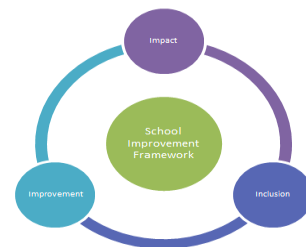




**Perth and Kinross Council  
Education and Children's Services  
Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report  
St Madoes Primary School  
1 and 2 October 2019**



## **BACKGROUND**

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers and a headteacher from Education and Children's Services visited St Madoes Primary School and Nursery Class on 1 and 2 October 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)*.

St Madoes Primary School is led by a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) consisting of a headteacher and principal teacher. At the time of the visit, the school had a pupil roll of 126 pupils within 6 primary classes, 2 of these classes being composite, and a nursery class with a total of 25 children across the morning and afternoon sessions. Pupil attendance for 2018 -2019 was 96% which is above the Perth and Kinross average.

During the visit, discussions took place with children, parents and all staff. Information was gathered from visits to classrooms, scrutiny of data and children's work, and viewing displays of children's work around the school.

## **ACHIEVEMENT**

Children at St Madoes Primary School are very proud of their school and present as articulate, confident and enthusiastic learners. They report that they feel listened to and well supported by adults. Children are knowledgeable about the wellbeing indicators and shared with the ELAV team that they felt confident going to staff if they needed support. Respectful and positive relationships are evident across the school and this is very much encouraged by the SLT, who lead by example.

Attainment data reviewed in the areas of literacy and mathematics for 2018-2019 indicates that all children in primary one achieved expected national levels in listening and talking and numeracy, and almost all in reading and writing. In the primary four class, the majority of children achieved expected national levels in listening and talking, reading, writing and numeracy. In the primary seven class, almost all children achieved expected national levels in listening and talking and most children achieved expected national levels in reading, writing and numeracy.

The SLT encourage staff to use a wide range of formative and summative assessment strategies to track individual pupil progress. Regular attainment meetings take place to discuss monitoring and tracking information for each class and plan the level of support and challenge required for individuals and groups of children. In order to develop a robust overview of pupil attainment and achievement across the school, staff should now agree consistent approaches to collating and analysing assessment information through planned moderation activities.

The SLT work with staff to identify, plan for and review support for children with identified learning needs. There is a systematic approach in place to target support for children who require interventions to progress their learning and this is well supported by the pupil support teacher, support staff and other agencies.

Children agree that the school helps them develop their individual talents and abilities and encourages them to take part in new and exciting activities, some that they may otherwise not have

experienced. All members of the school community talk passionately about the positive impact of the local Madoch Centre and how this benefits the school in providing a facility for a number of after-school activity clubs including netball, dancing, gymnastics and rugby. These clubs, as well as lunch time clubs, are well attended by children across the school and the SLT monitor attendance carefully to ensure that there is equity of experience for learners, using Pupil Equity Funding where appropriate to support learning.

The school promotes parental engagement in a wide variety of ways, for instance by inviting parents along to assemblies, open afternoons, information events and concerts. An intergenerational project that the school community were keen to discuss was their involvement with the local 'Madoch Meet Up' group, where children share their learning with local people suffering from dementia. This project is enabling learners to develop an understanding of the support required for people suffering from the condition and children showed compassion and empathy as they discussed their experiences with the ELAV team.

The school encourages parents to be partners in their children's learning in a variety of ways, including providing learning workshops related to paired reading, social media and Growth Mindset. Parents report that the school's use of an online method to share pupil learning has been a very successful way of communicating achievements and helping them to feel informed. Children we spoke to, were very enthusiastic about their online portfolios and keen to share how they could use them independently. They set their own personal targets regularly and these were shared with parents. This could be further developed across the nursery and primary stages to show the progression in children's learning across the curriculum.

Child protection, additional support needs, risk assessments and safeguarding policies are in place and reflect the most recent legislation. These are scrutinised on a regular basis and staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures. Parents consulted, including those in the nursery, appreciate the genuine interest and care that all staff have for their children and commented positively on the school's responsiveness when any matters have been raised.

## **LEARNING**

Learning spaces within the school building are well utilised by staff and pupils. Learning walls are bright and attractive and most display current learning and activities. In the nursery setting and in the majority of classrooms, learning environments are stimulating with displays that reflect learner input.

In almost all lessons observed, learning intentions and success criteria were shared with children. Explanations and instructions were clear and, in the majority of lessons, built upon previous learning. Learner responses were valued, encouraged and developed during learning activities. In most lessons observed, digital technology was used to support and motivate learning.

