

Firth Primary School



LEARNING TO BE OUR BEST TOGETHER

Standards and Quality Report
2020/2021

Context of the School

Firth Primary School is based on the outskirts of the rural community village of Finstown, Orkney. The school opened in 2002 and boasts a shore-side location with exceptional views and ample opportunities for outdoor learning.



The primary and nursery currently have a combined roll of 101 pupils. At present the primary has a roll of 72 pupils within three classes; P1-3, P3-5 and P6-7. The nursery provides early learning and childcare for children aged 2-5 years.

Firth School aims to ensure all pupils are motivated and encouraged to achieve their full potential in developing their knowledge, skills and abilities in a safe, supported and nurturing environment, through a wide variety of continuously high quality, engaging, relevant and innovative learning experiences. We welcome parental participation in the learning and life of Firth Primary and Nursery through our active and supporting 'Friends of Firth' Parent Council. We also work closely with the others schools in the Learning Community and our associated secondary school, Stromness Academy.

The leadership team consists of a Head Teacher, who is a linked Head with nearby Evie Primary School, and a teaching Principal Teacher. There are three other class teachers, two of whom job-share. There is a part-time Support for Learning Teacher, also shared with Evie Primary School. Firth Primary School is fortunate to have specialist teachers for music, PE and art as well as instrumental tutors for strings, woodwind, brass and guitar. The nursery team comprises of a lead practitioner with three early years practitioners. There is a full-time clerical assistant/auxiliary, a part-time janitor, three kitchen staff and two cleaners. Together, staff provide a warm, supportive and nurturing environment where pupils are supported to reach their full potential.

Vision, Values and Aims

Our pupils have been working on the rules and values for our school. They have identified the things that are important to them and necessary to make everyone feel valued and respected.



The pupils tried to reduce the number of values they had been working on. However, they felt these were too important and could not omit any.

The Next Exciting Step:

We have a clear vision, along with our school community, of where we are heading with our school and we are looking forward to pulling together ideas to define a clear statement to reflect who we are and what we do.

Learning Improvement Plan



Firth Primary School

Learning Improvement Plan

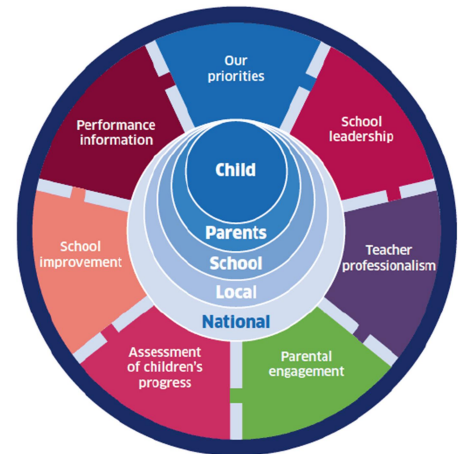
School Session 2020/2021

The Scottish Government's Aim: Scotland the best place to grow up and learn and our commitment to ongoing improvement reflects this aim.

What informs us?

The National Improvement Framework

- Children are at the centre of everything we do
- There are 6 Key Drivers of school improvement
- we looked back at the previous standards and quality report
- we used HGIOS 4 for self-evaluation



What is our capacity for improvement?		
Leadership and management	Learning provision	Successes and achievements
How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?	How good is the quality of the care and education we offer?	How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?
1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	2.1 Safeguarding and child protection	3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion
1.2 Leadership of learning	2.2 Curriculum	3.2 Raising attainment and achievement
1.3 Leadership of change	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	3.3 Increasing creativity and employability
1.4 Leadership and management of staff	2.4 Personalised support	
1.5 Management of resources to promote equity	2.5 Family learning	
	2.6 Transitions	
	2.7 Partnerships	

We reflected on our priorities

- self-evaluation including what our parents and pupils told us and the views of visitors and other stakeholders



Our Roadmap

Part 1 of a 3 year strategic plan being developed in collaboration with our school community.

