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**East Dunbartonshire Council**

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EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION SERVICE  
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REVIEWS

School Name: Meadowburn Primary School

Date of Review: 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> February 2016

#### Purpose of the review

The purpose of the review was to evaluate the school's capacity for improvement based on its own self-evaluation of key areas within How Good Is Our School 3.

The review team visited classes, sampled pupils' work and scrutinised key documentation. They met with groups of staff, pupils, parents and members of the school and local community. In evaluating how well the school was progressing the review team assessed the school's processes for self- evaluation and the impact of improvement planning.

#### Background

Meadowburn Primary School situated in Bishopbriggs. The school roll is 286 with 223 children attending the mainstream primary and 63 attending the Gaelic Unit. There are 98 children attending the mainstream nursery and 22 in the Gaelic nursery.

## **QI 1.1 IMPROVEMENTS IN PERFORMANCE**

### **STRENGTHS**

- Overall children are making very good progress in literacy and numeracy. Data from standardised assessments shows that children's attainment in reading and numeracy is very good and almost all children show progress in their learning.
- The school is data rich and uses this well to track children's progress from nursery to P7 and to identify children requiring additional support. Standardised scores in literacy have increased this session and have shown consistency over the last two years in Primary 7 although Primary 4 reading scores have dipped they are still above average. As a result of the dip in scores the school have reviewed their strategies in teaching reading and how it is assessed.
- The school have sought out an opportunity to have an inter authority group to moderate standards in literacy in the Gaelic unit, this recent development will be beneficial in ensuring progress continues and attainment increases.
- Staff have used the EDC assessment toolkit to devise a clear assessment policy which includes 3 whole school assessment weeks providing additional tracking data to inform actions for improvement.
- A comprehensive tracking system has been developed and is used very effectively with staff to identify where improvements are required. This system includes use of the SIMD data to support vulnerable children.
- Baseline, standardised test results and periodic assessments are analysed by SMT and used with staff very effectively to plan next steps in learning and ensure progression. Where interventions are required action is agreed, implemented and monitored by the SMT to ensure they have a positive impact on attainment.
- Professional dialogue take places regularly throughout the year during teaching and learning meetings and the SMT provide appropriate challenge to staff to meet pupil needs more effectively.
- The majority of children are on target to achieve their expected CfE levels with some achieving beyond these levels in mathematics and numeracy and literacy and English.
- The school is making effective use of a range of data to gather intelligence about children's progress in numeracy and mathematics. Tracking procedures include the scrutiny and the discussion of standardised testing, moderation of assessment, pupil assessments and professional discussion at tracking meetings with teachers and members of the Senior Management Team. Maths standardised scores have steadily increased in Primary 4. As a result of a concern raised last year with P7 data in Mathematics, the school are revising their teaching and learning methodology to focus on increasing pace and challenge to improve attainment throughout the school. Standardised tests for P5 and P6 are to be used in the coming session in order to track children's progress more effectively between Primary 4 and Primary 7.
- Children are learning progressively across a range of experiences and outcomes in numeracy and mathematics. They are involved in active learning and using relevant contexts to enhance their learning.

- Children at all stages benefit from working in pairs and groups to solve mathematical and numerical challenges. The focus set by the school Maths Challenge groups has been extended into some classes, where challenge tasks and written problems are available. Pupils in the upper school can discuss the conversion of fractions into decimals and percentages with confidence and have a clear understanding of the relevance these skills will have in real life contexts. Children benefit from the two stars and a wish approach to feedback in their mathematics and numeracy work as well as the opportunities to co-create the success criteria in their learning.
- There is a progressive literacy programme in place throughout the school focused on skills development. Literacy experiences are very well planned with a varied range of relevant, appropriate and challenging literacy learning experiences. The school has developed the reading curriculum across the school which has raised attainment as evidenced by the improving trend in reading attainment. Reciprocal reading has been introduced in all classes and this approach is providing children with opportunities to engage with more varied and challenging texts suited to their reading abilities; children reported this as having improved their understanding of texts.
- Children can use and apply their reading skills across their learning accessing increasingly challenging texts and developing skills such as note-making, identifying fact and opinion and skimming and scanning. Almost all children are developing and applying their literacy skills in interesting contexts through interdisciplinary learning topics e.g. using a range of texts to access facts linked to Spanish festivals and creating application forms and carrying out job interviews.
- Within the school and nurseries higher order reading skills have been implemented effectively and children are able to understand and analyse age appropriate texts. A range of revised reading tools and strategies across the school are impacting positively on children's reading ability and children could explain how they use these to improve their reading.
- Children write very well in a wide range of contexts and for a variety of purposes across the curriculum and the writing at the P6 and P7 stage is of a very high standard. A revised programme for grammar has ensured children's writing is developing in line with the progression frameworks.
- A recent writing intervention at the early stages has raised attainment in writing at P1 with children able to compose simple personal stories, blend letters to spell words and use simple punctuation.
- Many children demonstrated listening and talking skills that were very well developed and opportunities were given across the curriculum for children to use these skills in a range of contexts including talking and listening into writing. The nursery provide children with the motivating opportunities to encourage emergent writing.
- Children in the Gaelic unit benefit from rich listening and talking opportunities. All children are encouraged to speak in Gaelic during lessons and in social interaction and play with their peers. The teachers use this medium effectively for example children were observed role playing to encourage listening and talking into reading and writing. The

