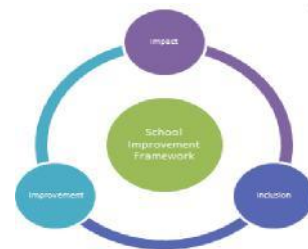




Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Oakbank Primary School 19, 20 & 21 March 2019



BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a visit was conducted by Quality Improvement Officers from Education and Children's Services, the Service Manager for Inclusion, the GIRFEC development officer and one peer Headteacher. Two Education Officers from Angus and Dundee Council also joined the team through the work of the Tayside Regional Collaborative. 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.

At Oakbank Primary School, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is comprised of a Headteacher and two Depute Headteachers. An acting Depute Headteacher will take up post at the beginning of the summer term. The specialist provision currently has a Depute Headteacher who leads the team within the setting. At the time of the visit the school had a pupil roll of 513 pupils, organised across 14 primary classes, 2 specialist classes and the Nursery. There are currently 107 children registered in the Nursery across the morning and afternoon sessions. Pupil attendance for session 2017-18 was 96.6%, which was above the Perth and Kinross average of 95%.

ACHIEVEMENT

Children at Oakbank Primary School are very proud of their school and present as happy, articulate and confident learners. It is evident that there are positive and caring relationships within the school, which provides a supportive and inclusive ethos. There are many opportunities for children to take part in a wide number of extra – curricular activities and children are encouraged in a number of ways to take responsibility for their learning.

In the nursery, there are a wide range of free-flow play opportunities providing rich literacy and numeracy experiences for learners and almost all children are making good progress in their learning. Staff now need to ensure consistent use of the Perth and Kinross developmental milestones assessment tool to support a better understanding of overall progress of children within the setting.

Across the primary stages, most children are making good progress against their predictions and attaining in line with national expectations in numeracy and literacy. Most P1 and P4 children are on track to achieve appropriate levels in numeracy and literacy by the end of the session. In P7 almost all children will achieve Second level in literacy and numeracy. Across all stages there are a number of children on track to achieve the appropriate level earlier than national expectations. Trends over time indicate an increase in attainment, although writing is an area which will benefit from a continued focus.

The school carries out regular attainment and achievement meetings and staff are becoming increasingly confident in using their professional judgement, supported by a range of assessment information and pupil work, to gauge individual pupil progress. The SLT now plan to focus in more depth on the impact of classroom teaching strategies on pupil learning.

Pupil Groups are well established and provide an opportunity for children to exercise responsibility and learn a number of skills for learning, life and work. Children, especially in the upper stages, take an active role in a number of initiatives including leading school improvements and recognising wider achievement. The school should now consider ways to identify more explicitly the skills being developed and refer to the Perth & Kinross Skills Framework, as well as Career Education Standard for guidance. The school should also continue to strengthen links with their neighbouring secondary school Perth High to take advantage of Developing the Young Workforce opportunities where appropriate.

Children report that they are listened to, treated with respect in school and concerns are dealt with quickly by adults who keep them safe. Every Nursery and P1 child in the school has a buddy and these links promote a range of social skills and develop the sense of shared community. Although the school provides many valuable opportunities within the health and wellbeing curriculum, children would benefit from refreshing their understanding of the wellbeing indicators and how they relate to their own personal learning experiences.

The school has celebrated many successes including winning the Rotary Quiz, being part of the opening ceremony at the Victoria and Albert Museum in Dundee and participating in the Remembrance Ceremony at St John's Kirk. Learner journey jotters have been introduced to share learner progress across the curriculum and staff have revised their reporting methods to create more effective partnerships between home and school. The school use an online method along with the learning journey jotters, for sharing pupil progress with parents and will revise guidelines to support its use.

Parents we spoke to feel very welcome and supported by SLT and encouraged to engage in the life of the school. They appreciate the committed and hardworking staff and comment positively on the school's responsiveness if issues are raised. Several parents have become involved in activities such as the running club and Bikeability and volunteers support in-school activities and educational visits. Learning is shared with parents through 'Stay and Play' sessions in the Nursery, open afternoons, curriculum evenings, class performances and assemblies. The school provides regular updates through their website and shared newsletters and parents report that they find the new school app, launched this year, useful.

LEARNING

Children in the nursery benefit from strong, positive and nurturing relationships with staff. Strong Start 2 children are very well integrated in the main playroom where their own stage of learning is catered for appropriately in the overall provision. In the majority of classrooms, care has been taken to create an attractive environment which supports and stimulates learning. The school should continue to promote opportunities to build staff skills and expertise in creating inclusive classroom environments.

