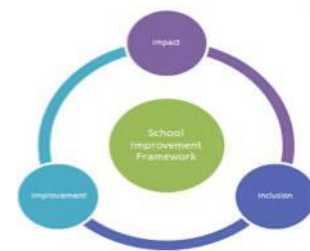




Perth and Kinross Council Education and Children's Services

Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Crieff Primary School 21 and 22 March 2017



BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit was to support the school in the process of self-evaluation. The visit was conducted by five Quality Improvement Officers from Education and Children's Services, a peer headteacher and an Education Additional Support Officer. The themes subject to scrutiny were based on core Quality Indicators from 'How good is our school?' (4th edition) and reflected the most recent advice from Education Scotland which outlines raised expectations in relation to schools' implementation of all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

Information was gathered from visits to classes, scrutiny of data, records and children's work, discussions with children, parents and staff, and other evidence of learning

In Crieff Primary School the senior leadership team (SLT) comprises a headteacher, two deputy headteachers (DHTs) and a principal teacher in the specialist base. At the time of the visit the school had a pupil roll of 454 children, organised across fifteen classes. The nursery has 63 places at each session including 6 fulltime places allocated on the basis of support for children and families; 4 two year old children attend the nursery as Strong Start 2s. At 94.73%, pupil attendance for session 2015-16 was below the Perth and Kinross average of 95.3%. The school has plans in place to address this.

ACHIEVEMENT

Almost all children in Crieff Primary School are making very good progress in their learning. In June 2016 almost all children in P1, P4 and P7 were making very good progress or better in reading, writing, listening and talking and mathematics. At all stages a few children were attaining ahead of national expectations. The SLT know their children and families very well and the focus on raising attainment for all is well embedded across the school.

Class teachers in Crieff use the SEEMIS management information system and the Perth and Kinross tracking and monitoring spreadsheet to record pupils' progress against, and predict attainment of, national targets. Judgements are informed by a range of standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy and ongoing class-based assessment activities. Where dips in attainment are evident these are addressed.

Collaborative working by teachers across CfE levels, supported by the designated member of the SLT, has been effective in embedding whole school approaches to planning, evaluating learning, moderating standards and engaging in action research. Weekly staff meetings have proved to be very effective in sharing good practice across levels and in developing the team identity.

Regular tracking and monitoring meetings between the headteacher and class teachers inform action plans which ensure appropriate pace and challenge for those children who face barriers to learning. Class teachers use literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and cross curricular skills grids to record progress in learning. Perth and Kinross pre-school developmental milestones link in to these grids. There is now an opportunity to also plan and

track progress in the range of skills for learning, life and work, including creativity, digital and employability skills.

Staff have devised progressive pathways in literacy and numeracy to support pace of progress for all children. A three year, whole school, rolling programme of learning in context captures the core experiences and outcomes which will be the learning focus in any term. In addition, a progressive framework for science has led to the recent development of a Science Hub in the school in partnership with Glasgow Science Centre and iTeach training is supporting staff to make good use of digital technologies. French is taught from nursery to P7; a focus to develop consistency of French teaching across all classes would be beneficial.

The health and wellbeing curriculum is supported by the use of BounceBack and restorative approaches across the school. Current work to develop self-regulation approaches is proving to be effective in supporting some children and there are plans in place to extend this. Across the school children can talk about the Wellbeing Wheel, also known as SHANARRI. A health and wellbeing skills development programme has been implemented this session and the health and wellbeing skills grids effectively support the focus at individual pupil level.

Teachers' skills grids are used to inform Learner Led Conferencing where pupil voice is strong. Throughout the year, in 1:1 conversations with their teacher about learning, children are supported to evaluate their own learning and capture their progress which is then shared by them at Parent Contact appointments. Children consulted spoke enthusiastically about the process, appreciating their direct involvement in the discussion between their parents and the teacher.

P7 children identify real purpose in the duties they carry out in their roles as ambassadors and house captains. Children from P5-P7 appreciate opportunities to engage in the life of the school through the citizenship committees including Pupil Council, media and ECO groups. Active Schools involvement has resulted in a number of parents trained to deliver school clubs, e.g. Bikeability. Weekly Skills Academy sessions offer all children P1-P7 a range of activities including photography, drama and puppet making.

The ethos of Crieff Primary School is encapsulated in the school's motto 'Inclusive, Inviting, Inspiring, Invested' – which children refer to as "the four Is". In particular, the principle of inclusion is core to the culture of the school. This has influenced the symbolisation of the school environment to support those learners with language and communication needs. Nurturing approaches are evident throughout the school, for children and for staff.

The school responds appropriately to concerns about children's wellbeing. Good working relationships have been developed with a range of agencies, and colleagues in health and social work use the school building for support meetings. For some children and families at Crieff Primary, attending school regularly can be a challenge; the headteacher monitors those children carefully, liaising with parents and identifying support where that is appropriate.

