



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

**Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report
Forgandenny Primary School
21 November 2013**



BACKGROUND

The purpose of this visit was to support the school in the process of self-evaluation and was conducted by two Quality Improvement Officers from Education and Children's Services. The themes subject to scrutiny were based on core Quality Indicators from 'How good is our school?' and reflected the most recent advice note from Education Scotland which outlines raised expectations in relation to schools' implementation of all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence.

Forgandenny Primary School has a pupil roll of 61 pupils organised in three classes P1/2, P3/4 and P5-7. The acting Headteacher and acting Principal Teacher have been in post since August 2013.

During the visit, strengths were identified in line with the school's own self-evaluation. Of particular note were:

- the positive and supportive ethos of the school and genuine sense of community that it promotes
- pupils who are polite, articulate and keen to be involved in the life of the school
- staff who work well together under the direction of the recently appointed Headteacher
- parents/carers who support the work of the school very effectively and enthusiastically
- active community links and partnerships which enrich children's experiences

Information was gathered from class visits, scrutiny of data and children's work, discussions with children, parents/carers, staff and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and displays of children's work around the school.

ACHIEVEMENT

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities which promote learning and the development of their skills. These include events when pupils are able to engage with children from other schools such as the St. Andrews Day of Dance and the Commonwealth Games themed Expressive Arts Day. Pupils also have rich opportunities to learn through planned community initiatives notably the highly successful Living Communities' Skills Exchange and Forgandenny Garden Day. Pupils are encouraged to share their wider

achievements and these are celebrated at weekly Assembly and Together Times and on their 'Achievement Alley' display wall.

Children consulted spoke enthusiastically about the supportive ethos of their school; as one P7 pupil who had joined the school at an earlier stage put it, in Forgandenny you "feel more known". This ethos extends to the playground where children report they are happy and have fun in a safe environment.

Most learners are making good progress against national expectations. The school gathers information about pupils' progress in a variety of ways including regular professional discussions and dialogue with parents/carers. This helps staff plan for next steps in children's learning and to identify where support may be needed. This should now be augmented through:

- planned dialogue with learners about their progress in learning to enable learners to have more involvement in identifying and progressing individual and specific learning targets which are appropriately challenging
- the consistent use of Perth and Kinross Indicators to inform teachers' professional judgements about the progress of children based on evidence from day to day learning and teaching

LEARNING

Learners benefit from opportunities to learn across the four contexts of learning. Children find the themes for interdisciplinary learning particularly engaging. They spoke enthusiastically of a recent visit to the Forth Bridge Crossing, an experience designed to support an interdisciplinary theme about bridges.

The curriculum at Forgandenny School has been enhanced through recent joint curricular initiatives with staff from other schools in the Local Management Group; e.g. well planned and appropriately challenging learning opportunities in Science across the school and in the use of active approaches in Mathematics. Pupils benefit from active and experiential learning approaches across the curriculum and from opportunities to work with other pupils in vertical groups.

Staff know their pupils very well and have been seeking to provide for their individual learning and support needs drawing on the support of partners in other agencies when necessary. Staff work together to plan and review learning and this practice should now be developed by:

- devising approaches to planning and assessment that take full account of the totality of the curriculum. e.g. by building on the opportunities for learning in activities such as Responsibility Groups, Together Times and outings by planning appropriate learning for individuals and groups.

- providing more planned opportunities for pupils to personalise their learning through:
 - focussing on the development of skills through the use of the Perth and Kinross Skills Framework
 - pupils taking greater responsibility for their learning
- across the school, providing clear learning outcomes and success criteria which inform evaluations and result in feedback which impacts on pace of progress in learning for all pupils.

LEADERSHIP

Most staff members have lead roles within the school and there is a committed collegiate approach to improvement. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to be involved in improving their school such as their roles in Responsibility Groups and being Buddies. The strong community ethos is developed through working closely with parents and carers who are also very involved in school activities as helpers. Those parents consulted report that they feel very included in decisions that affect the school, particularly through the work of the Parent Council, and feel that there is ample opportunity to be actively involved in their children's learning. This is developed through good communication and opportunities to take part in school activities. The school is seen to be at the heart of its community and fosters very effective partnerships.

Recently, there has been significant change in the school's Senior Leadership Team. This has been managed successfully and has led to close collegiate working with Forteviot Primary School.

The school, through self-evaluation, has identified strengths and areas for improvement which are being taken forward through the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Staff have already identified that they need to determine strategies to effectively measure the impact of the work they are undertaking as part of the SIP. They should also work together to ensure that:

- they engage in professional dialogue about effective learning and teaching in order that a shared understanding of pedagogy and practice is evident across the school to ensure consistency for learners
- the views of all pupils are heard and taken into account when evaluating aspects of the work of the school so that pupils genuinely influence decisions that affect them

CONCLUSION

Forgandenny Primary School offers a distinctive learning experience and environment for its pupils. The school believes it has been very successful in promoting a strong sense of community both in and beyond the school which staff, pupils and parents are keen to maintain as the school role grows.

In addressing the points made above, the school should now focus on the following to secure ongoing improvement:

- Ensure approaches to planning and assessment take account of learning across all contexts with a particular focus on the further development of learners' skills by June 2014.
- By March 2014, all teachers should engage in shared professional dialogue when planning and evaluating learning and teaching to ensure learners' needs are met across the school.
- Further develop the use of Perth and Kinross Indicators and Skills Framework to:
 - support professional dialogue and judgements and inform tracking of pupils' progress in learning in Literacy and Numeracy by March 2014
 - inform dialogue with pupils and partnership in learning with parents by June 2014

[HMI Report](#)

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