In the majority of lessons observed, a range of teaching approaches were used including good use of questioning and discussion to stimulate learners' interest and enable them to express their views and ask questions. Learners were given feedback and well-earned praise in the majority of lessons, which helped to progress learning and promote motivation. The majority of staff treated children with equality, fairness and respect and the school should consider how differentiated learning materials are presented.

Staff should now focus on ensuring that there is sufficient differentiation, support and challenge for all children to maximise learners' progress. This includes considering the pace of learning and staff having high expectations and aspirations for all learners. A range of formative assessment

strategies should be introduced to enable staff to make sound judgements whilst responding to learners' needs.

It was evident during the visit, that staff regularly involve children in planning for and discussing their learning through the use of classroom visible learning walls. These are designed to help support children to have a voice in what and how they learn and are linked to the four contexts of the curriculum and the wellbeing indicators. This medium-term planning tool could be further developed to ensure a consistent approach across the school and by aligning the four contexts of the curriculum with the school vision, values and aims.

In the nursery setting, children were settled, happy and engaged in their chosen learning activities. The calm, nurturing ethos within the learning environment provides opportunities for children to investigate, explore and develop their own interests. Staff interact well with children and use positive language to support children in their learning. There should be a continued effort by staff to make good use of the local community to enhance children's learning experiences and in developing children's curiosity through planned activities and play opportunities.

Children at St Madoes Primary are polite and well-mannered. They support each other well and have a shared understanding of resources available in class to assist them with their learning. Children engage in peer support across class stages through paired reading activities and parents state they feel this strategy supports children's learning well. Children we spoke to, discussed the positive impact of the Dyslexia Help Group in raising awareness of support available in school for pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP**

The headteacher operates an open-door policy and parents consulted state they find her to be approachable, as well as supportive and they hold her in high regard. They recognise that she is ably supported by the principal teacher, who takes the lead on a number of school improvement priorities. The SLT should now work to ensure that there is clear strategic leadership and direction in relation to learning and teaching to ensure improved outcomes for all learners.

Parents value the staff team and feel that all staff work hard to meet the needs of their children. This was clear during our visit, where staff spoke about their positive, growth mindset and their commitment to continuous professional learning and development. Teaching staff are responsible for an area within the school improvement plan which includes digital literacy, health and wellbeing and modern languages and this gives them a real sense of ownership and responsibility. Staff leadership responsibilities involve engagement in leadership training opportunities, leading collegiate activities and delivering workshops. Previously staff have engaged in improvement methodology activities to take forward aspects of the school improvement plan. Staff should continue to look for opportunities to engage in practitioner enquiry and to take part in good practice visits to other schools. Moving forward, the school should work to gather evidence of the impact of school improvement activities on classroom practice and improved outcomes for children.

Children state they are given opportunities to be involved in leadership roles such as being House Captains and members of the School Improvement Committee. There is scope for further development of these opportunities across the school to develop children's skills for life, learning and work. For instance, it would be beneficial to further develop children's knowledge and skills through the Eco Schools Award and perhaps a deeper focus into children's rights and responsibilities.

## **Key Strengths**

- The strong commitment of the school leadership team, supported by a motivated staff team, in continuously improving learning and teaching to ensure better outcomes for learners
- The welcoming ethos where children, staff and parents feel safe, included and involved in learning and school improvement
- The strong sense of community, where partnerships with parents, other agencies and the local community provide opportunities for wider achievement and the development of skills for life, learning and work
- The polite, articulate and enthusiastic children who are keen to share their learning and next steps

We discussed with staff how they might continue to improve the school and agreed the following:

## **Areas for Improvement**

- Ensure there is sufficient pace, challenge and differentiation for all learners, by focusing on the planning and implementation of high-quality learning and teaching approaches across the school (from November 2019)
- Further develop the curriculum rationale to ensure it aligns to the school's vision, values and aims, positive relationships policy and core school improvement activities (From January 2020)
- Review self-evaluation processes to ensure that evidence gathered demonstrates the progress made and impact of school improvement activities (From January 2020)
- Continue to engage in regular moderation activities within and outwith school to agree approaches to assessment, planning and learning and teaching (From November 2019)

## **Conclusion**

It was evident during our visit children, staff and parents at St Madoes have a real pride in their school. Building on the key strengths identified above, the school should now work to address the areas for improvement, as outlined in the school action plan. Education Officers will work with the school in taking forward the improvement agenda and a follow up visit will take place in October 2020.

## [HMI Report](#)

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