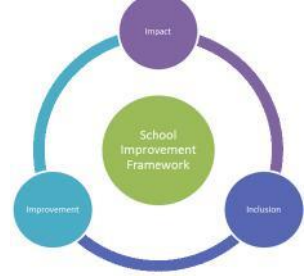


# Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Glenlyon Primary School 20 September 2016



## BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers from across Education and Children's Services (ECS) visited Glenlyon Primary School and nursery class on 20 September 2016. 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?* (4<sup>th</sup> 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 visit Glenlyon school had a pupil roll of 17 organised in one multi composite class. The Nursery class had capacity for 8 places which can be accessed over 3 days. The school is led by the headteacher (HT) who has a teaching commitment of 3.5 days and is supported by a class teacher for 1.5 days.

The school has an attendance level of 93.23% which is slightly 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

Children at Glenlyon are learning in a purposeful and organised environment within which they feel safe and cared for. They impress as happy, very well behaved and positive towards their learning. Children are confident in expressing their opinions. They are able to describe many improvements in their school that are a direct result of their contributions and suggestions. They are extremely positive about their active and varied learning experiences.

Almost all children are currently making very good progress, in line with national expectations, in mathematics, listening and talking, reading and writing. A few children exceed national expectations across the stages. Overall, this is a continuously improving trend which the school predicts will be sustained for June 2017.

The school has developed effective approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Staff can discuss attainment and progress at year group, class and individual levels. The school is now planning to scrutinise this information by gender to further refine strategies for both support and increasing levels of challenge. There are plans in place to address the slight drop in attendance.

Across the school, attainment in reading continues to improve. The new group reading test has been very helpful in ensuring that reading ages and abilities are in line with teacher's professional judgements. The school has had a focus on reading for enjoyment and is now embracing the First Minister's Reading Challenge which is extending children's skills in reviewing and recommending books to others and self-challenge.

Almost all children can listen attentively and build very well on each other's contributions. Children talk very confidently and articulately, with each other and with adults. Almost all collaborate very well with each other when learning in pairs and small groups.

The school team has prioritised raising expectations and standards of the quality and presentation of writing at all stages and across all curriculum areas. There should now be an

increased focus on the moderation of standards and expectation at school level and with colleagues from other schools using the PKC Indicators and recently published National Benchmarks.

Progress in Maths assessments are being used effectively to scrutinise attainment and progress. Mathletics, an online interactive maths programme enables children to practice their mental agility skills. They are highly motivated by the opportunities for self-challenge that the Mathletics activities provide. Children are also using Mathletics at home which is enhancing learning. This combination is supporting the staff team's ability to scrutinise data and identify specifically where children are learning well or requiring further input as well as, development of numeracy across the curriculum. This focus has improved children's mental agility and basic number concepts and their engagement in maths is also much improved.

Children are developing an understanding about their own health and wellbeing. All staff know children extremely well individually. It is evident in all aspects of their work that children's wellbeing and achievement are at the heart of all they do. HWB is very well embedded in the school. Children are active and energetic in their learning in and out-with school. Teaching and non-teaching staff work together to provide a varied and motivating range of physical exercise sessions and outdoor learning experiences for example the daily exercise programme and Forest Schools activities. The school is currently working with parents to increase after school activities and lunchtime clubs to the school's rural remote location.

Children are encouraged and supported to talk about and record their achievements in school and out-with. They talk proudly about the work that they are involved in to improve their school and contribute to their community. They are aware of their rural remote location and appreciate the school's approach to widening their learning horizons. For example, their participation in Micro Finance – KIVA, an initiative promoting the hand up not a hand out approach enabling schools to help finance very small businesses around the world. This also develops children's skills in and learning in financial education, investment and speculating. Children are also extremely positive about the range of opportunities they have to develop their interests and talents through sports, competitions and performances.

## **LEARNING**

Glenlyon's grounds are expansive and very well used. Children have access to a variety of play areas which support creative play and outdoor learning very well. Children have appropriate clothing which enables them to maximise outdoor learning all year round. Parents are using their expertise in craft and expressive arts to plan activities which will further enhance the classroom and outdoor learning, for example yarn bombing, pottery and willow weaving. Plans are in place to refresh active schools training and work with colleagues to access the local estate who have made more grounds outside Meggernie Castle available. The school will also be working with a local gamekeeper from Chesthill House to learn more about local wildlife.

Staff are currently working together to involve children and parents more to further expand their community links and business partnerships to enhance children's experiences across the curriculum. We discussed with staff the need to reinforce the school's contribution, reach and impact in its community, partnerships and business links. There is also scope to brand this work using the recently developed school logo of Growing, Achieving and Learning Together.

The nursery and classroom are extremely well organised. They provide children with motivating and supportive environments in which to learn. Children's learning is displayed very effectively throughout the school. Displays make clear how children's ideas and creativity are being used and are enhanced with the use of children's writing and art work to reinforce key learning points.

