Primary School the senior leadership team (SLT) comprises a Headteacher and Principal Teacher. At the time of the visit the school had a pupil roll of 7 in the nursery and 139 children in the primary, organised across 5 classes. At June 2017 pupil 97% attendance for session 2016-17 was above the Perth and Kinross,

ACHIEVEMENT

In June 2017 almost all children in P1 were achieving expected levels in listening and talking, reading, writing and numeracy. In P4 almost all children were achieving expected levels in talking and listening and numeracy and most in reading and writing. In P7 most children were achieving expected levels in talking and listening and numeracy and the majority in reading and writing. It is evident that over time attainment trends vary.

The school have identified target groups and individuals through professional dialogue and use a range of interventions to support children's learning in relation to literacy and health and wellbeing. It is evident these interventions are building learner confidence. The use of Growth Mindset language in the classroom is building learner resilience; with targeted group work supporting social skills. The school should now develop more robust measures to track progress for targeted groups to evidence the impact of planned interventions.

Overall, children are confident and contribute to the life of the school through pupil committees and the work around Rights Respecting Schools; where they have earned Level 1 Award. Wider achievements are shared and displayed on the Achievement Board and recorded in children's individual Learning Logs. The school's house system encourages citizenship and responsibility and a sense of belonging to team and school. The school provides a number of activities that add to children's achievement including sports clubs, bikeability and visits out of school to extend learning such as Dynamic Earth and the Mock Court Project. They also participate in a wide range of fundraising events to benefit others including "Children in Need" and "Save the Children". Pupils are confident and talk passionately about their school; they feel included and that they belong.

The Perth and Kinross tracking and monitoring tool provides the SLT a focus for discussions with teachers about the attainment levels and progress of children in their class. The school should now further develop their practices in tracking attainment and achievement of children over time to ensure that learners continue to make very good progress to achieve expected levels.

LEARNING

The ethos and culture of the school reflects a commitment to children rights; children feel happy to express themselves and know their opinions are valued and acted upon. The school motto is 'Happily Learning Together', and strong relationships are evident in Longforgan Primary School.

Pupils we talked to stated that they felt safe, included and listened to in their school. They were familiar with the wellbeing web and talked about using this to reflect upon their health and wellbeing. Child protection, additional support needs and safeguarding policies are in place which reflect the most recent legislation. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place, where appropriate, to ensure young people are safe and secure whilst at school.

Effective use is made of the spaces within the school, including the outdoor space. Staff and children work in departments aligned to Curriculum for Excellence levels, staff plan together and children work in 'vertical groupings' for literacy and numeracy and specific staff deliver other aspects of the curriculum. The school should evaluate this practice to ensure that planned learning has high expectations for all learners and that planning for differentiation, support and challenge is evident and meeting the needs of all learners.

Health and wellbeing is a key feature of a varied curriculum for learners in Longforgan Primary School. The school celebrates its uniqueness and children talk enthusiastically about their development of skills and learning in the four capacities. Children experience a range of learning opportunities outwith the classroom and demonstrate independent learning through taking part in committees, groups and department working. The curriculum takes account of personalisation and choice through "own learning" sessions. Children can talk confidently about what they enjoy in activities such as Mock Court, links with Castle Huntly and the Pollination Project for outdoor learning. The curriculum at Longforgan Primary should be revisited to ensure learning pathways deliver appropriate progression in learning.

In the nursery class children were able to talk about their learning and the strategies they use to help themselves and children were involved in planning their own learning across the curriculum. Staff use the developmental milestones to track children's progress in their learning, they should now use this information to set targets and plan for specific interventions for individual children.

In lessons observed in the primary most lessons teacher explanations are clear and built on previous learning. Learning intentions are shared in almost all lessons however more attention should be given to developing and sharing success criteria that evidence achievement for children at their own level. In the most effective lessons observed learning was motivating and sustains children's attention with effective use of questioning to allow children to think, build curiosity and express their views. There were examples of effective practice observed where good use was made of formative assessment strategies. The best examples of learning environments were stimulating and displayed pupils learning well. In a few classrooms very good use of digital technologies was allowing children to further enhance their learning and provide support to individuals to celebrate success. Across the school almost all the learners engaged well in their activities. Staff should work together to highlight and share the good practice in relation to learning environments and approaches to learning and teaching. To enhance practice further, it would be beneficial to develop a learning and teaching policy that

sets expectations of practice across the school including involvement of children in planning learning.

