

Context of the School

Mid Calder Primary School is a non-denominational school, serving the village of Mid Calder. The school, which was built in 1977, and refurbished in 2004, provides bright and well-equipped accommodation for pupils and staff. The current head teacher took up post in January 2014 and the Depute Head Teacher (DHT) took up post in April 2014. There is a principal teacher (PT) in post. The school is of semi open-plan construction and hosts a separate nursery unit on campus. There are plans in place to build a new nursery building that is linked to the school to be completed by December 2015. In the session 2014-15, the school roll is 270 (11 classes), plus 30 places for children in the morning nursery class and 20 children in the afternoon nursery class. A significant number of the pupils come from out with the catchment area, as a result of parental placing requests. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is 8.5%. The school has received awards over the last five years for Learning through Technology, Global Citizenship, Eco Schools, Fairtrade, Enterprise, International Education, together with several European Quality Labels.

The school is committed to raising attainment and has focused on improving teaching and learning within literacy and numeracy. As part of the school's commitment to self-evaluation, the school took part in a validation self-evaluation in March 2014.

How well do children and young people learn and achieve? (1.1; 2.1)

We are committed to raising standards of attainment and achievement for all our pupils and overall we are making good progress.

Strengths

Together we have developed our vision in partnership with all stakeholders and we have a clear sense of direction for continuous improvement.

Almost all of our learners are successful, confident, exercise responsibility and contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. Most are personally and socially adept and are successful in a range of activities for personal and wider achievements. This includes residential experiences for primary four to seven pupils which promotes independence; social skills and resilience. The breakfast club is well established and promotes pupils responsibility and well-being including physical activity. Staff are very welcoming and supportive of the children.

In our school and nursery, learners are treated with equality, fairness and respect. We continue to promote active learning, learning through play and collaborative working. Good progress has been made to provide learners with more opportunities to engage in their learning and discuss their next steps. We now plan to ensure that this happens more consistently and effectively across the school and nursery.

The introduction of pupil voice groups has enabled all pupils to share their views and recognise that their views are sought and acted on. Most pupils have a good sense of responsibility as well as a commitment to improvement and are developing their leadership skills as they drive forward school improvements. Almost all of our learners are motivated and eager participants in their learning. Almost all of our learners feel safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, included, respected and responsible and help to develop these qualities in others.

Our school improvement plan has made an impact on improving the achievements and attainment of our learners within literacy and maths. Most children are making very good progress from their prior learning in writing. At the early level most children are making better progress in numeracy through the introduction of Stages of Early Arithmetical Learning (SEAL). At second level grouping to support differentiation in the teaching of numeracy and maths skills is better meeting the needs of all learners. Almost all learners are making progress in their

learning from prior levels of attainment. We are starting to use the analysis of adaptive testing results to enable us to identify areas for improvement and help us to validate our professional judgement about learners' attainment and achievement.

Areas for Development

- Continue to develop consistent high quality feedback
- Continue to raise attainment of all pupils in maths and literacy
- Continue to develop more robust systems for the collection of attainment data with further analysis to track attainment over time.

How well is the school helping children and young people to develop and learn? (5.1; 5.3)

We regularly review and refresh our curriculum rationale with all stakeholders and we continue to improve the quality of our curriculum.

Strengths

The school and nursery class are developing learning and teaching in line with Curriculum for Excellence. This session, progressive, skills-based progression pathways developed from experiences and outcomes are being implemented in all curriculum areas with a focus on maths and language to ensure breadth, depth and progression in learning across the school.

In almost all classes, children are given the opportunity to engage in learning French allowing children to extend their knowledge of basic vocabulary as well as developing their understanding of the French culture. In almost all classes staff use ICT as a tool for teaching and are increasing the use of ICT to enhance learning across the curriculum. As a result pupils are having more opportunities to learn independently and to enrich learning experiences for children. The nursery curriculum is based on learning through play, both indoors and outdoors, which allows children to experience all curricular areas at the early level whilst developing problem-solving, creativity and social skills. Staff ensure that they engage and respond to interests of the children.

The newly introduced collaborative clusters allow teachers to plan across stages to ensure consistency of learning for pupils and to ensure progression within a level which is leading to improved learning experiences for pupils.

The lowest and highest 20% in each class are identified and support/challenge for these groups of pupils is agreed, however, these strategies now need to be fully embedded in practice. Quality assurance procedures continue to highlight the need to improve the pace; challenge and differentiation of lessons in most classes to ensure learning activities fully meet the needs of all learners. We now need to continue to develop consistent approaches to assessing pupils' prior knowledge in language and mathematics.

Pupils are becoming more actively involved in their learning and we need to continue to develop a range of strategies to meet the varying needs of learners. We are committed to providing more effective support and challenge and are developing together more opportunities for independent and collaborative learning to take place. We will continue to monitor the balance of pupil/teacher dialogue to ensure that we respond appropriately to pupil responses and allow pupils to express ideas and ask questions more often.

The new Support for Learning teacher is building the capacity to meet the needs of all learners more effectively and in particular those at risk of missing out. Through termly meetings we identify, review and evaluate learners' needs underpinned by Getting it Right for Every Child

(GIRFEC). Individualised Education Plans (IEP) are regularly reviewed and all relevant stakeholders are involved in the process of setting and reviewing targets to ensure appropriate progress is made by pupils.

The PE specialist supports staff to ensure two hours of weekly quality PE is embedded in their class timetable ensuring that children receive their full entitlements within the broad and general education.

