



Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Methven Primary School 16 and 17 April 2019

BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers from across Education and Children's Services visited Methven Primary School and nursery class on 16 and 17 April 2019. 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 *How good is our early learning and childcare?*

At the time of the visit, the school had a pupil roll of 117 children in primary organised over 6 classes. The Nursery has capacity for 21 children from aged 2 to school age across the morning and afternoon sessions. Methven Primary School is led by a Senior Management Team (SMT) of a headteacher and a Principal Teacher. The headteacher has been in post since August 2018.

The school has an attendance level of 95% which is slightly above the Perth and Kinross average. There are plans in place to continue to monitor this.

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

ACHIEVEMENT

At Methven Primary School there is a welcoming ethos where children are happy and enjoy being at school. The Methven 'PROMISE' is embedded in the ethos of the school where all children relate their learning and achievements to the PROMISE core values promoted regularly within classrooms and the wider school.

The children in the Nursery experience an interesting and stimulating environment which is rich in opportunities for children to problem solve, investigate, experiment, explore and create their own play in imaginative ways.

Attainment data indicates that over the past three years attainment has increased in literacy and numeracy for almost all stages.

Data from June 2018 shows that almost all pupils in primary 1 are achieving early level in line with national expectations in reading and most pupils in listening and talking, writing and maths. In primary 4, all pupils achieved first level in listening and talking, the majority achieved first level in reading and writing and most pupils met national expectations in maths. The majority of pupils in primary 7 achieved second level line with national expectations in writing and reading and most in listening and talking and maths.

The headteacher meets regularly with teaching staff to discuss pupil progress and attainment and makes use of the Perth and Kinross tracking system to support with this. Discussions take place to ensure that, where sufficient progress is not being made, plans are in place to support improvements. The staff know the children well and are aware of pupil barriers to learning. They have identified a number of individual children and small groups to receive targeted support through planned interventions, some of which are supported by the use of the Pupil Equity Fund. There is evidence that some of this work is beginning to have an impact on the reading progress of some children. Pupil support

assistants who support the delivery of these interventions have received appropriate training and report that they feel they are contributing to the positive impact of this work.

The headteacher and principal teacher should now continue with plans to ensure greater involvement of class teachers in tracking and analysing all pupil progress over time.

The pupils in Methven have opportunities to achieve within a variety of lunchtime clubs led by both teaching and support staff. These include football, netball, library club and a gardening group. The glee choir are particularly proud of their recognition in the recent competition winning the 'esprit de glee' trophy and reaching the national finals. Children are encouraged to use the school 'chatter box' to share any achievements from outside of school at the regular assemblies and do so with confidence and pride. These are recognised and displayed in the school hall and pupils record individual achievements on 'PROMISE' slips in their Learning Journey Jotters. Staff should now consider how they can link the achievements of pupils in a structured way to individual learning targets.

The school intends to plan for pupil participation in opportunities for wider achievement across the school to ensure a range across stages. They should further consult pupils on what activities they would like to participate in and how they can contribute further to leading some of these developments.

LEARNING

In the Nursery, the team work very well together. They develop the use of the children's voice when planning and evaluating learning. They respond to the interests and needs of children and take account of observations made. The effective team ensure that they share any observations of significant learning taking place and carefully plan next steps for all children.

Methven Primary is a welcoming school where the values of the 'PROMISE' are evident. The best examples of displays around the school are of a high standard, relate to learning and are contributed to or created by pupils. There is scope to increase pupil voice in designing and creating learning displays.

Positive relationships between staff and children are evident. Most pupils were observed to be engaged in the classroom learning activities and teachers should ensure that they continue to communicate clear expectations of behaviour and engagement to all pupils. In the best lessons observed, explanations and instructions were clear, built on prior learning and activities were differentiated to support learning needs. All teachers share learning intentions with pupils and almost all used success criteria to support pupils to understand what is expected of them and how they will succeed. Feedback in most classes is constructive and supports children in achieving their next steps. Teachers have been developing their use of the Methven planning wall to involve pupils and support their understanding of their learning. The use of these planning walls should now be reviewed to ensure consistency of approach across all classes. The Methven rationale and guidance on learning and teaching have been developed with staff and collegiate working should continue to focus on ensuring that consistent approaches to effective learning and teaching are developed in all classes. Staff should have increased opportunities to share practice within their own school and across other local schools. Staff should review their expectations of the quality and standard of presentation of written work to ensure consistently high expectations in all subjects across the school.