LEARNING

Crieff Primary School provides a carefully considered, calm and aesthetically pleasing environment for learning and working. Classroom areas throughout the school are conducive to learning, and care is taken to avoid sensory overload. Shared walkway areas are used creatively to support learning or to offer children access to an unobtrusive quiet space. Children consulted enjoy using the attractive outdoor environment for learning and for play. The outdoor classroom is well used and plans in place to develop an additional area of school grounds will extend the range and quality of the learning regularly taking place

outdoors. Children from the specialist provision and the nurture base make very good use of their own safe garden area.

Most children experience high quality learning and teaching. Over the past three years there has been a consistent focus to embed and refine Assessment for Learning (AfL), with a focus on strategies and interventions which engage children and support them to understand themselves as learners. Rich tasks, which provide challenge and the opportunity for children to apply their learning, are embedded within the curriculum. In the best of lessons observed, teachers used questioning and discussion very effectively to encourage deeper thinking and develop higher order skills.

Across the school, almost all children engage well in appropriately differentiated learning experiences, at times contributing to the creation of learning intentions and success criteria. They then have opportunities to peer and self-assess their learning. Children evaluate their own skills grids termly with the support of their class teacher, assessing and recording their level of progress in each outcome. This then informs learner-led conferencing and as a result children know their next steps in learning well.

Robust processes and procedures are in place for identification of additional support needs and action plans created by class teachers then inform child friendly individual education plans (IEPs). Co-teach groups and small learning communities have been developed to allow children to engage in appropriately differentiated learning in carefully structured groups. Effective communication between all teachers involved with a child supports appropriate progress in learning. Support staff are deployed flexibly and effectively; all are valued members of the school team. Where appropriate, Child's Plan meetings, informed by the Wellbeing Wheel, ensure that partners work together to improve outcomes.

LEADERSHIP

The vision and leadership of the Headteacher has been instrumental in developing the school as a vibrant learning community focused to deliver excellence and equity for all children. The depute headteachers have provided very effective support in this journey. Together the SLT have forged positive relationships with children, staff, parents and partners and have developed consistent whole school approaches for delivering high quality learning and teaching for all children.

There is a very strong focus on professional development at Crieff Primary. Teacher 'experts' have been instrumental in leading developments e.g. Targeted Early Numeracy Support, self-regulation and the Science Hub. Support staff are 'experts' in approaches e.g. Wave 3 and High Five. All nursery staff have leadership of an area for focused improvement in the nursery. The expertise of the primary pupil support teacher is impacting very positively on children and staff.

Across the school children enjoy opportunities for leadership in accredited activities, citizenship groups, project work, as house captains, ambassadors and pupil council representatives. In P7 all children enjoy the opportunity to 'grow' their £1 'seed money', developing entrepreneurial skills, often with significant financial gain. The school should now increase the focus on the development of skills within such activities, and track children's access to experiences to ensure appropriate skills development for all.

Parents consulted particularly appreciated the approachability of school staff and the very good communication systems in place at Crieff Primary. Termly Sharing the Learning events are highly valued by those who attend. Parents consulted recognise the difficulties in making such events accessible for all and the nursery's very effective use of digital technologies to support parental engagement could inform future developments. At whole school level it

would now be appropriate to extend the range of opportunities provided to parents for meaningful engagement with their child's learning.

All stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to the school's self-evaluation process through the use of e.g. questionnaires, 'exit cards' at school events, and Bite and Bletcher sessions. Recent use of an info-graphics approach with staff, Parent Council and children has been very effective in using plain language to gather views, evidence progress and identify priorities. Children consulted during this visit explained that self-evaluation is "about making a difference" and "knowing what to do next".

CONCLUSION

Children, staff and parents at Crieff Primary evidence a real pride in their school and in the quality of education it provides. The school aims to deliver an inclusive, values based education where every child gets what they need to succeed. Effective whole school approaches have been carefully embedded across the school to ensure high quality learning and teaching for all with consistently high expectations of learning and behaviour. Creative and innovative approaches to improvement are valued.

Building on the key strengths identified below, the school should now address the areas for improvement, including them in the planned improvements for session 2017-18. Education officers 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 detailed below.

Key Strengths

- Articulate and well-behaved children who are proud of their school and engage enthusiastically in their learning;
- Collaborative approaches, marked by genuine professional enquiry, which are focused to improve the quality of learning and teaching for all children;
- The quality of the strong staff team where all are encouraged to share in leadership and are partners in quality assurance;
- The calibre of the leadership, direction and support provided by the headteacher and depute headteachers;
- Whole school, evidence based approaches which have been consistently implemented and carefully embedded.

Main areas for improvement

- Further develop the planning and tracking of learning to include the range of skills for learning, life and work ensuring appropriate opportunities for all; (from August 2017)
- Further develop processes for engaging parents with their children's learning and school improvement planning; (from October 2017)
- Continue with plans in place to:-
 - further develop digital technologies through the iTeach programme;
 - extend the range and quality of the learning regularly taking place outdoors. (by March 2018)

[HMI Report 2009](#)

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