Year 1: The Foundation Year

	Theme	HGIOS 4 Area	NIF Drivers	What will we do?	How will we know we are successful?
Priority 1	The Ethos and life of the school	<p>Leadership & Management</p> <p>1.3 Leadership of Change</p> <p>Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community</p> <p>Strategic planning for continuous improvement</p> <p>Implementing improvement and change</p>	<p>School Leadership</p> <p>Parental Engagement</p> <p>School Improvement</p>	<p>Working in partnership to refresh and create:</p> <p>A Vision</p> <p>A set of Values</p> <p>A set of Aims</p> <p>A Curriculum Rationale</p> <p>A Highly Effective Approaches to Learning and Teaching framework</p> <p>Which reflects our unique context and the views of our pupils and the school community</p>	<p>Analysis of stakeholder views, including parents and pupils, sought through surveys and direct feedback, informing a review of vision, values and aims.</p> <p>Staff, parents and pupils within the school will have a shared understanding of the ethos and values.</p>

Progress and Impact

There has been a significant focus on developing our ethos and culture as a school and this has been very successful. Feedback from our staff, pupils, parents and visitors tells us this.

There has been a great deal of energy invested in our school community to refresh the partnership working with parents and families. We have an open door policy and welcome parents and families to work with us to support their children. All staff are committed to providing a welcoming, nurturing environment for all children to achieve their best at Firth. We have worked extremely hard to develop the school's identity within the community and become real leaders of change within the local area by reaching out and engaging with our families and beyond.

We have worked with pupils to develop and implement a new approach to promoting positive behaviour through our 3 new rules: Ready, Respectful, Safe. This came in response to a need to provide an inclusive, positive approach to supporting pupil behaviour. Pupils co-created and co-delivered the changes with videos created and shared on our website and with other classes to drive forward real change. The impact on pupil behaviour has since been improved and pupils have shared how much they enjoy having 3 clear, simple and easy to follow rules.

Working in partnership to refresh and create our new school values. Pupils worked together to identify the values we live in our school. They also worked to design our new values and rules graphic which has been a huge hit with staff and pupils to represent our development work. These values act as our schools' compass and direction for decision making.

We have been working to develop our vision statement in collaboration with our community - this is a work in progress!

Our curriculum rationale for the year has been focused on some key aspects in response to the global pandemic:

- Core Literacy & Numeracy
- Supporting the Health and Well-Being of all learners
- Covid Recovery through our Community Project

These priority areas provided a clear focus for school staff which helped them to direct their efforts to the areas of most need within the current circumstances. This proved to be hugely successful in preventing our attainment gap from widening during the pandemic.

	Theme	HGIOS 4 Area	NIF Drivers	What will we do?	How will we know we are successful?
Priority 2	Quality Assurance and Moderation	<p>Successes & Achievements</p> <p>3.2 Raising attainment and Achievement</p> <p>Attainment in literacy and numeracy</p> <p>Attainment over time</p> <p>Overall quality of learners' achievement</p> <p>Equity for all learners</p>	<p>Teacher Professionalism</p> <p>Assessment of children's progress</p> <p>Performance information</p>	<p>Create, implement, evaluate and embed a new school system for:</p> <p>The moderation of Literacy and Numeracy teaching and learning</p> <p>The quality assurance framework including standardised assessments, attainment level</p>	<p>Baseline observations and assessments (SNSAs, New Group Reading etc)</p> <p>Resources and interventions will be targeted to address the greatest need and improve outcomes for children and families. (PEF)</p> <p>Planned and regular moderation using</p>

				data, peer and formal lesson observations	<p>the national benchmarks of literacy and numeracy across all levels of the curriculum involving partner school.</p> <p>Almost all pupils, through focus groups, feedback positively about their learning in Literacy and Numeracy</p> <p>All practitioners engage in professional learning which impacts positively on classroom practice and pupil attainment</p>
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Progress and Impact

In order to drive forward this priority we evaluated our planning and realised that it was not fit for purpose. We therefore decided to undertake a complete overhaul of how we plan for pupils' learning experiences to ensure it was proportionate, responsive and helped to direct time for teachers to plan the highest quality learning experiences for pupils. We created Operational Guidance for Planning and new accompanying paperwork. Once implemented all staff felt that they had increased time and capacity to plan and evaluate their teaching and pupil learning. Comments from supply staff also reflected the positive steps taken to streamline planning and focus on our learners' experiences.

