



Perth and Kinross Council Education and Children's Services



Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Aberuthven Primary School 26 and 27 January 2012

BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of two quality improvement officers visited Aberuthven Primary School in January 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? (3).

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

During the extended learning and achievement visit, the team carried out discussions with the headteacher and other staff, observed learning and teaching in classrooms, reviewed documentation, and met with groups of children and parents.

The strengths and areas for development identified as a result of this visit and the school's self-evaluation process are recorded below under the three main themes of Achievement, Learning and Leadership.

Achievement

Strengths

- Overall children are making good progress in learning across the curriculum. Progress is evidenced in attractive portfolios which are shared with parents.
- There are very good opportunities for children to influence the life of the school through the pupil parliament which is skilfully led by the pupil council. Issues are raised in this weekly forum and decisions are made democratically by the children after full and thoughtful discussion.
- The school's own values of trust, respect and fairness are well embedded throughout the school with children and adults showing a high level of respect for each other.
- Children are articulate and confident to share their opinions and responses. Almost all children are happy, polite and very well behaved.
- Through the system of school committees, children access a wide range of activities to develop the skills and attributes associated with being confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- Children enjoy a range of sporting and cultural activities organised by the school and the local authority for example football and rugby tournaments and Scottish Book Trust events.

- Children report that they feel safe at school and know exactly what to do if they have a worry or concern. Adults in school are kind, listen to them and respond to their concerns.
- Transition arrangements into S1 are well planned and are enhanced as appropriate to ensure that all needs are met. A P7 residential activity week involving children from across the Local Management Group supports the transition experience for all those involved.
- The transition into P1 from local nurseries is well managed and is supported by a number of induction events. There are weekly opportunities for pre-school children from the locality to join the P1 and P2 children for Rhyme Time sessions provided by the local authority.
- Overall the School Improvement Plan is effective in directing the work of the school. Staff, children and parents are actively involved in taking the school forward.

Areas for development

- Continue to work on raising attainment particularly in writing by providing more frequent opportunities for children to develop their skills and apply them in different contexts.
- Further develop staff understanding of the standards associated with curriculum levels to establish clear benchmarks in learning.
- Continue to track progress in learning to ensure very good progress.
- Develop after-school clubs as planned by the pupil parliament.

Learning

Strengths

- Almost all children listen attentively to explanations and instructions and work well with each other. Most are actively engaged in their learning.
- Pupils have demonstrated that they can apply their learning in a range of contexts, for example, maths learning was used within a class topic on transport.
- Children are treated with respect and fairness. Their responses are encouraged and valued with almost all children listening well to their teacher and to each other.
- All lessons observed were well structured and teachers' explanations and instructions were clear. Teachers made good use of questioning to extend learning.
- Overall, children are able to talk about their learning and, in the upper years in particular, can fully explain the purpose of learning intentions and help to create their own success criteria. Children are very proud of their learning which is attractively displayed throughout the school.
- Overall, children engage in interesting and relevant activities which they find enjoyable. During the Living Classrooms project P4-7 children enjoyed learning about nature in Dunning Woods.

- Staff supporting children with identified Additional Support Needs (ASN) work together effectively providing well judged and sensitive support.

Areas for development

- Ensure planning identifies appropriate lessons and activities to meet the needs of all learners depending on their age and stage of development.
- Continue to develop formative assessment ensuring the pace of learning is well judged to provide appropriate support and challenge.
- To further enhance learning experiences, continue to develop active learning including co-operative learning and learning through play.

Leadership

Strengths

- The effective leadership of the headteacher is focused on school improvement. She demonstrates a clear vision for the school and is well supported by the motivated and effective staff team.
- The school's committees effectively encourage pupil voice and the development of leadership skills. With the organisation of events and fund-raising activities, the committees promote enterprise and skills for life, for learning and for work. Children are very proud of their school's Eco and Health Promoting status.
- The headteacher engages very well with the school community and is held in high regard by the staff team, children and parents. Parents report that all school staff are approachable and helpful. Any concern raised or request made is listened to and dealt with appropriately and sensitively.
- Recent opportunities to share professional development sessions with colleagues in the local management group have been mutually beneficial. Good use is made of collegiate events and in-service training to promote a shared understanding of a range of issues within learning and teaching.
- An important initiative has been the joint working with the local private nursery to develop the health and wellbeing curriculum.
- Staff embrace leadership opportunities and have a strong sense of ownership of school improvement.
- There are very good opportunities for staff, parents and children in taking forward the School Improvement Plan. This is displayed as a working document for all to see and contribute to.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and are keen to work in partnership in a range of ways. There is an active and enthusiastic parent council which offers a valuable contribution to the life of the school.
- Self-evaluation is well embedded throughout the school and impacts positively in a range of ways.

- The head teacher makes good use of opportunities to involve staff in a range of development activities including training and visits to other schools.

Areas for development

- Ensure the monitoring of learning and teaching results in positive outcomes for children consistently across the school.
- Continue as planned to engage in professional development activities, particularly those related to assessment and moderation, with schools across the local management group.
- Continue as planned to develop the involvement of parents and the community in the school's self evaluation processes.

Conclusion

Aberuthven Primary School is a happy, village school, set within a strong community. Children are well cared for, well behaved and motivated to learn. The headteacher leads the school very well. She and the wider staff team work well together to provide a supportive learning environment where children flourish. Parents are keen to support the school and to be involved in their children's learning.

Aberuthven Primary School has many strengths with the capacity to continually improve. The headteacher, staff, children and parents should continue to work together to further develop the good work already started and to support future improvements in order to enable all children to develop and achieve their full potential.

The school should now use the areas for development identified in this report in conjunction with their School Improvement Plan for session 2011-2012 in the process of continuous improvement.

[Aberuthven HMI report](#)

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