Teachers have agreed approaches to planning writing, numeracy and contexts for learning. The headteacher and staff have identified the need to review the curriculum rationale and frameworks to ensure they provide clear direction, outline expectations and underpin curricular planning.

Teachers use a range of assessment information to inform their planning and assessment. Teachers make use of the Benchmarks to support their professional judgements of pupil progress and are engaging in moderation activities within the school. This practice should be

continued and increased across the coming session to support and raise teacher understanding of progress in learning and confidence.

The school has focused on reviewing approaches to reporting pupil progress to parents, in particular through the use of Learning Journey Jotters and a revised written report at the end of the school year. The work has been based on the outcome of parental consultation this session. The guidance and purpose of the Learning Journey Jotters should be refreshed as part of this ongoing work.

The parents we spoke to expressed their satisfaction with the school and the nursery and in particular with the support their children receive when it is required. They appreciate opportunities to be involved in the classroom learning of their children and would like increased opportunities to do so.

The staff has engaged in professional learning to enhance their ability to support children with individual needs. The headteacher and staff work to ensure that planning and support is appropriate to individual children and is reviewed as necessary. Child protection, additional support needs and safeguarding policies are in place which reflect the most recent legislation and are scrutinised on a regular basis. Staff have a very good understanding of child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place, where appropriate.

The support staff present as an effective team who are committed to getting it right for pupils. They undertake professional learning and engage in professional dialogue with each other and with teachers.

LEADERSHIP

The recently appointed headteacher and principal teacher have worked to build positive relationships across the school community with pupils, staff and parents. The parents we spoke to told us that the new SMT are approachable and supportive. They have a clear vision for the school and are working to ensure that this is shared and embedded across the school. They ensure that all staff understand the key priorities for the school and that all work together to take these forward. The leadership team undertake quality assurance processes and analyse the school data to inform improvement.

All staff demonstrate a commitment to school improvement and have recently taken on the leadership of key actions for improvement. They have identified a need for increased involvement of all stakeholders in approaches to self-evaluation and should now work to create a systematic calendar of activities across the nursery and the school.

The effective staff team within the nursery undertake a range of leadership roles including leading parent learning sessions, library time, story sacks, Play on Pedals and outdoor learning. They communicate effectively with each other and review their work on an ongoing basis.

The older pupils have a range of opportunities to undertake leadership activities within the school. These include house captains, vice captains, buddies and tuck shop leaders. The pupils we spoke to told us they really appreciate the opportunity to undertake these roles and see the benefit of being more involved in the life of the school. The very successful school library development last year, led by the pupil council and supportive parent council, created a range of valuable experiences for pupils which could be used as an example when planning further opportunities.

Conclusion

Methven is a warm and welcoming school where the whole staff team are committed to continuous improvement. The new leadership team have worked to effectively build positive relationships and identify their key priorities for improvement.

Building on the key strengths below the school should now address the key areas for improvement.

Strengths

- Friendly and welcoming children who enjoy opportunities for leadership within the school
- The team working of all the staff who demonstrate a commitment to taking forward school improvement priorities
- The strong practice in the nursery where pupils experience a range of rich opportunities delivered by an effective team
- The work of the school in continuing to develop their ethos using the Methven PROMISE
- The ongoing work of the staff in taking forward approaches to effective learning and teaching

Areas for improvement

We discussed with the headteacher and the principal teacher 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:

From May 2019 and in the coming session 2019 – 20:

- further develop the school's curriculum rationale and pathways to ensure staff consistently:
 - plan and deliver high quality approaches to learning and teaching
 - ensure challenge, depth and the development of skills for life, learning and work.
- further develop whole staff approach to monitoring and tracking pupil progress and understanding and using key relevant data
- continue to develop plans to increase pupil and parental involvement and engagement in learning

ECS officers will work with the school throughout session 2019 – 20 and return within a year to evaluate the school's progress towards taking forward the recommendations for improvement.

[HMI Report](#)

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