Teachers have engaged in moderation of writing across the school and with Local Management Group colleagues to share standards and assess individual's progress. With involvement from parents, the school have developed effective reporting to parent's procedures. Building on these recent positive developments; staff should develop assessment practices to support professional judgement and planning for progress and achievement using Education Scotland's Benchmark Statements.

Children across the school benefit from universal support such as peer support and Help Boxes within their classroom. A new initiative set up by the Pupil Support Teacher for pupils who have a specific difficulty in literacy is increasing understanding and awareness in this area across the school community. The current priority around Growth Mindset is allowing children to talk about their learning and set personal targets using the Learning Pit. Targeted support builds on universal practice with identified groups and individuals however early identification of need require more robust assessment evidence. Children's views are sought and recorded within child's plans; based on wellbeing indicators. Staff should now seek to further develop their awareness of how to identify and support specific barriers to learning and track and monitor impact of interventions.

LEADERSHIP

The headteacher has created a warm and supportive culture where staff are confident to discuss school practice and participate in decision making. There is a strong sense of collaboration across the school and staff have the opportunities to take on leadership roles. The school community, who would be committed to driving forward a shared agenda for improvement provide scope for more direct ownership of staff, children and parents in self-evaluation and school improvement planning.

Staff are motivated, work collegiately together and enjoy the opportunity to engage in professional dialogue. They know the areas within the school improvement plan. They engage in regular discussion about the school improvement plan and are well placed to engage in robust evaluation of school improvement using "How Good is Our school?4". Staff use the Perth and Kinross tracking and monitoring spreadsheet to make prediction and monitor progress of learners over time. They now require to fully engage in self-evaluation for continuous improvement using the tracking and monitoring information available.

Pupils are involved in aspects of self-evaluation through Learning Log discussions, committees and at assembly. They experience a range of learning opportunities outwith the classroom and demonstrate independent learning through taking part in committees and groups. The learners we talked to said they had benefited from the school's work on growth mindset and that the learning pit in each class was helpful. There is scope to enhance this practice to strengthen pupil participation in self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

Parents we talked to reported their satisfaction with the information received from the school. They have an opportunity to hear about school improvement priorities and have a chance to provide feedback through surveys. Those involved in the Parent Council have further opportunities to be involved in discussing the work of the school. The school engages with parents to gather the views and feedback through surveys, coffee mornings, open afternoons

and Parent Council and use this to plan for improvement in certain areas, most recently in homework and reporting. Parents told us they are happy with the work of the school and have very good relationships with staff and the wider community.

Recent work to make the school's improvement priorities more accessible through the use of a wall display in the main corridor has allowed pupils and staff to make statements about progress on improvements. A more strategic approach to self-evaluation and quality assurance should involve pupils, parents and partners to ensure robust evidence of impact of learners' achievement and attainment. This would support high expectations and a clear direction for change and improvement that is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school community.

Conclusion

Children, staff and parents at Longforgan Primary evidence a real pride in their school. Building on the key strengths identified below, the school should now address the areas for improvement, including them in the planned improvements for session 2018-19. Education officers will provide support and will 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 detailed below.

Strengths

- The ethos and culture of the school.
- The varied curriculum with high focus on health and wellbeing and personalisation and choice.
- Children who are confident, well-behaved and eager to learn.
- The strong sense of team work and supportive culture across the school.
- High levels of satisfaction from parents.

Areas for improvement

- The whole school cycle of self-evaluation and quality assurance should involve pupils, parents and partners and should now be planned in a strategic way to ensure robust evidence of impact of learners' achievement and attainment. (by August 2018)
- The school should evaluate practice of working in departments to ensure that planned learning has high expectations for all learners and that planning for differentiation, support and challenge is evident. (by June 2018)
- The curriculum at Longforgan Primary needs to be revisited to ensure learning pathways deliver appropriate progression in learning.(by December 2018)
- Staff should now seek to further develop their awareness of how to identify and support specific barriers to learning and track and monitor impact of interventions through child's plans. (by April 2019)
- To enhance practice further, it would be essential to develop a learning and teaching policy that sets expectations of practice across the school including involvement of children in planning learning. (by April 2019)

[HMI Report](#)

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