



Extended Learning and Achievement Visit (ELAV) Report Kinross High School 02 and 03 October 2017



BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers from Education and Children's Services (ECS) visited Kinross High School that is located within Loch Leven Community Campus on 02 and 03 October 2017. 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)*. It outlines the raised expectations in relation to schools' implementation of all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence. The ELAV also considered the Responsibility of All themes of Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing as agreed in partnership with the School and under the HGIOS4 Quality Indicator 3.2, Raising Attainment and Achievement.

At the time of the visit the school role was 1030. The Senior Leadership Team consisted of: Headteacher; two Depute Headteachers (School Improvement); one Depute Headteacher (Support) and a Business Manager. Attendance in session 2016-17 was 93% which is in line with Perth and Kinross secondary schools and is above the national average.

Information was gathered from class visits, scrutiny of data and evidence of young people's learning conversations with young people, parents and staff, from documentation including the school's Helping Ourselves to Improve (HOTI) supported self-evaluation process and reports, and whole school policies.

ACHIEVEMENT

The school reported that at the end of the Broad General Education in the 2016/17 session 82% of young people were secure in Literacy at the third level of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and that 93% were secure in Numeracy. At fourth level of CfE the school reported that 56% of young people were secure in Literacy and 68% were secure in Numeracy. This data displays an increase in young people's achievement in Literacy and Numeracy from session 2015/16 and is in excess of the Perth and Kinross Council average. Young people in the Senior Phase achieved just above their Virtual Comparator (VC) in Literacy and Numeracy at Level 4 on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), and achieved just below their VC in Literacy and Numeracy at Level 5 on the SCQF. Staff feel that the moderation of literacy and numeracy activities across the curriculum could be improved and it is felt that interventions to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy could be more effectively implemented. Young people and their parents feel that their learning experience could be improved in English, in some instances, and in Mathematics in particular, and this was evident through classroom observations also. It is recommended that the pace of change in methodological and pedagogical approaches in English and Mathematics is increased and that the recommendations set out in HOTI reports are fully implemented.

In breadth and depth measures, and the 7 key performance indicators measured locally, Kinross High School performs significantly above the PKC average and equal to or above the virtual comparator in 6 of the 7 indicators. In Improving Attainment for All, the lowest 20%, middle 60% and the highest 20% all perform well above the PKC average and in S4 above the VC. The performance of the middle cohort in S4 and S6 is greater than the VC. The profile of Kinross High School is that most young people reside in SIMD 6-10, however

young people from all backgrounds achieve as well as or above their VC. Young people achieve well in National Qualifications and there is the opportunity to access a wide range of academic qualifications to Advanced Higher. The majority of curriculum areas perform beyond the course comparator measure that indicates performance of a department against other departments nationally.

Kinross High School continues to develop its approaches to Developing the Young Workforce. All young people in S2 have access to the Design Engineering and Construction programme which is delivered in partnership with employers. The success of this programme was recognised in the Chamber of Commerce Awards, where it was awarded a Business Star Award. There are a wide and diverse range of employers and employer engagement. In the Senior Phase a large number of young people engage in wider achievement awards and in particular the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the John Muir Award in S4, S5 and S6. There is some engagement with employability programmes enabling a small number of S6 pupils to be supported through the Career Ready programme. In 2017, a Kinross High School pupil was Scottish and National award winner of the Sir Win Bischoff award and received prestigious financial internship as part of this award. There is some access to high demand professions through Open University courses and Young Applicants in Scotland. The school offers work placements in the Senior Phase which are a blend of dedicated 5 day placements and extended placements, and young people participate in Take Your Child to Work day. Under the banner of skills for work courses Travel and Tourism is available at National 4, Sport and Recreation at National 5. Photography, Russian and Mandarin and Science are offered as National Progression Awards. There are opportunities for pupils to develop work skills as part of the extracurricular programme for example the unique Build a Plane project in partnership with Aerospace Kinross. Participation rates of young people from Kinross High School entering into positive destinations continues to rise with 97% of school leavers progressing into positive destinations from school session 2016-17.

There are opportunities for all pupils in the Broad General Education to be involved in local philanthropic activities during challenge week such as cooking meals for the elderly and helping villages in bloom. All pupils in S2 take part in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI). Each year a senior pupil group organises events to fundraise for their chosen charity. This has resulted in significant benefits to local and national charities. There is an opportunity for Kinross High School to engage further with wider achievement opportunities, philanthropic and enterprise programmes and also volunteer opportunities to enhance the vocational offer and to enable young people to have a broad and varied package of experiences in preparation for the world of work. Parents also indicated that they would appreciate enhanced work being undertaken on the career journey from an earlier age including a greater level of engagement with the Career Standards.

