



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

**Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report
Royal School of Dunkeld Primary School
24, 25 September 2012**



BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers from across Education and Children's Services visited Royal School of Dunkeld Primary School and nursery class on 24 and 25 September 2012. 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* and by using the most recent Education Scotland Advice Note. It outlines the raised expectations in relation to all schools' implementation of all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence.

The school's Standards and Quality Report 2010-2011, the School Improvement Plan 2011-2012 and the school's own self evaluation formed the core documentation for scrutiny and discussion during the visit.

During the Extended Learning and Achievement Visit, the team carried out discussions with the headteacher, principal teachers, teachers and support staff. They observed learning and teaching in classes, reviewed documentation including children's work and met with groups of children and parents/carers.

The strengths and areas for improvement identified as a result of this visit are recorded below under the three main themes of *Achievement, Learning and Leadership*

Achievement

Strengths

- Overall children are achieving very good standards in learning. Across the school children are confident, successful, exercise responsibility and contribute to the life of their school.
- The headteacher and staff are able to evidence the progress and achievement of individual children through comprehensive tracking processes and discussions.
- There is a strong sense of pride, identity and ownership in Royal School of Dunkeld. The positive atmosphere and high standards in presentation of the whole learning environment evidence a shared desire and active interest to continuously improve the school.
- Children at Royal School of Dunkeld present as happy, polite and very well behaved. Throughout the school, high expectations in regard to pupil attitudes, contributions and behaviour are evident.
- Pupils consulted are very clear that they are cared for and known well by all adults in the school. They know what they can do if they need help.
- Parents consulted reported that children look forward to coming to school and are motivated to learn and achieve. They commended all staff for their positive approach and close team work sighting this as a major strength.
- Children are very active in and out of school. Assemblies and newsletters provide a platform for sharing and celebrating their personal achievements. Children are

particularly proud to have their success shared in the local newspaper, "The Bridge", every second month. Parents are extremely positive about the efforts made by the school to recognise effort and achievement for all pupils.

- The pupil voice is strong at Royal School of Dunkeld. Children are actively involved in all aspects of school improvement. Those involved in the school's various committees have the opportunity to use their learning by taking active roles in planning and organising whole school events.
- The school successfully links enterprising approaches to learning with ECO schools and health and well-being. Learning within the local community is ongoing with activities supporting local trusts such as RSPB, the Loch of Lowes, and the Woodland Trust, whose outdoor ranger works regularly with the school.
- Children from P4 -7 use their Big Learning vertical groupings to organise school events which share their learning with their families and provide service to their community. For example they produced tourist guides for Dunkeld Tourist office.
- Staff teams work together to organise whole school events and to support a range of activities during and after school. Their contributions and support of the wider life of the school are appreciated by children and parents.
- There are effective transition arrangements in place for nursery to primary 1 and from primary 7 to secondary school. At both points of transition, school and community learning staff organise enhanced arrangements for children requiring additional support.
- The school improvement plan directs the work of the school and actions taken. The senior management team work with staff regularly to review children's progress and achievement.

Areas for Development

The challenge for the school is now to maintain, and to further develop, the very high standards achieved in this area, and to ensure that as new staff join the team they are supported to attain those same high standards. The School Improvement Team will now consider, with the school, how best to share Royal School of Dunkeld's improvement journey with other schools. In support of partnership working, parents would benefit from a brief summary of the outcomes and priorities within the school's plan for improvement.

Learning

Strengths

- Children's views, and their participation in decision making related to their own learning, are clearly taken into account, valued and acted upon.
- Across the school children demonstrate a positive attitude to learning. Those consulted could give many examples of when learning was challenging for them and when they had to think for themselves.
- Children consulted talked of enjoying their learning experiences and of teachers making activities interesting and fun. Parents consulted commended the school's encouragement for pupils to aim high and for organising opportunities for children to work across stages. They hold staff in very high regard.
- Children evaluate their learning in a range of ways including one to one conversations with their teachers and talking and thinking books in the nursery.
- In all classes, children have the chance to build on and use their prior learning and connect it to new and relevant contexts across the curriculum.

- Lessons are well planned and structured. The school has developed planning and assessment tools which take account of all eight curriculum areas and enable teachers to focus on key areas for teaching and evaluating children's progress and achievement.
- Teachers and support staff know children well and are sensitive to their needs.
- A variety of activities, tasks and resources is used which overall meet children's needs. The staff team work very effectively together to provide inclusive approaches to addressing barriers to learning.
- Parents consulted praised all staff for their quick response to any concern and the time offered to resolve issues. They value the approachability of staff and the opportunity for informal conversations.
- The school team works closely and successfully with colleagues from other services and agencies to offer appropriate support for children and their families.

Areas for Development

- Staff should monitor the balance of time where adults are directing learning to ensure an appropriate balance is achieved between this and pupil led learning activities.
- Continue to use children's ideas for planning their learning experiences across all eight areas of the curriculum.
- Review current homework tasks to ensure they build on, extend and challenge children's new knowledge and skills.

Leadership

Strengths

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She demonstrates drive and energy in achieving consistency in high quality learning and teaching. Shared aspirations and high expectations are at the core of the school's approach.
- The headteacher, principal teacher and acting principal teachers work effectively together. There is a very well developed model of distributive leadership including teachers, support staff, partners, parents and children. All have a part to play in taking forward school priorities as individuals and in teams.
- Driven by the headteacher, the staff team have developed a culture of continuous dialogue about school performance which impacts positively on classroom practice.
- Collegiate time is invested in whole school approaches to planning and evaluation of learning. This good practice helps to translate plans into learning experiences which reflect what children need and want to learn.
- The headteacher regularly monitors the impact of professional development priorities through evaluations of learning and teaching.
- There is a strong culture of collegiate working and a clear sense that everyone is expected to contribute to school improvement. Staff are keen to share their practice and utilise each other's strengths and talents for the benefit of the school.
- The school values the contributions of all stakeholders and has very effective systems in place to gather their views. The parents and children consulted are confident that their suggestions are welcomed and acted upon where appropriate.
- Parents consulted appreciated both the frequency of events throughout the school year where they can share in their children's learning, and that the school offer a range of times to take account of parents' different working patterns. They also noted pupil led conferences as particularly helpful.

Areas for Development

- Sustain consistency in planning, assessment and evaluation.
- Build on current collegiate strength by developing learning rounds, incorporating peer evaluation.

Conclusion

Royal School of Dunkeld is seen by those who work and learn there as being central to the community. Strong partnerships and very effective teamwork are fundamental to the school's success in creating such a positive and vibrant climate for learning.

The school benefits from the headteacher's high quality leadership coupled with that demonstrated by a professional and effective staff team who share the desire to work together to improve the school. High expectations are set for all children who present as extremely proud of their school, happy and ready to learn there.

High priority and value is given to everyone being accountable and responsible for positive outcomes for children. This places the school in a very strong position to continually move forward.

The school should now address the areas for development in this report within their plan for improvement in session 2012 -2013.

HMI Report: [HM Follow Up Inspection Report 2007 \[pdf 29KB\]](#)

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