



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



**Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report  
Moncreiffe Primary School  
12 and 13 January 2015**

## **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this visit was to support the school in the process of self-evaluation and it was conducted by four Officers from Education and Children's Services. 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.

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

Moncreiffe Primary School is led by a Headteacher, supported by a Principal Teacher who has a part-time teaching commitment. At the time of the visit the school had a primary pupil roll of 162 children, organised into seven classes. The nursery class has a combined roll of 30 children, who attend either morning or afternoon nursery sessions or a mix of both. Pupil attendance is in line with the national average.

## **ACHIEVEMENT**

Children at Moncreiffe Primary School are proud of their school and come to school ready to learn. They are enthusiastic learners who enjoy a positive and warm school ethos. Attainment data reviewed in the areas of literacy and mathematics indicate that most learners are meeting or exceeding national standards in listening and talking, with the majority meeting or exceeding national standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Some examples of good practice in relation to developing writing skills were observed. For example, in the P7 class extended pieces of writing were displayed alongside relevant and appropriate learning intentions and success criteria. Learners were fully engaged in their writing tasks, using their own notes taken from research on the internet. They were encouraged to peer assess regularly referring to the success criteria. In the Nursery, children's letters showing their emergent writing skills were displayed next to the Post Office role play area where some children were observed to be purposefully writing their letters, labels and envelopes.

In order to effectively capture learner progress in all curricular areas, the existing electronic tracking and recording tool should now be reviewed and streamlined in line with local and national assessment guidance. This should then improve procedures for analysing standards of attainment over time and have a positive impact on the rate of progress in learning for all children.

Children at Moncreiffe have the opportunity to celebrate their wider achievements within class time and at assemblies. They are encouraged to talk about their achievements from external clubs and activities. Children, mostly from P3 –P7, have the opportunity to take part in school clubs such as football, netball, basketball, art and craft and the school website. A recently created House System, which is being taken forward by one of the four Pupil Councils, has the potential to capture the imagination of all children and provide an effective mechanism in promoting team spirit, identity and an award system that is real and relevant.

Parents consulted appreciate the interest and care that staff have for their children and commented favourably on the school's responsiveness when issues have been raised. Children stated that they feel safe in school, that they are listened to and that they trust staff to look after them. Personal and social development opportunities are planned for throughout the school, for example, learning about the Well-Being Wheel and re-establishing the school rules during assemblies.

## **LEARNING**

The learning environment is generously proportioned with a number of open spaces that can be accessed by all children. There are breakout areas, an additional learning base (The Yellow Room), a fully furnished kitchen within a General Purpose Room (G.P. Room) and a classroom currently used by the teacher delivering Reduced Class Contact Time (RCCT) all set against a backdrop of extensive and attractive outdoor space.

In all lessons observed, learners were treated with fairness and respect by staff members. In the majority of lessons there were opportunities to achieve in learning; explanations and instructions were clear, building on previous learning and real-life experiences. In the best lessons observed success criteria were created with learners and were used by the children when self and peer assessing the work that they were doing. The support and advice given by the staff members meant that children's learning was effective; for example, in P6 learners were extending their skills in working with the concept of division. Children were observed engaging in a variety of experiences, using a range of resources which enhanced their learning by making it relevant and meaningful. Differentiation and the use of formative assessment strategies ensured appropriate pace and challenge for all learners in the class. However there were too few classes observed where these approaches were evident.

This session almost all teaching staff are engaged in the Tapestry Programme which provides professional development sessions for teachers related to the effective use of formative assessment strategies (including the use of learning intentions and success criteria) in improving learning and teaching. Continued engagement with this work into next session will help to develop a shared understanding of the features of effective learning and teaching. As it impacts on practice this should provide a more consistent experience for children in understanding their progress and next steps in learning as they move through the school.

All children experience a broad, general education which includes opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills through a range of learning contexts. In P1 children were learning through play in their shop, using a range of coins to buy and sell items.

The school has identified the need to develop a clear rationale for its curriculum design which is understood by all staff. Integral to this will be ensuring that learning experiences enable all relevant skills and attributes to be developed in many different ways. They should be well planned for, innovative and adapted to meet the needs of all learners. As part of this process the involvement of all stakeholders should be encouraged.

This full review of the curriculum will give staff and children the opportunity to consider the learning environment, in and beyond the classrooms, to enhance learning and wider achievement.

Profiling of learning has been established in the Nursery and the principles underpinning this are being built upon in P1. Children in P6 and P7 share their wider achievements and comments on their own learning in Glow e-portfolios. Profiling of learning should now be taken forward in a consistent, more robust whole school approach capturing each child's learning journey. This will enable learners to be better placed to recognise their own strengths and next steps in learning as well as provide useful information to parents about their child's progress.

Since August 2014 there has been a review of the school's Additional Support Needs (ASN) procedures with the headteacher and principal teacher working closely with the Pupil Support Teacher (PST) to ensure targeted support for identified individuals and groups. The PST has a clear remit which should ensure that her role impacts on supporting individual needs. Support timetables are regularly reviewed to meet emerging needs, measure impact of interventions on learners and ensure appropriate allocation of staff.

## **LEADERSHIP**

The headteacher, who has been recently appointed, identified that key in taking the school forward will be building on the positive team spirit and the collective willingness on the part of all stakeholders to work together to secure school improvement.

She has quickly established strong relationships with the school community and has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She has a measured and timely approach to addressing necessary changes and a commitment to doing this in partnership. She is well supported by the principal teacher who knows the school well and who is an effective role model to her colleagues.

Parents commented positively on the headteacher's consultative approach and responsiveness as well as the improved school systems for communication. This was reiterated by staff and children who were able to express confidence in the direction the school is taking. Staff have valued recent opportunities to be fully involved in self evaluation activities. They have a clearer, more meaningful sense of direction and value the team-working ethos that has been developed.

The majority of teaching staff have a leadership role. There is scope to extend so that all staff take on leadership responsibilities that directly impact on school improvement. Over time this should impact on planned improvements in the school, for example, the principal teacher has been developing planning and profiling at the early stages with the intention that this be taken forward across the school.

In conversations children articulated a strong sense of their own learning and that of others. They were able to reflect on their school experiences and recognised when they learn best. The Pupil Councils encourage all children to take on a leadership role, promote responsibility and independence, giving them the opportunity to talk about their learning. This should be developed to become integral to learning and teaching in every class.

## **Conclusion**

Moncreiffe Primary School has a staff, parent and pupil group who have a loyalty to their school and a collective commitment to work together to secure best outcomes for all learners. The confident, well-behaved children are keen to learn and contribute to the life of the school and its community.

Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in their learning and development. In the areas of learning and achievement school staff should capture the enthusiasm, engagement and readiness to learn of all learners to ensure that they meet their full potential.

Under the leadership of the headteacher there is clarity of direction, shared vision and the capacity for effective change to be made.

## **Areas for Improvement**

- The curriculum should have a clear rationale understood by all and should be designed to raise standards of attainment and achievement. This will be a focus for school improvement effective from February 2015.
- Teachers should continue to develop their approaches to planning, assessing and tracking children's progress to ensure that all learners achieve to their full potential. A revised tracking system will be in place by June 2015.
- Learners should be given increased opportunities to talk about and record their learning to include strengths, next steps, aspirations and wider achievements within a whole school framework. This whole school framework should be implemented at the start of session 2015/16.

With the support of education officers, 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.

## **[HMI Report](#)**

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