



Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report Pitcairn Primary School 20 and 21 February 2019

BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers from across Education and Children's Services visited Pitcairn Primary School on 20 and 21 February 2019. 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)*

At the time of the visit Pitcairn Primary School had a pupil roll of 75 organised across 4 classes.

In session 2017/18 the school recorded an attendance level of 96% which is above the Perth and Kinross average. There are plans in place to continue to monitor this in the coming session.

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 Pitcairn Primary School are very proud of their school. They are well mannered, polite and welcoming to visitors. They enjoy opportunities to talk about their achievements and can do so with confidence.

Attainment data from June 2018 shows that all children in Primary 1 were achieving in line with national expectations for listening and talking, with almost all meeting national expectations for reading and maths and the majority in writing. In Primary 4 all children were meeting national expectations for listening and talking with most for reading and maths and the majority working at this level for writing. In Primary 7 the majority of children were achieving national expectations for listening and talking and reading, with less than half for writing and maths.

At the time of the visit, attainment predictions indicate that most pupils in Primary 1 will achieve early level in all areas of the curriculum by the end of June 2019, the majority of pupils in Primary 4 will achieve first level in writing, listening and talking and maths with most achieving first level in reading. Predictions for Primary 7 indicate that the majority of pupils will achieve second level by the end of June 2019.

The school attainment data indicates that over the past three years improvements in attainment have been variable. The headteacher and staff team are making use of the Perth and Kinross tracking and monitoring system to record pupil progress. The headteacher and class teachers meet to discuss pupil progress and attainment and teachers know their pupils well. Assessment and tracking information are used to inform decisions about interventions and targeted support. This increasing knowledge of the data should be further developed with all staff across the school to ensure that it is most effectively used by all to plan, assess and monitor the impact on individual pupil attainment.

Additional funding allocated to the school through the Pupil Equity Fund is being used to provide support to pupils in the areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and there are early indications that these are having a positive impact on the progress of a group of learners. Of

particular note is the impact of the targeted reading intervention. The staff are now planning to use their learning from the delivery of this intervention to implement strategies within all classrooms.

The Pitcairn 'Skills and Strengths Trees' are referred to by teachers during literacy and numeracy lessons and in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils can talk about the Pitcairn skills they are developing within these lessons. Staff now need to review these skills, taking into account the Perth and Kinross Skills Framework and National Benchmarks and consider the need for them to be comprehensive and progressive.

There has been some work undertaken within the school to increase opportunities for pupil leadership and responsibility. All pupils are involved in taking on leadership roles within the school. Pupil groups, which are aligned to the school improvement plan outcomes, now meet to discuss progress with the plan and provide feedback to the staff. The Eco Committee was recently successful in supporting the school to receive its 3rd green flag. House captains have begun to lead games for pupils in the playground with the aim of improving relationships between children. This is developing the leadership skills of the house captains. Recent building work in the school has allowed for links with the construction company who have worked to consult pupils on the developments and to speak with pupils about their work. Within school pupils are given opportunities for wider achievement. They have visitors to the school to work with them and they go out on trips related their class learning, for example museum visits. All pupils participate regularly in outdoor learning activities and speak very positively of this experience. Staff should now develop an approach to planning and tracking all leadership and wider opportunities available to pupils. This would ensure that there is a wide range of skills being planned for and developed in a progressive manner.

As identified last session, the school staff, pupils and parents have been working to develop their relationships policy including the use of restorative approaches and self-regulation. This work is ongoing and includes engaging with a range of strategies such as the use of fix it folders, 'bucket filler' self-esteem activities and other in-class incentives. Whilst there is a nurturing and supportive ethos across the school, pupils would benefit from all adults taking a more consistent approach towards sharing expectations and using agreed strategies. The current support and behaviour management systems within the classrooms now need to be reviewed as part of the school's work on developing their relationships policy. This will support staff to lead and model an inclusive, consistent approach across all classes and within the school.

LEARNING

The staff in Pitcairn have been working towards increasing creativity in their curriculum using approaches such as 'Creative Week' and family learning afternoons. The aim of this is to allow pupils to have greater opportunities to be involved in planning their learning. The pupils and staff spoke positively about the level of enjoyment related to these learning events. The children told us that their involvement in planning has allowed them to understand the curriculum and their learning better. The school should now consider how these opportunities can be embedded within the curriculum and structured to allow for progression in learning with appropriate challenge and support whilst still allowing for pupil voice and leadership of their learning. This would be supported by a review of the rationale of the curriculum to ensure that it truly reflects 'the Pitcairn way'.