Underpinning how we moderate, led us to realise that we didn't have a clear understanding of learner pathways within our school. Using the benchmarks and pathways from Renfrewshire and Clackmannanshire we collaborated to create our own pathways for Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Well-Being. These have been implemented with great success in providing practitioners with a clear progression framework for learners' experiences within the core curriculum areas. In conjunction with the new planning format there are clear expectations of what, why and how we plan and how we support children on their own learning journey within a coherent, progressive structure.

Once our foundations were established we worked together to design an overview for our quality assurance framework which will be live in August 2021. The framework consists of a range of quality assurance systems which will be undertaken throughout the year to add rigour to the ongoing evaluation of the teaching and learning taking place in the school. The framework includes: formal lesson observations by the Headteacher, peer observations to focus on learners' experiences, pupil focus groups, pupil attainment groups to support teacher judgements on progress as well as opportunities for self-reflection and professional dialogue as a staff team.

This year we have undertaken an overhaul of our school finances, updating the spreadsheets, auditing previous spending and setting up online banking. We have also implemented the new authority

'purchase2pay' system for school finances. Financial planning in relation to our DSM and our Pupil Equity Fund has been shared with our staff team, providing them with much needed opportunity to influence and impact on how school funds can be spent to maximise gains for learners. We also took on board feedback gathered as part of our COVID questionnaires to inform our direction. For this year, we had a targeted Pupil Equity Fund plan which was devised as a team to raise attainment and stop our attainment gap from widening. Over the course of the year we completed all aspects of our plan and we have had fantastic feedback from staff, pupils and parents on the use of the funds and how these have enhanced our learners' experiences.

The creation of a moderation calendar has also helped to ensure that clear, directed time will be given to ensure that there is an agreed standard of what teachers are looking for at each level. The importance of moderation to support teacher professional judgements has been increasingly realised. The new calendar is ready to be implemented in August 2021 and staff have worked together to create this to ensure it is fit for purpose.

	Theme	HGIOS 4 Area	NIF Drivers	What will we do?	How will we know we are successful?
Priority 3	Systems for Safeguarding & Support	Learning Provision 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection Arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection Arrangements to ensure wellbeing National guidance and legislation 2.4 Personalised support Universal support Targeted support Removal of potential barriers to learning	School Leadership Teacher Professionalism Assessment of Children's Progress Performance Information	Create, implement, evaluate and embed a new school system for: Child protection and Staged intervention including both targeted and universal support To reflect the most recently national legislation and best practice models	An effective system in place with a shared understanding across the school community which is consistently used by all practitioners All staff will have engaged in the new operational guidance for child protection and are confident of the procedures in the school and the local authority. Planned and effective timescales implemented for universal and targeted support. Collaboration between all professionals and external agencies is effective and planned.

Progress and Impact

All staff have taken part in in-school child protection training delivered by the Headteacher. We now have a school-based Operational Guidance for Child Protection which has been implemented. The new system works extremely well to ensure concerns and information relating to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils is documented, stored and shared appropriately. Staff confidence in this area has increased tenfold alongside greater communication among the staff team in supporting our families.

The local authority have implemented a new multi-agency Getting it Right framework. All staff have undertaken professional reading in this new framework and are confident in how this underpins our school based work. The Headteacher attended the full-day launch and training event and has shared relevant documentation and cascaded information to staff. There is a greater sense of clarity on what should be reported, why, how and to whom across the school at all levels. There have been several instances where this has led to flagging concerns earlier than what would be have previously taken place. We also have been praised by other agencies for having our information organised and detailed to a higher standard than before.

