



Newsletter 6

GIRFEC in Action: Relationships and Belonging in School

Spotlight: Easter Carmuir's Primary School

This edition focuses on how everyday practice and relationships create a sense of belonging for children and families.

Since August 2022, Easter Carmuir's Primary School has made a simple but courageous change: encouraging staff and pupils to use first names rather than formal titles. This wasn't about being informal or lowering standards – it was about removing barriers and strengthening relationships.

The change grew from an understanding that traditional school hierarchies can feel intimidating for some children and families, particularly those who have had difficult experiences with education or authority. At Easter Carmuir, this did not align with the school's core values of Respect, Inclusion, Sincerity and Empathy.

By moving to first-name use, the school aimed to make everyone feel more equal, approachable and included. The approach was modelled by senior leaders, introduced gradually, and embraced as a whole-community change rather than a rule. Families, pupils and staff were kept informed and involved from the outset.

The impact has been significant. The school is now widely recognised for its warm, welcoming ethos. Most staff now use their first names, families report feeling less anxious about approaching the school, and children demonstrate confidence in speaking to a wide range of adults. Relationships are stronger, communication is more open, and support is accessed earlier – before issues escalate.

Why this matters

- Barriers between staff, pupils and families are reduced
- Children feel respected, included and confident to speak up
- Families are more likely to seek support early

This is GIRFEC because...

It prioritises wellbeing, relationships and inclusion, creating an environment where children and families feel safe, respected and equal partners in their education.