

**Primary stages****Strengths:**

- The **curriculum** is based on a sound rationale and a set of shared values. Staff have played an active role in reviewing the curriculum and are developing new approaches and practices for planning in all curricular areas using a computer-based solution. They have worked exceptionally well together developing active learning experiences and planning interdisciplinary learning and teaching activities which increasingly involves children across all stages. They have taken careful account of how all four contexts for learning can be used in balance when planning children's learning. Clear evidence that they take account of design principles and children's entitlements. Children were involved at an early stage of curriculum development in giving feedback on what makes good learning.
- **Planning** is collegiate and based around Curriculum for Excellence levels so that teachers are clearly referencing where learning has been and where learning is headed next. Children's prior knowledge and specific areas of interest are very well used to plan sequences of learning and teaching. Mindmapping techniques have been introduced and are ensuring all learners can contribute to planning the curriculum using a preferred style. Excellent progress in developing a shared understanding of progress through levels.
- The school's approach to **interdisciplinary learning** – InterDisciplinary Experiences and Activities (IDEA) is designed to enable children to make connections between areas of learning. Focus on learning transferable skills is subsequently applied and assessed in Challenge Weeks. Timetables show a balance across IDEA and single focus activities.
- Staff have been actively encouraged by the headteacher (and the EA) to innovate within the context of Curriculum for Excellence to enhance the delivery of the curriculum. This has helped to promote significant confidence in using the **experiences and outcomes** from Curriculum for Excellence. Teachers are responding in an exemplary fashion to increased expectations of them in taking forward Curriculum for Excellence. The headteacher has very effectively empowered staff to take leading roles in developing aspects of Curriculum for Excellence such as reviewing planning. This results in staff who are developing sector-leading practice and are willing and able to share this with cluster and authority colleagues.
- Teachers are very confident in their use of different assessment approaches. Their approaches to **assessment** were showcased on the LTS website and at SLF.
- Approaches to **moderation** are sector leading. Led by the headteacher, staff have developed a practice for moderation in the school that is now being put in place across the Musselburgh cluster. This demands that staff not only have a sound working knowledge of the relevant experiences and outcomes at their own teaching level but also that they have a secure knowledge at the level at which they are moderating.
- Published schemes are used thoughtfully and with a purpose. Teachers select activities and use content from a variety of sources, increasingly drawing on real-life resources and the application of learning from one discipline in another. Increasingly, the curriculum is making connections with real-life contexts and

demonstrating the purpose of a particular learning experience so that children see the relevance of what they are learning.

- **Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing** are well embedded across learning in other curricular areas. Much progress has been made in embedding health and wellbeing across all aspects of the curriculum. A very clear programme is in place to deliver all of the experiences and the outcomes for health and wellbeing. By working together to plan learning within a level staff build effectively in prior learning, involving external partners when their involvement makes a specific and relevant contribution to learning. Staff understand and make connections between learning in HWB taking place both within the classroom and outwith. Links with school meals could be developed even further. The headteacher is taking steps to begin a review of existing programmes for the delivery of relationships, sexual health and parenthood.
- Children are receiving the national expectation of two hours of quality **physical education** each week. Good emphasis on physical activity generally and children involved in range of different sporting activities.
- Children have learned to use information and communications technology (**ICT**) to practise and consolidate, e.g. Nintendo brain training, and also to be creative, using animation software, for example. Children in P4 used small portable video cameras to record their learning in grammar, using themselves to exemplify adverbs.
- **Science** is being well developed in school and within a cluster plan. The overall programme is securely based on key scientific concepts and takes account of the principles and practice recommended in guidance. Commendably, staff have built in flexibility of topic/context choice and keep focus on concepts, development of scientific literacy.
- Children are gaining confidence through their **expressive arts** experiences in, for example, drama and music. They are involved in taking on roles and performing in front of each other and also through whole-school shows performed to large audiences of parents. The skills and expertise of the visiting drama teacher are well used to develop children's skills and understanding. For example, applying aspects of learning in health and emotional wellbeing (The king who got fatter) and Scottish history (Mary Queen of Scots) through drama. Recent update of expressive arts policy – resulting in practical drama and dance guidance for teachers - due to be reviewed this month.
- Children in P6 and P7 learn **French** and this language development continues into secondary.
- The school places a commendable focus on the **Scottish** dimension in their interdisciplinary and **social studies** work. For example, the annual Burns' focus has been augmented with work on Scotland as a place and key elements of Scottish history.
- Children respond well to being challenged in their **technologies** work. For example, P5 children created shadow puppets and theatres in groups as part of their Light and Sound topic. They were fully engaged in the challenge of making their puppets have moving parts and have enough character but as a shadow on a screen. P7 had opportunity to debate the merits and impact of advertising in relation to the marketing and promotion of Scotland and its produce.
- Good evidence of a comprehensive **religious and moral education** programme. Supported by the local minister who comes into school to support the Christianity component and religious observance. The school hosts the

minister at Easter and go to her church at Christmas. RME is included within the new computer-based planning and is linked to other curricular areas appropriately where possible.

- The school uses a wide range of **partnerships** very well to support and enhance a wide range of curricular areas. These include parents, local authority staff such as sports coordinators and safety officers, organisations such as Film Council and people in the community (such as local Musselburgh based services and businesses and staff and students from Queen Margaret University (QMU)). For example, parents, QMU and local businesses were heavily involved in a Careers Week to focus on the world of work and lifelong learning. Commendably the school is working very effectively with several departments, staff and students from QMU to enhance learning, for example supporting work on health and fitness and drama. The Building Our Skills at Stoneyhill (BOSS) clubs with a focus on skills for life and skills for work are delivered in partnership with parents.
  - The school makes very good use of residential experiences and visits to relevant places to support learning. Part of a wider **outdoor learning** approach.
  - The school has reviewed its approach to **homework** to bring in more creative and open-ended tasks, such as model-making, to go with more traditional practise and consolidation activities such as spelling and numeracy exercises. Example – P1 number lines. Talk about ‘extending learning into home’.
- Transitions** into nursery, from nursery into primary and from stage to stage are well managed and now benefit from increased staff shared understanding of children’s progress through Curriculum for Excellence levels. Transition arrangements with Musselburgh Grammar are well established and include visits to the high school and visits from staff to Stoneyhill as well as a range of social/pastoral activities such as sports/quiz events. Children with additional support needs are well supported in transition to secondary. Staff in Stoneyhill have a lead role in developing aspects of the work of the cluster schools, this gives them a very good understanding of the experience of children and staff across the cluster schools.

#### **Aspects for development:**

- Continue to build on the very impressive progress made in developing shared understanding of standards and progress through Curriculum for Excellence levels with cluster colleagues seen in developing the moderation of progress in literacy and use this as a model of best practice for other curriculum areas.