As a school we have worked to implement a new Staged Intervention framework moving in line with the national 3- Stage practice model. The authority position has informed this movement and there is greater clarity and consistency of how we classify additional support needs and how to document these. We have new paperwork created for how we log additional support needs (an overview spreadsheet) and track stages 2 and 3. This has helped to clarify with staff their role and areas of responsibility in driving this forward as well as how other professionals, within and outwith the school, fit into the framework.

Teacher Professionalism

The commitment to professional learning is evident at all levels across our school: This session our Head Teacher, Miss Emma Ritchie is nearing completion of her Doctorate in Education. She has been invited to speak at the UK Literacy Association annual conference this year to share findings and implications of her research. Our Principal Teacher, Mrs Emma Jane Rendall, has been successful in completing the Into Headship SCEL course through Aberdeen University. Our P345 teacher, Mrs Pamela Scott, has been successful in completing a PG certificate in Middle Level Leadership through Aberdeen University. We have also supported three teaching students this session; from Aberdeen University, the University of Dundee and the University of the Highlands and Islands. The nursery also supported a University of the Highlands and Islands student through her HNC placement in early years.

Priority 4

COVID 19 - Resilience, Health & Well-Being, policies, procedures and guidelines

August 2020 brought an earlier start date to the session and uncertainty for schools due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic. COVID-19 procedures, risk assessments and operational guidance were created to meet the needs of all staff and pupils and to ensure a safe environment for learning. Our risk assessments were highly regarded within the authority for their rigour and also for the collaborative way in which they were constructed. Firth Primary School staff and pupils demonstrated how a school can be run safely by following positive mitigations put in place, evidenced in feedback from a visit from Head of Schools, Peter Diamond. Input from key stakeholders informed the latest risk assessments and procedures and these were reviewed monthly with stakeholders. Our aim was to promote positive communication regarding our measures and so we increased our Parent Council meeting frequency to a monthly meeting to ensure regular feedback and dialogue was facilitated.

Concerned about the impact the long term use of masks may have on health and wellbeing and communication, the P345 teacher carried out a research enquiry to see if there were improvements when transparent masks were used. The research paper can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

Due to a significant rise in COVID cases in Scotland, January 2021 saw schools being opened only to vulnerable pupils and children of key workers. Firth Primary School was run as a hub for the first six weeks of term three. Mrs Scott headed up the frontline staff team and the school and Mrs Rendall took leadership of the home learning provision. Regular staff meetings ensured that effective communication was evident.

Digital Learning

After the mid-term break in February 2020, only younger pupils were able to return to school. In order to maintain an inclusive culture and ensure effective teaching and learning reached all our pupils, our Principal Teacher embarked on a leadership project titled 'Empowering A School Community: Leading Strategic Change to Future Proof Learning' to explore the digital readiness of our school community. As part of this we sought regular feedback from our parents and carers with telephone surveys to provide feedback on our approaches allowing us to respond to feedback and adapt our approaches to meet the needs of families. The research paper was a key contributor in Mrs Rendall's Into Headship national accreditation. The research paper can be found in Appendix 2.

Outdoor Community Learning

As part of Firth Primary School's COVID recovery plan, a Community Project has been mobilised. The main aim was to build and maintain a positive ethos and culture within our school and wider community. We hoped the project would bring stability and normality as well as opportunities to be citizens of a broader community while learning to contribute purposefully through intergenerational learning opportunities. As a result of a proposal by the Parent Council, Firth Primary School was chosen by the Co-op in Dounby to be one of the community initiatives they wished to support. Since February the school has been working towards planning its outdoor space to create a more stimulating and inclusive learning environment for everyone in the community. We have also developed a partnership with the Orkney Men's Shed and they are one of our key supporters.

The pupils have organised themselves into three groups to take planning forward: Plant to Taste, The Wildlife Team and The Garden People. We are also establishing a Community Action Group so we can benefit from local expertise in taking our vision forward. An overview of our project can be found in Appendix 3.

Key Priorities for Improvement in 2021/2022

Evidence from this report, alongside our updated self-evaluation has been used to create our Year 2 Learning Improvement Plan.

A copy of Year 2 of our Learning Improvement Plan can be found in Appendix 4.