



**Perth and Kinross Council
Education and Children's Services**



**Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report
Viewlands Primary School
25, 26 April 2012**

BACKGROUND

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team of officers from across Education and Children's Services visited Viewlands Primary School on 25 and 26 April 2012. 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?*

The school's Standards and Quality Report 2010-2011, the School Improvement Plan 2011-2012 and the school's own self evaluation formed the core documentation for scrutiny and discussion during the visit.

At the time of the visit the new depute headteacher had recently joined the team.

During the Extended Learning and Achievement Visit, the team carried out discussions with the headteacher, senior management team, teaching and support staff. They observed learning and teaching in classes, reviewed documentation including children's work and met with groups of children and parents/carers. In addition, discussions about the involvement of the school within the community were held with children and parents.

The strengths and areas for improvement identified as a result of this visit are recorded below under the three main themes of *Achievement, Learning and Leadership*.

ACHIEVEMENT

Strengths

- Overall, all children are making good progress in their learning.
- Children access a range of thoughtfully planned experiences and have many opportunities to develop the skills and attributes associated of being responsible citizens and effective contributors – playing important roles in planning school events and as members of the Pupil Council and various committees that work to improve the school environment.
- Children, staff and parents are very proud of their school and identify very strongly with it.
- The school is developing a positive culture of sharing important information to ensure all staff have a knowledge of children's individual strengths and needs.
- There are effective arrangements in place to support transitions from pre-school to Primary 1. Children from partner nurseries have the opportunity to meet their teachers in advance of starting school; there are number of events organised to welcome them to the school in the summer term.
- P7 pupils are involved in a range of transition activities throughout the year with staff from a number of departments at Perth Academy.

- There is a high quality of pastoral care; all staff school in the school know children well as individuals. The whole school community takes an active role in promoting the care and welfare of others.
- Children feel listened to, understood and safe at school. They were confident that there were adults who they could approach for help or to share their concerns with. They felt that difficulties were dealt with fairly and they held a high regard for the adults who worked with them.
- Children know that their opinions are valued and acted upon. They could give many examples of their involvement in choosing and planning topics for learning. Children are also fully involved in the improving their school environment through the Pupil Council, Eco and Health Committees.
- Pupil's involvement and contributions had been the driving force in establishing the new school motto "Growing Through Learning." At all stages they talked enthusiastically about their participation in developing this theme.
- A number of parents support events and work with the school. Examples of this are parents contributing to the P7 World of Work; talking about their careers and answering questions from children and working with children to run Crumbs Café at break times.

Areas for improvement

- The school should make better use of any information gathered from a range of sources to ensure it feeds effectively into the school improvement process.
- There needs to be a sharper focus when identifying next steps in learning and there should be greater pupil involvement in this process.
- Maximise the impact of the work of the staff development groups in taking forward literacy and numeracy across learning.
- Build on the very positive response from parents about the level of information they receive by continuing to organise events for parents which will:
 - Support their understanding of the curriculum and progression in learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy
 - Demonstrate new approaches in learning and teaching.
 - Enable children to share their success in learning

LEARNING

Strengths

- There is a positive atmosphere in the school which supports learning and staff interactions with children are very supportive. Overall learning and teaching is good.
- Children across the school impress as happy and interested. They talk confidently about what they are learning and enjoy the range of experiences and approaches that make their learning enjoyable.
- At some stages teachers share responsibility for planning, delivering and evaluating progression in learning. At the stages where this has been developed it has proved to be very effective. Children and parents talk enthusiastically about the benefits of children working together with other classes and staff.
- There is evidence across the school of children's involvement in planning relevant contexts and themes for their learning that reflect their interests.
- There are some good examples of children being able to use their learning and transfer their skills across subject areas and within a range of meaningful contexts.

- In some lessons, children are involved in setting their success criteria and check their progress in meeting these.
- The ongoing development of cooperative learning is giving children regular opportunities to work cooperatively and to take responsibility for their learning.
- Classrooms and communal areas across the school are bright, attractive and add to the positive climate for learning.
- In a few classes teachers are using creative strategies to provide ongoing feedback to children which is directly related to the learning and skills being developed. This approach could be used by all staff.
- There is an effective and professional approach to meeting the legislation and procedural obligations relating to supporting pupils with additional learning needs. There are clear procedures in place for addressing concerns and accessing appropriate resources.
- Support staff work well with children and teachers across the school. They make a valued contribution to the life of the school.

Areas for improvement

- Increase the good practice that enables staff across the school to share the planning, delivery and evaluation of learning.
- There is a need to further develop strategies such as effective questioning across the school to ensure that all children are accountable for contributing to lessons and their own learning.
- Teachers should continue to plan to ensure that differentiation is well planned for the range of abilities of all pupils, particularly for more able pupils.
- Staff should continue to develop their expectations of progress in learning by using the Perth and Kinross Standards.
- Develop a consistent approach to setting learning intentions, success criteria and feedback to pupils across all stages

LEADERSHIP

Strengths

- The senior management team share a clearly articulated vision of Viewlands focused on learning. They promote aiming for the highest standards for all.
- The strong direction from the headteacher and senior managers is establishing an ethos of professional development which is inclusive of all staff.
- There is a well considered and carefully planned staff development programme. Good use is made of collegiate time and inset days to promote shared understanding for all staff of current developments in learning and teaching and to improve all aspects of their practice and the experiences of children.
- Parents consulted reported strong partnerships between school and parents characterised by very approachable staff, good communications and mutual respect. They also spoke highly of the school's supportive ethos which results in children being happy to come to school and enjoying their learning.
- Parents reported that the school provided a range of events throughout the year which share the children's achievements and work of the school.

- The school's engagement with relevant partners is proactive and effective. Productive partnerships are built and sustained for the benefit of the community. A good example of this is work undertaken with Fairview School which enables groups of children to work together across both schools.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to develop approaches to gathering evidence which supports accurate evaluation and to ensure that areas for improvement identified in this report can be taken forward effectively and timeously.
- Continue to use the wide range of experience and skills of parents to enhance the life and learning experiences of the school.
- Build on the good practice of informing parents at the beginning of the school session about the focus of learning at each stage to a termly update which includes examples of how parents can support learning at home.

Conclusion

Viewlands Primary School is a well-led school where children are supported by professional and positive staff. Parents praise the education that their children receive at Viewlands and feel extremely positive about the school and their involvement with it. The positive ethos of the school ensures that children and parents feel welcome and included. The school has demonstrated a strong capacity and drive to continuously improve.

With the support of local authority officers, the management team, staff, pupils and parents should continue to work together to support future improvements in order to enable all children to develop and achieve their full potential.

The school should now use the information from this report to take forward improvements within the school and to develop the School Improvement Plan for session 2012-2013.

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