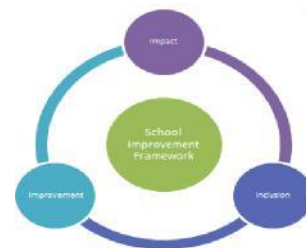




Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Collace Primary School 7 & 8 March 2019



BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit was to support the school in the process of self-evaluation. The visit was conducted by a Quality Improvement Officer from Education and Children's Services and one peer Headteacher. The themes subject to scrutiny were based on core Quality Indicators from 'How good is our school?' (4th edition).

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

Collace Primary School is led by the headteacher who has a shared leadership role as headteacher for nearby Balbeggie Primary School. At the time of the visit the school had a pupil roll of 22 pupils, organised across 2 classes. Pupil attendance for session 2017-18 was 96.5% and therefore above the Perth and Kinross average of 94%.

ACHIEVEMENT

Children, staff and families are very proud of the purposeful, focused learning environment at Collace Primary School. Across the school peer relationships are respectful, nurturing and supportive, an aspect that was evidently valued and respected by families, staff and children, who spoke with genuine pride and recognition of the inclusive and happy ethos of the school. The whole school community have been actively involved in creating a clear, visual values base for the school. There is a shared understanding of the school values and expectations by all in the school community. Children articulate the values and are enjoying linking evidence of their successes to the newly created School Values logo. Children report that they feel safe and well cared for at school and that adults know them well.

Most children are currently achieving expected levels of attainment, in line with national expectations, in mathematics, listening and talking, reading and writing. A few children exceed national expectations across the stages. All children are making good progress on prior levels of learning. Appropriate support is in place for children with additional supports needs.

All teachers have high expectations for learners. Teachers meet regularly to look closely at assessment data and evidence of learning for all children. They have a very good understanding of where children are in their learning. These discussions support the teachers to identify next steps and resources for individuals in their learning. This would be made more effective by ensuring the senior management team plan for these discussions to include robust analysis of attainment levels, predictions and interventions to provide additional support or challenge.

Children spoke positively and with confidence about many of their wider achievement opportunities, whilst offering ideas about how they could increase their personalisation and choice of the types of events and wider school activities their school participated in. All children are actively encouraged to share their personal achievements from outwith school and are proud to share these using the

wider achievements display in the school foyer. Leadership groups, such as Pupil Council, Eco and Enterprise Group, Junior Road Safety Officers and Library Group allow children to contribute to the wider life of the school. Children link their experiences to the school values and Wellbeing Indicators, supporting them to identify the skills and strengths they develop. In the P4-7 class, leadership skills are referred to by children and they are beginning to think more deeply about how and when they will use these skills in the future. Children across the school are developing a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities through the whole school focus on Rights Respecting Schools.

There is a strong sense of community pride in the school, evidenced by successful events such as the Plant Sale, MacMillan Coffee Morning and through the dedicated community members who regularly share their skills and experiences in school. Regular events around the local area are actively encouraged. This included farm visits, theatre trips and participation in the Day of Dance amongst the examples that were shared. This places Collace Primary School strongly at the centre of its local community and extends learning experiences for all children.

Transitions in a child's learning journey are well thought through and planned, making effective use of imaginative resources to help build confidence and self-esteem. Visual and tactile resources made for the 'Primary 1 Starting School' programme are an innovative way in which to help further develop the strong open door policy that Collace holds. Whilst the Local Management Group 'Steps Up to Perth Academy' initiative brings wider achievements to the forefront for children who are moving onto S1, utilising a motivating programme to encourage learners to volunteer and get involved in their local community. 'Friends for Life' supports this, offering P7 children opportunities to regularly meet with their peer group from other similar sized schools in the area. P7 children shared this aspect of their experience with great enthusiasm and stated this helped them build confidence when thinking about the next stage in their learning.

Parents consulted were very pleased with the types and frequency of communication from the school. There was a consensus that the school holds an 'open door' approach and that any positives or concerns can be freely shared with staff, who will act with sensitivity to appropriately address any issue. Parent Contact evenings were felt to give a good picture and level of detail about children's learning and the sharing of the termly learning information sheet, alongside the school website, gave opportunities for comments and feedback to be shared. Parents stated positively that the school set high expectations for their children and the nurturing ethos brought a family feel to the school and its wider community.

Child protection, additional support needs and safeguarding policies are in place which reflect the most recent legislation and are scrutinised on a regular basis. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place, where appropriate, to ensure children are safe and secure whilst at school.

