



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



**Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report
Ruthvenfield Primary School
10 October 2013**

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit was to support the school in the process of self-evaluation and was conducted by two 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.

Ruthvenfield School has a pupil roll of 65 pupils organised in three classes P1/2, P3/4 and P5-7. Attendance is above both the national and the Perth and Kinross average. The headteacher has a weekly teaching commitment.

During the visit, strengths were identified in line with the school's own self-evaluation. Of particular note were:

- the learning environment which acts as both a stimulus for learning and a record of what has been learned
- young people who are polite, articulate and keen to be involved in the life of the school
- the very strong teamwork of all the staff in the school who work well collectively for the benefit of all learners, and each other
- parents/carers who are honest about and supportive of the work of the school
- effective teaching approaches including skilled use of questions to extend learning for most learners.

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

ACHIEVEMENT

In Perth and Kinross pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities which promote learning and the development of their skills. These opportunities often include events when pupils are able to engage with children from other schools, work with visiting specialists from a range of backgrounds and attend special events. The young people at Ruthvenfield are no exception in that regard; for example they enjoy a residential experience; they designed and produced award winning digital animation films about staying safe on line and the digital animation club continues to meet to design and develop other

projects. The school has a stunning school choir with their own CD which is for sale.

The House system has clear links to developing values and citizenship in the young people and is a key source of motivation for improvement across the school. For a small school they do a great deal of work for many others through the on-going charity fundraising for organisations such as Jeans for Genes and Comic Relief.

Children consulted were honest and insightful about their learning specifically and about their school more generally. They were able to articulate what they were learning, its relevance for them and how they could make improvements. They also told us that the staff “treated everyone with respect and that they helped you learn.”

Most learners are making good progress in line with national expectations. Reading skills are well developed across all stages and many contexts for writing are relevant and engaging for all. Planning for learning, however, would benefit from shifting the focus from what is being planned on paper, to a more dynamic approach that places a greater emphasis on professional dialogue. To do this all staff should review the range and volume of planning that is currently undertaken with a view to producing a more streamlined approach ready for use from August 2014. It will be beneficial to undertake this work with support from education officers who are leading on developing alternative approaches to planning across all Perth and Kinross Council (PKC).

LEARNING

High quality interactions between staff and learners were evident at every stage. There is clarity of purpose to the learning that is shared and discussed with children at all stages. Questions are used effectively to check understanding and then review where the lesson may need to go next based on the feedback received from the young people. Additional support for children who require it is well planned and allows those youngsters to make good progress with their learning.

In reviewing the approaches to planning learning, care should be taken to ensure the PKC Indicators of Learning are used to help make sound judgements about the rate of progress being made by all learners. This would help ensure a more brisk pace of learning was achievable for all.

LEADERSHIP

All staff members have lead roles within the school and there is a strong collegiate approach to planning for improvement. The headteacher is considered, reflective and willing to listen to and act upon advice. He has fostered a very strong sense of community at Ruthvenfield, where everyone

feels included and involved. He and the whole staff team have ensured that the environment for learning is welcoming to all and stimulating for learners.

Pupils are given a range of opportunities to be involved in improving their school such as their roles in a range of committees and through the house system. Those parents consulted report that they feel very included in decisions that affect their children specifically and the school more widely: they feel valued, listened to and demonstrated great pride in being associated with Ruthvenfield. They consider communication between home and school to be very good and they find the staff team approachable. The headteacher's leadership was positively remarked on and parents feel he has made significant improvements to the educational provision in his time in post.

The school, through its processes of self-evaluation, has identified strengths and areas for improvement which are being taken forward through the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Through discussion between officers and staff during the visit it was identified that there is now a need to increase the pace of curricular change, ensuring there are clear, progressive pathways for all learners. Alongside this they need to have clear, concise approaches to evidencing and evaluating the impact of any planned curricular improvements. The focus of their planned development work should now include reviewing the strategic curricular plan to ensure that:

- appropriate attention is paid to all four contexts for learning
- the Perth and Kinross Indicators are used to inform teachers' professional judgements about the progress of children based on the evidence observed during the course of the learning and teaching in classes
- feedback for and between staff should focus more on the learning observed rather than the written plans. This should start with immediate effect to help free up time for more professional dialogue.

The areas for improvement identified in this report should be taken forward in a systematic way over the remainder of this school session and also incorporated in the next school improvement plan.. A revised strategic curriculum plan and a new, streamlined approach to planning learning should be the main priorities and work should begin now to develop these.

CONCLUSION

Ruthvenfield Primary School is a school where learners are well motivated and are actively engaged in their learning. They can demonstrate a range of skills which they apply confidently in different contexts. The whole school community takes an active role in promoting the care and welfare of all. It is a school where provision overall is good; it now has the capacity to build on the solid foundations to improve further still the quality of the learning experiences and outcomes of all.

[HMI Report](#)

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