In all lessons observed there were positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupil responses were valued and encouraged by staff. In all lessons the purpose of learning was shared and in the majority of lessons learners understood how they could be successful in their learning. In the best of these observations, pupils were motivated and challenged in their learning and teachers used a range of strategies to ensure that feedback was effective and supported children to understand their next steps. Teachers should now review their use of assessment is for learning strategies to ensure that pupils are consistently provided with effective feedback throughout lessons. The pupils in Pitcairn are ready and eager to take more

responsibility in all aspects of their learning and staff should now give more planned and structured opportunities for pupils to do so. In the most effective lessons tasks, activities and resources are differentiated to meet the needs of groups, this requires to be further developed and embedded across the school. Teachers should have increased opportunities to share practice within their own school and in other schools.

Staff use information from a range of assessments to support their planning. Teachers plan on a daily, weekly and termly basis and these plans are moderated and monitored by the headteacher and principal teacher and across the staff. Staff should now review the amount of planning produced in line with national and local guidance and increase the opportunities for pupil involvement in the day to day planning.

Progress in pupil learning is recorded and shared with parents in a range of ways. These include the use of pupil learning jotters, 'my most impressive work' books and a snapshot week. The school has also recently begun to share learning through the use of an online digital tool. The use and purpose of each of these should now be reviewed to ensure a shared understanding and consistency of use.

The parents we spoke to told us that they like to hear about their children's progress and appreciate the opportunities to attend open afternoons and other learning events. Parents appreciate and enjoy the new 'Parents as Partners' events where they are invited to be in the classroom alongside their child and also hear about the work of the school. They like to see pupil work at home and all agreed that the recently launched digital approach to sharing learning is an accessible option.

Teaching staff and support staff work closely together in order to meet a range of pupil needs. They deliver support and interventions to groups and individuals to make progress in their learning. These interventions are tracked by the headteacher and principal teacher and pupils are able to discuss their work and how this helps them. Staff work with a range of partners to meet the needs of individuals and parents spoke positively about how any concerns are listened to and acted upon. Staff should look at the level of need for some children, review the number of individual child's plans and consider how needs could be best met by further differentiation of class activities. Staff should work to ensure that the targets within these child's plans ensure that pupil progress is measurable.

Staff know children well and support and promote their wellbeing well. Staff and children have developed relationships built on mutual trust and respect and this is **beginning to have** an impact on pupil behaviour which the school has continued to develop in their improvement planning. There are a number of behaviour management tools used across the school and pupils report different tools are used for the same purpose. Staff should review the use of these and ensure that children, staff and parents are clear about the strategies being used and the impact these are having.

LEADERSHIP

The headteacher and principal teacher have a clear shared focus on improvement outcomes for the school. They ensure that all staff understand the key priorities for the school and that all work together to take these forward. The leadership team undertake quality assurance processes and analyse the school data to inform improvement. They should now continue working to ensure all staff fully understand and use the data information available to them.

All staff demonstrate a commitment to improvement and take on leadership roles within the school improvement planning process. Recently staff have taken on the leadership of whole school assemblies on writing which supports follow up work in class for all pupils. Teachers have responsibility for leading groups such as the travel committee and eco committee. Staff are involved in evaluating the work of the school on a regular basis. They should now undertake moderation activities and good practice visits focussed on aspects of school improvement and

improving classroom practice. Collegiate time should be carefully planned to develop shared approaches to planning, teaching and assessment.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles. The pupils told us that they really appreciate these and they feel they have roles which make a difference to the life of the school for example the house groups, house captains and committees. They have very recently been involved in evaluating the work of the school through focussed groups linked to the school improvement plan and the staff take into account their feedback when planning next steps.

The recent introduction of the Parents as Partners sessions is providing the school staff with an opportunity to share their work with parents and to seek their feedback. There is a supportive parent council which is consulted and updated on the school improvement priorities regularly.

Conclusion

The staff and children of Pitcairn Primary School demonstrate a pride in their school. Building on the key strengths below the school should now address the key areas for improvement.

Strengths

- The teamwork of the hard working committed staff
- The positive relationships between staff and children across the school
- The articulate, confident children who are very proud of their school
- The developing approaches to pupil leadership through their learning and the wider opportunities offered to them

Areas for improvement

We discussed with the headteacher how the staff 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:

- From August 2019, review the existing curriculum rationale to ensure it supports all learning opportunities and skills development
- This session and in session 2019 - 20, continue to develop the school relationships policy in order to have clear and consistent approaches to behaviour management and inclusive practice
- This session and in session 2019 – 20, continue to develop the leadership of all staff to support improvements
- This session and in session 2019 – 20, further develop staff knowledge of pupil data
- From August 2019, review whole school approaches to planning learning and recording pupil progress

ECS officers will work with the school to take forward the areas for improvement through an action plan and regular monitoring. A return visit will be arranged within a year to evaluate the school's progress.

[HMI Report](#)

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