LEARNING

Collace Primary School's grounds are expansive and provide access to a variety of play areas which support creative play and outdoor learning very well. Classrooms are extremely well organised, stimulating learning environments. They provide children with motivating and supportive spaces in which to learn. Children's learning is displayed very effectively throughout the school.

The school's curriculum enables children to develop an understanding of the wellbeing indicators. 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 Collace. Great efforts are made

by the school team to ensure that children have regular opportunities to learn alongside their peer groups from other schools.

The quality of learning and teaching is of a consistently high standard across the school. Staff know children very well and are sensitive to the attributes and needs of learners within multi-composite classes. In all lessons, explanations and instructions are clear and they build upon previous learning and real life experiences. A range of creative and innovative teaching approaches are used, including effective use of ICT to extend learning. Lessons are well planned and motivating for all children. They take very good cognisance of prior learning. The level of support and challenge is appropriate, with good differentiation of tasks for all levels. 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.

Children are focused learners, engaged in their learning and motivated to do well. Co-operative group work was a key feature in learning activities observed. Children are confident working independently and in small groups and are skilled at supporting each other in their learning. Consideration should be given to extending the opportunities for all children to take ownership of and lead their own learning. This should include increased personalisation and choice in planning and assessment.

Children are encouraged to share their learning and talk about strategies used. In plenary sessions children reflect on their progress and consider how they know they have improved. The sharing of learning intentions and success criteria supports children in being able to identify and evidence their progress in learning. Learners are involved in gathering evidence of their learning and progress from all curriculum areas for their Learning Journey folders and E-Profiles. There is great detail in the content gathered and learners are proud of their folders, but would gain from working with staff to think about their purpose, intended audiences and the types of reflection they would personally like to have included.

Staff work very well as a team, supporting each other to provide a rolling programme of learning experiences. Joint planning with colleagues at Balbeggie Primary is in its initial stages and is an area staff are keen to use to further develop their use of the moderation cycle. As discussed with teachers, it is necessary to consider ways in which to streamline and refine their planning and assessment systems to reduce bureaucracy, ensure clear links with tracking information for individual children and increase pupil voice.

Staff use a variety of assessments to gather a range of evidence to make robust judgements on the achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level. They have a strong awareness of individual learner progress and are confident in their judgements. Staff have engaged in some moderation of their professional judgements with other schools, including moderation of writing with the Local Management Group, supported by the English Department at Perth Academy. They should continue with their plans to set up a range of further moderation activities with other schools.

LEADERSHIP

The headteacher is well-respected by staff, children and parents. She works effectively with staff, and with the Local Management Group. She knows the children and families very well and works well with the community and partners.

All teaching staff lead on aspects of either the school or Local Management Group's improvement plans to help achieve improvement. School staff have highly valued their participation with Local Management Group colleagues. The headteacher should develop approaches to ensure that all staff, parents and children are involved in a continuous cycle of planning and self-evaluation processes of school improvement. A calendar of self-evaluation linked to How Good is Our School will support self-evaluation processes, ensuring all aspects of the school's work is evaluated and all stakeholders have an ownership of the improvement priorities.

Children are very clear that their ideas and contributions, shared in leadership groups, play an important part in making a difference in the school. At all stages, children are able to describe how they have influenced decisions and the responsibilities they are given enable them to turn ideas into actions. There now needs to be a focus on increasing opportunities for leadership of learning.

Strengths

- The positive ethos of respect, support and inclusion promoted by all children, staff and families;
- The happy, polite, confident and respectful children who learn well together;
- The strong teamwork of all staff in working in partnership with each other, Balbeggie Primary School, the Local Management Group schools and parents to support and extend all learners;
- The high expectations staff have for all learners contributing to a positive climate for learning;
- The high quality of learning and teaching to meet learners' needs and to provide a range of learning experiences for all children;
- The highly effective approaches to transition, especially for Primary 1 and Primary 7 children

Areas for improvement

- By June 2019 the headteacher should develop more effective self-evaluation and school improvement processes which involve all stakeholders strategically across the year and which lead to identification of appropriate improvement priorities and planning approaches.
- By June 2019 reflect on examples of effective practice locally and nationally to review and streamline approaches to planning and assessment;
- From May 2019 begin to use How Good is Our School to increase the level of pupil voice and leadership of learning in planning, learning and assessment for children at all stages;

Children, staff and parents at Collace Primary evidence a pride in their school. Building on the key strengths identified, the school should now address the areas for improvement, including them in the planned improvements for session 2018-19. Education officers 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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