Kinross High School has an extensive offer of extra-curricular programmes including sporting, musical and cultural experiences and provides many opportunities for international education and school trips. This includes annual pupil exchanges to France and to Germany and a Battlefields tour. There are biennial ski-trips, World Challenges and a Chinese language immersion programme, in partnership with the Confucius Institute for Scotland (CISS). The annual Challenge Week (S1-3) is enhancing the provision for young people to be involved in educational excursions and almost all pupils in S1 take up the opportunity for a residential experience as part of the programme. The School has begun to undertake analysis of the profile of the young people who participate in these activities and wider analysis will enable the School to further engage with providing excellence and equity for all.

Health and wellbeing is an evident part of the culture and curriculum in Kinross High School and young people, parents and staff consider it to be an inclusive school. The wellbeing

indicators are used effectively to map out whole school approaches and this is also linked to school improvement planning and the National Improvement Framework. Staff are committed to ensuring all children are supported to have the skills and confidence they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. The Tutor Support Group initiative is now supported by House Team meetings and there is continued work on the perception of health and wellbeing and the responsibility of all at whole school level. There are holistic approaches to engaging a team around the child and this includes developing resilience in young people. It is necessary to consider the very small number of young people who do not respond to the School's approaches to improve outcomes for them and to review these processes. The S1 HWB programme and the HWB Trees are being well received and will be complemented by enhanced approaches to profiling and parental engagement. There is also current work being undertaken in relation to staff wellbeing and approaches can be taken to identify factors that may have an impact upon staff wellbeing and what interventions can be explored.

Child protection and safeguarding policies are in place which reflect the most recent legislation and are reviewed on a regular basis. Staff have an understanding of child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place, where appropriate to ensure young people are safe and secure whilst at school.

Kinross High School has a well-established ethos. Respectful relationships are evident between pupils and between staff and pupils. This has been maintained during a period of significant staff change. Young people talk with a sense of pride about their school. Young people, in the main, feel that they are safe, respected and listened to, and that they are known in school by adults. They feel that they are well informed about relationships, internet safety, substance misuse and sexual health. Some young people were of the opinion that problems were not dealt with quickly enough and new processes have been introduced within pupil support to address this issue. This includes additional care and welfare officers and guidance teachers and also appointment and communication systems for young people and parents. Parents report that they are reasonably confident in their knowledge of how their child is progressing in their learning and that they have access to a wide range of information regarding learning. Parental consultation indicates that they would welcome an increase in communication, increased expectations of young people's learning and behaviour, and earlier interventions to support families.

LEARNING

Across the school, learners are treated with equality, fairness and respect. In almost all lessons their contributions are valued, encouraged and built upon. There are positive and strong relationships in the majority of classes and the learning climate and environment are conducive to good quality learning and teaching. Explanations and instructions are clear and they build upon previous learning and real life experiences. In most lessons, learning is well planned and sustains pupil motivation and attention. Learners have opportunities to achieve within the activities and are given feedback and praise which progresses their learning and motivates individuals. In the best lessons, learning intentions and success criteria are appropriate, referred to and support young people to achieve. There were relevant links to prior learning. Recent work on implementing starter activities to learning and teaching is evident and were observed in most classes; however it is necessary to ensure they are appropriately pitched and that all young people are engaging with them and benefitting from them. The school has a renewed focus on Active Learning however this is not evident in the majority of classes. It is recommended to revisit the understanding and definition of Active Learning and to explore best practice across curricular areas, within and outwith the school.

There is an opportunity for the school to refresh methodological and pedagogical approaches to learning and teaching, such as Co-operative learning techniques that build

community, develop responsibility and enhance the skills of independent learning and learning from peers, and for good practice to be shared across the School.

Personalisation and choice in the Senior Phase is strong and enables young people to tailor their learning and their course options. In the main, young people and parents, feel that they have a good learning and achievement experience in Kinross High School and welcome the wide range of opportunities on offer, the commitment of staff and the ethos and climate of the school.

In order to maximise learners' experiences, it is essential that approaches to the differentiation of tasks and activities for young people are developed further and become evident in the majority of classes. This approach will also ensure that the pace of learning responds to the needs of all learners, takes account of learning targets and barriers to learning, and is suitably challenging and extends learners to achieve to the best of their ability. This should be complemented with a refresh for staff in the design, development and deployment of differentiation activities and any necessary professional learning associated with additional support needs. This approach to more individualised learning should also address disengagement observed, in that, young people were experiencing the tasks to difficult or too easy and were not always pitched at their ability.