The school's curriculum enables children to develop an understanding of the wellbeing indicators from nursery throughout school. It reflects and maximises the school's unique community and rural setting. Making connections across learning, across the community and

beyond is what is important for Glenlyon. Great efforts are made by the school team to ensure that children have regular opportunities to learn alongside their peer groups from other schools.

Staff know children very well and are proactive in developing children's individual interests, skills and attributes. Target setting and profiling are developing across the school starting in nursery. Children are developing an understanding that achievement is about progress and a feeling of personal improvement and development. They are enjoying using digital profiling process called Book Creator on ipads to capture and annotate examples of their learning. They are ready now to record the skills they are developing in their notes. The school should ensure that children are gathering evidence of their learning and progress from all curriculum areas. The PKC Skills Framework will be an important resource for this work as will ensuring that staff provide high quality written feedback for children in all curricular areas.

Learning activities are well planned, carefully structured and clear and children are involved in setting their success criteria. The level of support and challenge is appropriate and activities are differentiated to meet the range of children's learning needs and abilities. Staff use questioning effectively to support higher order thinking skills. The team observed high quality interactions in the nursery and composite class, children are working in a culture of enquiry and respond positively to challenge. This is an area that the nursery and school should continue to develop.

Teachers and support staff work very well together to provide well-judged assistance for children. Relationships between staff and children are extremely positive, helpful and respectful. There are effective systems in place to ensure joined up and consistent approaches between those staff supporting children with additional needs. At this time the team have access to a termly consultation with a pupil support teacher.

Those parents we consulted with feel that the school communicates very well with them and like the use of homework diaries which give detail of class topics for learning. They are positive about the high expectations set for children and appreciate the interest all staff have in helping children to achieve and experience success. They also commend the school for its determination to connect children with their peers across Highland Perthshire enabling them to work in larger groups.

## **LEADERSHIP**

The headteacher knows the school very well and has a clear sense of direction. She is skilful in utilising the expertise, interests and enthusiasm of the school team, parents and wider community to enhance the life and work of the school.

There is a strong ethos of teamwork within the school. Staff and parents appreciate the visible and supportive leadership of the HT. The HT, teacher and support staff are collectively reflective about their practice. There is a positive and proactive approach to professional learning which is inclusive of all staff. There is an evident shared accountability and responsibility for achieving the best for all children. Within this small team, there are regular activities to monitor standards of learning and teaching. All staff work effectively to continually review and refresh the school environment and approaches to learning and teaching.

Children are very clear that their ideas and contributions play an important part in school improvement. At all stages, children are able to describe how they have influenced decisions and the responsibilities they are given to turn ideas into actions. Pupil voice is a strong feature of Glenlyon and there are already plans in place to further develop the children's role in planning and evaluating learning. Teachers and children talk regularly about learning. These conversations now need a sharper focus on evidencing progression in learning and the skills that children are developing across the curriculum.

Children appreciate the opportunities they have to develop their leadership skills and attributes. They talk enthusiastically about their organisation of events for parents and the community

such as school performances and sharing the learning events. They play a key part in planning the content and leading the daily exercise programme and are very much enjoying their support of baking activities in the nursery. As with learning, children have the capacity to take on more challenge and independence in their leadership roles.

They are provided with regular information on school events via newsletters, Twitter and the school's website. Parents appreciate the efforts made by the school to use the skills, expertise and connections that families can bring to enhance learning and the curriculum. They value the approachability and willingness of staff to offer time to talk when that is requested.

## **Strengths**

- The very articulate children who learn well together;
- The teamwork and commitment of all staff in providing a positive, motivating and inclusive ethos;
- The school's approaches to learning outdoors and making the most of the local area and community partnerships;
- The high quality of the learning environment and;
- The headteacher's leadership and the shared responsibility of the school team in taking forward school improvement.

We discussed with 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:

- Further develop processes for moderating standards of attainment across the curriculum using the PKC indicators and National benchmarks from November 2016;
- By May 2017 extend the new approaches for tracking progress to all aspects of the broad general education with an initial focus on health and wellbeing.
- From October 2016 use the school's Logo "Learning, Achieving and Growing Together" as the brand for work to further develop the involvement of children, parents and partners in planning and evaluating school improvements;
- From October 2016 increase the use of the PKC Skills Framework to focus learning conversations and support the development of children's profiling and self-evaluation skills and;
- From October 2016 increase the level of independence and challenge in learning for children at all stages.

## **Conclusion**

Glenlyon is a well led school where children are making very good progress in their learning. The clear sense of direction of the HT, support of the school team and partnership with parents and the community make the school a vibrant and positive place to learn. As part of the normal ELAV follow up procedures, ECS officers will return within a year to evaluate the school's progress towards taking forward the recommendations for improvement.

### [HMI Report 2008](#)

Responsible Officer: Rhona Jay, QIO Email: [rjay@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:rjay@pkc.gov.uk) Telephone: 01738 476360