All staff are involved in developing a shared understanding of what interdisciplinary learning looks like in the school which reflects national guidance and they are now using a new planning format to ensure that children are experiencing breadth and depth across the curriculum. The majority of staff consult with pupils at the planning stage and throughout the learning context in order to respond to pupil voice. In the nursery, children are involved in planning their learning through the use of floor books to allow for child centered learning.

The nursery curriculum provides valuable opportunities for the development of talking and listening skills through role play and real life experiences, for example the pizza restaurant and visits to the post office. Staff are continuing to embed a listening ethos within the nursery to continue to respond to the interests of the children to ensure personalisation and choice for children. This good practice now needs to be extended through quality interactions and interventions with adults.

Recently, staff have been developing children's thinking skills within reading through a range of approaches in the nursery and through home learning links.

Parents and partners acknowledge the improving practices and procedures to support children with additional needs at times of transition. Primary/secondary transition procedures have recently been refreshed and extended to provide experiences of the secondary curriculum.

Pupils are excited and motivated by their visits and are more confident in moving forward in their learning at high school. Nursery/primary transition provides opportunities for children and parents to get to know the school building, routines and key staff. Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure children and pupils experience appropriate progression in their learning.

Areas for Development

- To continue to develop robust and consistent approaches to moderation and assessment using the significant aspects of learning
- To continue to develop learning and teaching to ensure appropriate pace, challenge, support and differentiation to meet the needs of all pupils
- To review the provision and resources in the early level including opportunities for play
- Continue to increase children's knowledge and understanding of the experiences and outcomes so they can talk more meaningfully about their learning which is recorded through improved profiling

How well is the school improving the quality of its work? (5.9)

We are committed to self-evaluation in order to move the school forward. We are continuing to develop robust self-evaluation procedures involving all our stakeholders.

Strengths

We are committed to improving our school through a range of evaluation and quality assurance procedures. We share good practice to enhance pupil learning. This session we have implemented a peer observation model within a number of departments to share learning and teaching strategies within the school to enhance the quality of learning and teaching across the

school.

Staff continually undertake evidence based discussion linked to key quality indicators from How Good Is Our School (HGIOS) and Child at the Centre (CAC) in evaluating aspects of the work of the school. This enables staff to have a shared understanding of where we are and what we need to do to improve pupil experiences. We now actively seek feedback from our stakeholders in a range of ways and we use this information to identify strengths and areas for development. In the nursery we are developing effective systems to develop the views of all our stakeholders to ensure that the nursery ethos and curriculum reflects the needs of all.

Leadership at all levels is developing through a range of working groups and coordinator roles, staff are encouraged to take ownership of areas for development in order to drive forward improvement across the school.

Progress of all learners is being monitored and tracked within literacy and numeracy and staff are continuing to develop confidence in this area. We identify, review and evaluate learners' needs, including those whose needs are significantly different from those of their peers. We do this through working closely with our learners, their parents and partner services.

The introduction of Personal Learning Communities gives staff opportunities to engage with professional reading with colleagues and we will continue to promote this with all staff. Professional learning impacts on the work of the majority of staff to support professional development as well as the development of the school. All staff are beginning to engage with Professional Update and to develop an understanding of the expectations of the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) Professional Standards as a starting point for personal reflection and self-evaluation.

Areas for Development

- To continue to develop robust self-evaluation activities to effect improvement and increase capacity for self-evaluation across the school and nursery
- Continue to develop the use of the GIRFEC self-evaluation toolkit with all relevant partners to identify next steps in well-being

How well is the school working with partners? (8.1)

We work well with our partners to support and enhance learning for all pupils.

Strengths

We have effective partnership working which makes a difference to the quality of support for learners. Staff are committed to the aims of joint working and engage actively with partners, community representatives and agencies. Staff work well with others to ensure that all children, including those most vulnerable, are well supported and their learning and pastoral needs are identified and addressed through transitions. The nursery link well with a wide range of local community partners to enhance the early level curriculum to give real life contexts for learning.

This commitment to working with our partners ensures that we are fully supporting the needs of the children in our service. We provide effective support through partnerships with educational psychologists, health services and social workers. We are clear about our respective roles and responsibilities and have very good opportunities for partnership working. Staff ensure that all pupils have experience of enterprise activities, community and cluster involvement and sporting initiatives resulting in pupils being given the opportunity to work and interact with the

wider school community, developing skills in problem-solving and decision making. This session all classes have established a business link within their class interdisciplinary context to enhance learning and allow children to build skills associated with enterprise and employability.

We value parents as partners in their child's learning and the newly designed school blog allows parents to easily access information regarding the school. The termly learning letter; fortnightly blog posts; and termly sharing the learning afternoons allow parents/carers to know what their child is learning in school and how they can further support at home. We involve adult helpers in contributing to the life of the school to enhance pupil experiences.

Areas for Development

- To continue to develop parents' understanding of their child's next steps in learning.
- To further strengthen our links with the wider community with a focus on the world of work

Based on the above information, at this point in time, we evaluate ourselves against the quality indicators as follows:

Our school:

1.1 Improvements in performance	Satisfactory
2.1 Learners' experience	Good
5.1 Curriculum	Satisfactory
5.3 Meeting learning needs	Good
5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation	Good
8.1 Partnership with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers	Good

Our nursery:

1.1 Improvements in performance	Satisfactory
2.1 Learners' experience	Good
5.1 Curriculum	Satisfactory
5.3 Meeting learning needs	Satisfactory
5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation	Satisfactory
8.1 Partnership with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers	Very Good