In almost all lessons observed, explanations and instructions by staff were clear and they built upon previous learning and real life experiences and in all lessons learners were treated with equality, fairness and respect. In the majority of lessons, the learning intention and success criteria were shared and the range of teaching approaches included the skilful use of

questioning to enable learners to think, build curiosity, express their views and ask questions. The school should now look to further develop children's ability to talk about learning through regular learner conversations. This should also incorporate children identifying and evaluating their strengths and personal targets for next steps in learning. Written feedback from staff in jotters and on pupil work was variable and teachers should now work to ensure that feedback is actionable and constructive.

In the best lessons observed there were explicit references to prior learning, the pace and challenge was appropriate and learners took responsibility for their own learning. In the early years in particular, there were some examples of exemplary classroom management, where pupils demonstrated high levels of independence and use of Growth Mindset strategies when tackling problems. The Treehouse specialist provision is providing very effective intervention for identified children. Personalised support is well established and the work to enable children from the specialised provision to join mainstream classes and vice-versa is very positive. Opportunities for children to develop cultural awareness and apply skills in new contexts are available through cross-curricular activities which are enhanced by visits from Scottish Opera, Horsecross and Scottish Ballet. Children in P7 engage very well in the Mock Court project, which provides learning experiences in art, journalism, debating and writing skills. The school promotes regular sporting activities and is well supported by the Active Schools Co-ordinator, Perth High School and other local clubs including football, rugby and cricket. There is some evidence that Growth Mindset is beginning to build children's resilience and develop their coping strategies. To be fully effective, strategies need to be consistently used across all stages.

The school has been reviewing planning procedures to increase pupil voice within the process. Visible curriculum plans are displayed in classrooms as a focal point for children and staff to discuss and evaluate current learning. Learning plans are shared with parents and have been adapted with a focus on assessment. This work should now be linked to establishing a curriculum rationale, along with developing a shared understanding of the totality and design of the curriculum. This will enable staff to consider coverage and progression within the curriculum and incorporate all learning opportunities on offer for children.

LEADERSHIP

Parents consulted find the headteacher to be very approachable and solution focused. They recognise she is well supported by her depute headteachers and that together they are a strong management team, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for all learners. The senior management team will gain another acting depute headteacher in the summer term, which will bring the team up to its full complement. Despite a number of changes in the team, it was felt by parents that the headteacher provides stability and direction. To underpin the work of the school, she plans to refresh the schools vision, values and aims to foster a sense of ownership and high expectations within the whole school community.

Staff have opportunities to take the lead in working parties which are linked to school improvement priorities. This session, staff have focused on the development of progression pathways in literacy, numeracy and digital learning and staff will now implement these to support the planning process. Staff have engaged in moderation activities through professional learning network groups with a particular focus on Growth Mindset and writing. Overall this has had a positive impact on staff, as activities encouraged collaboration and professional dialogue. It is planned to utilise these groups further to focus on the moderation of jotter work, teacher planning and learning and teaching

practice. It will be important for SLT to monitor the progress of working parties to focus on action planning, appropriate timescales and the pace of change.

There are a many opportunities for children, especially in the upper school, to take on leadership responsibilities such as house captains, P7 ambassadors and playground rangers. The Oakbank News group is a fantastic example of children leading the learning, where a weekly news report is filmed and shown in classes and shared with parents. Another good example includes the P6 children who visit partner providers to help assist children's smooth transition into P1. Children report that their roles are helping them to solve problems, develop team working skills and feel more confident. The school should continue to provide leadership opportunities for children across the school and to encourage children to display their work to increase pupil voice.

Self-evaluation and quality assurance approaches provide detailed information as to the impact of school improvement work and highlight the schools strengths and development needs. The Pupil Council should continue to develop its role to enable pupil voice in evaluating the impact of school improvement activities on learning.

Strengths

- The strong leadership of the Headteacher, who is well supported by her senior management team in taking the school forward
- The purposeful, inclusive and welcoming ethos; where it is evident that there are strong relationships and mutual respect between staff and pupils
- Highly motivated, articulate and well-behaved children, who are proud of their school
- The wide variety of opportunities for wider achievement available for children across the school

Areas for Improvement

- Continue to raise attainment through effective learning and teaching. Particularly focusing on differentiation, appropriate pace and challenge, skills development and making learning 'visible' to ensure learner voice
- Focus on the language of learning to develop high quality pupil feedback through a range of formative assessment strategies
- Engage in regular moderation activities to agree standards within pupil work, confirm teacher judgment and share good learning and teaching practice

Conclusion

Children, staff and parents at Oakbank 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 2019-20. 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.

[HMI Report](#)

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