It is the responsibility of all to develop individual skillsets to ensure the universal support entitlement is delivered. There is work ongoing to engage teaching staff to shape and review universal support approaches. Young people feel that approaches to personal support are not resulting in them feeling more confident as learners, and they do not equip them with the tools to improve in achievement, attainment and in their wellbeing.

LEADERSHIP

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at Kinross High School has seen significant change in the last two years with four new members of the SLT. The Headteacher and the SLT are ambitious and display a commitment to change, to continuous improvement and to excellence and equity. Pupil and parental surveys highlight an awareness of the School's vision, "Happy, successful and achieving excellence" and most young people display these attributes. There are plans in place to re-engage the school community with the vision, values and aims with a view to review. It is evident that the School's processes for departmental self-evaluation and school improvement planning "Helping Ourselves to Improve" (HOTI) is impacting positively and is robust and rigorous. This included a positive HOTI review of the SLT in August 2017 by a group of principal teachers from within the School. The leadership team are focussed on sustaining consistently high standards of learning and teaching across the school and should continue to focus on their roles and remits in taking forward key improvement priorities for the school. The recent professional learning conference has been very well received and displays a commitment to developing professional learning capacity across the school system.

The Senior Leadership Team has the support of a staff team who demonstrate a drive to get it right for young people. There is a focus on enhancing and distributing leadership with the introduction of development posts for teachers and the development of Middle Leaders in partnership with the Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL). There is a strong ethos of teamwork among the staff. All members of staff make contributions to evaluating the work of the school, and the School's self-evaluation, and are involved in school improvement planning. Teachers now take responsibility for leading developments within the improvement plan and contribute to collegiate groups. HGIOS4 is used effectively at whole school and department level to challenge thinking and make judgements.

The behaviour of almost all young people is commendable. However it is highlighted by young people, parents and staff that the conduct of a small number of young people and the application of the School's behaviour policy are not consistent and detract from the experience of some at Kinross High School. This school has been working to improve consistency and clarity of expectation of young people. As a result, and with more effective targeted support there has been a reduction in the number of incidents of misbehaviour that require intervention. The school should continue to implement strategies to improve the conduct of young people. The School should also engage further with parents and staff in efforts to reduce the number of complaints received.

Kinross High School engages well with the parental and pupil bodies through online surveys, for example, and uses the information gathered to plan and evaluate its work. There is also good use of social media. However, staff and parents feel that communication could be improved and this includes matters relating to learning, additional support needs, transition and roles and remits.

The leadership of Health and Wellbeing and Pupil Support is now providing structure and coherence to approaches to improve outcomes for young people in their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. It is recommended that there is a refocus on the leadership of Literacy and Numeracy across the School and that there is a stronger focus on improving the experience of young people. In particular, young people and their parents report that they would benefit from enhanced experiences in Mathematics.

Pupils enjoy a range of leadership roles which contribute to the work of the school. They display good levels of leadership skills and are confident and articulate about their school and their experiences as learners.

Conclusion

Kinross High School provides a safe, respectful and productive environment for young people with learning and wellbeing at the heart of it. Staff, pupils and parents have a sense of pride and ambition for the school. There is a shared approach to working to get it right for the young people in their care and to make sure they all reach their full potential.

Strengths

- Confident and respectful young people, who are proud of their school and who, in the main, engage enthusiastically in their learning.
- The teamwork and commitment of staff to ensure continuous improvements for young people.
- The wide range of experiences and opportunities available to pupils within the curriculum and the wider life of the school which support them in their learning and in their personal and social development.
- The inclusive and supportive ethos across the school, built on positive relationships where the majority of young people feel supported and enabled to improve and participate.

We discussed with the Headteacher and the Senior Management Team 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:

- During session 2017-18, and in preparation for 2018-19 continue to build on the wider achievement offer available to young people with a focus on the broad general education, as well as widening the opportunities for young people of all abilities in the senior phase.

- By August 2018 have a refocus on the leadership of literacy and numeracy across the school.
- By August 2018 drive forward continuous improvement and the pace of change to improve the educational experience of young people in Mathematics.
- In session 2017-18 review approaches to ensuring differentiation and challenge for all pupils with a particular focus on the design of tasks and activities and curriculum planning with a view to implement fully in session 2018-19.
- Continue to review and implement strategies such as the behaviour management policy that will alleviate current pressures and improve the experience for all.
- In session 2017-18 revisit approaches to learning and teaching that consider methodological and pedagogical advancements with a view to implement fully in session 2018-19.

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.

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