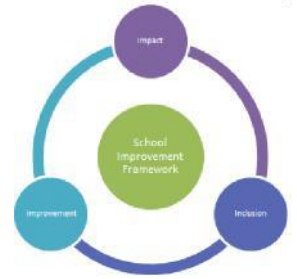




Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School 1 and 2 May 2018



BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers from across Education and Children's Services (ECS) visited St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School on 1 and 2 May 2018. 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 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.

At the time of the visit the school had a pupil roll of 67 organised in 3 classes. The school also has provision for part time nurture support in 'The Nest' nurture class. The school is led by the headteacher who is supported by a principal teacher.

The school has an attendance level of 92% which is just below the Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) and national average.

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

ACHIEVEMENT

St Ninian's provides a warm, welcoming and nurturing environment where children feel extremely proud of their school. There is a very positive, supportive ethos across the whole school where the quality of relationships is a clear strength. Pupils told us that they feel listened to and supported by the adults in the school and by each other.

Attainment data reviewed indicates that trends have been variable and inconsistent over time. Not all pupils in St Ninian's are making sufficient progress in their learning. In June 2017, the majority of P1 pupils had achieved in line with national expectations in their learning at early level across literacy and numeracy. By the end of P4, a few pupils had achieved in line with national expectations at first level in literacy and numeracy. In P7 less than half had achieved expected levels of attainment in their learning in Maths and the majority of pupils had achieved at second level in literacy. There is a need to focus on a rigorous and structured approach to raising attainment across the school. Staff are making use of the Perth and Kinross attainment tracking spreadsheets to record attainment information for pupils at regular intervals in the year. This information should be scrutinised and challenged taking into account the desired rate of progress for learners in order to have a more positive impact on raising attainment at a pace. The data gathered

should be used to track progress with specific interventions and the information should inform the support in place for identified pupils.

All staff in St Ninian's know the children well. They demonstrated a commitment to the wellbeing and learning of all children. They work collegiately and communicate well with each other. Staff have identified target groups of pupils and individuals and there is early evidence that the support provided in literacy and numeracy is having a positive impact on individual pupils' progress. Pupils in the early years have benefited from a focus on developing vocabulary and numeracy skills. The work in targeting reading for groups of learners is having positive outcomes and will continue next session. Staff access a range of literacy and numeracy assessment materials and should now ensure that the information gathered is reviewed regularly and directly informs planning for next steps in learning.

The parents consulted expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school. They commented positively on the caring and welcoming ethos of the school and on how well all members of staff know their children. The pupils have a range of opportunities for wider achievement within the school. There are a range of clubs including the homework club, football, rugby and chess. Pupils benefit from a range of learning experiences outwith school making use of the local area for example the Black Watch Museum and the local library.

LEARNING

All classroom environments supported pupil learning with the use of displays relating to current topics. Across the school all pupils engaged well with their learning activities. In the best lessons observed, learning was well planned, was appropriate and understood by pupils. They had the opportunity to achieve within the planned activities and were treated with fairness and respect. Some differentiation of learning activities was observed within lessons. A few pupils were able to talk with confidence about the purpose of their learning and their strengths and next steps. Pupils contribute to planning some learning of class topics and learning journey jotters provide a record of the work children have undertaken. These jotters could now be reviewed to ensure consistent use and that they also provide pupil reflections on learning against individual learning targets.

There has been initial work undertaken to further challenge pupils in their learning in numeracy. This is through the effective use of success criteria and this is having a positive impact on pupil engagement. The learners can articulate why this has supported their motivation and learning and there is now an opportunity to listen to children's views, examine the attainment evidence and use this learning to influence further approaches in developing effective learning and teaching. The school should now focus on developing a more consistent approach to the use of learning intentions, success criteria and the use of formative assessment strategies. They should ensure that pupils have increased involvement in planning their learning.

Pupils are polite, confident and able to describe clearly what they like about their school. They are given a wide range of meaningful opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. They demonstrate their responsibility and

confidence in a range of areas e.g. supporting the Little Cherubs crèche in the church, their intergenerational working within the community and the local vennel art project. Children in the school spoke positively about how they benefit from the 'FareShare' partnership which provides regular access to healthy snacks provided by a local supermarket.

Staff have worked together to create curriculum frameworks to support them in planning progressive learning for pupils. With the support of these frameworks, they are engaging with the national benchmarks for literacy and numeracy to further develop their understanding of achievement of a level. To inform professional judgements about pupil attainment, staff are engaging in moderation of standards of writing across the school. Staff should continue with their plans to create a range of further moderation activities within their school and with other local schools. This should involve the sharing of classroom practice.

There is an opportunity for the school to review the curriculum experiences within St Ninian's through working to create a curriculum rationale that takes into account the four contexts for learning and the needs of the school community. This would further enhance the curriculum on offer to allow pupils wider opportunities to apply their learning over a range of experiences.

The school adheres to all legislative requirements and where learning needs have been identified, planning is in place. The support staff have developed very positive relationships with pupils and are committed to meeting pupil needs. Individual planning to meet learning needs takes place as a team approach and actions are set and agreed through the use of a child's plan. The actions and outcomes within pupils plans should be reviewed regularly to ensure that all staff have a shared understanding of the barriers to learning and that these planned actions are appropriate and impact positively on pupil progress.

'The Nest' nurture class provides a supportive, welcoming and caring environment for those children who access the setting on a part time basis. There is clear communication between the staff within the room resulting in effective target setting for pupils. Pupils throughout the school have a shared sense of pride in 'the Nest' and those who have previously accessed the provision maintain a lasting connection as ambassadors within the school.

LEADERSHIP

The headteacher, the principal teacher and all the staff are committed to the school, the pupils and the wider community. They have worked over time to create a positive ethos where children are at the centre. The staff are involved in evaluating the work of the school and setting improvement priorities for each year. As planned, the headteacher should now ensure that the improvement priorities directly impact on learning and teaching, are monitored and tracked and lead to increased attainment across the school.

The small staff team work effectively with each other, are committed to collegiate working and engage well in professional discussions about learning and school improvement.

The parents we met spoke highly of the commitment and openness of the Headteacher and the staff. They appreciate the opportunities to hear about the work of the school through newsletters, the school app and open afternoons.

Conclusion

St Ninian's Primary School provides a safe, respectful and nurturing environment where pupils are happy and sociable. Staff, pupils and parents have a sense of pride in the school.

Strengths

- A welcoming, nurturing and warm ethos with a very strong sense of community.
- Strong working partnerships of all school staff who have a positive impact on social and emotional development of pupils.
- Confident, articulate and motivated pupils who have a sense of pride in their school.

We discussed with the headteacher and staff 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 August 2018; review the curriculum rationale to take into account:
 - pupil voice
 - the 4 contexts for learning
 - leadership at all levels
- Review whole school approaches to identifying, planning, reviewing and supporting individual pupil needs and barriers to learning from August 2018
- From June 2018, develop a wider range of approaches for self-evaluation and ensure these are used consistently across the school to impact on school improvement in order to:
 - Raise attainment supported by moderation and clear shared understanding of achievement of a level.
 - Improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

As part of the normal ELAV follow up procedures, ECS 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.

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