progress children have made from Primary 1 into Primary 2 was evident and children in Primary 2 were observed writing skilfully.

- Children could describe the relevance of their learning in literacy e.g. at P7 children explained how summarising texts would be a required skill in real life and P6 children described the use of persuasive language in their life to influence their decisions.
- Children are achieving widely across the curriculum as evidenced by the very high quality of displays around the school and nurseries.
- The school is providing pupils with a range of opportunities through the life of the school for wider achievement e.g. athletics, chess and football clubs and choir, music folk group and a range of performing opportunities. Activity clubs are available to children where they are developing a range of skills e.g. Coding, Drama, Art, Football, Book Club, Fashion Design and Dancing.
- The Gaelic choir is well established and children benefit from many opportunities to perform and compete for example at the Mod. The annual school pantomime was highlighted by parents as outstanding and gave all children in Primary 7 the opportunity to develop their creative skills in a variety of ways.
- Children's wider achievements are recognised and celebrated through Learning Stories, in class, through a wider achievement wall and at school assemblies and children have opportunities to record their achievements from outside school.

#### **Areas for development:**

- **Pace of learning for more able should be increased and challenge should be built into lessons on a more consistent basis.**
- **Further develop the good opportunity already in place for moderation within the mainstream school and inter authority for the Gaelic unit.**
- **Track achievement and participation in school clubs and activities and develop further to help children recognise the skills they are gaining and how these can be applied in other areas of life and learning.**

## **2.1 LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES**

### **STRENGTHS**

- Overall the totality of the learning experience for children is very positive. Pupils and staff show high levels of mutual respect and courtesy. There is a 'can-do' atmosphere and a strong work ethic which pervades all learning.
- The children throughout the school interact well with visitors and are happy in class. There is a positive ethos and strong sense of a fully inclusive community which is permeating all aspects of school life. Children feel safe and cared for in school. There is a strong focus on the nurturing principles throughout the school and nurseries.

- There is a sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm from children both during classroom learning and as they move around the school. They talk about how much they enjoy school and aspects of lessons which are fun and enjoyable. Children within the nurseries are provided with motivating and appropriate learning activities and respond positively to staff interactions.
- Nursery children have regular access to outdoor education to enhance this experience further a focus on progression of skills and planned learning opportunities should continue to be offered. Outdoor learning opportunities have begun to be developed throughout the school, Children at Early Level were observed using the outdoor environment to further develop their scientific knowledge. Good examples of outdoor learning linked to literacy were observed.
- An Early Level development group has been established across both nurseries and school to review Learning Stories, planning formats and share effective practice.
- A progressive programme of PE is in place and observed lessons in gymnastics showed skills development was strong. The leader of learning in PE was observed modelling the 'good' lesson for the Gaelic staff, this is a model being rolled out across the school.
- The Pupil Council has representation from all classes in the school and nurseries. This gives the opportunity for children and young people to make decisions about their school. Pupil Council members gather ideas for improvements to the school from their peers and these are discussed at monthly Pupil Council meetings. This has resulted in the pupils planning improvements to the exterior of the school.
- A clear health and wellbeing programme is in place with resilience and the Bounceback programme at its heart. Most children are developing well their abilities to recognise their feelings. Through the very positive relationships they have with staff children are making progress in managing their emotions, taking full account of the difficulties they face. They are learning skills and strategies which provide support in challenging situations. The use of the wellbeing wheel has helped children to articulate and understand their health and this is supported by staff where pupils have felt less sure.
- A whole school strategy for Assessment is for Learning has been recently agreed which was evident in all classes and impacting on children's learning. Children were encouraged to engage with learning intentions and success criteria and almost all children could explain what they were learning. In some classes there were very good examples of children co-constructing success criteria led by effective teacher questioning.
- Children in both nurseries are consulted on a daily basis and supported to make informed choices about their learning and development. This supports responsive planning of experiences, activities, topics and outings. Children are supported to highlight their achievements and next steps in learning contributing positively to their experiences. Children's profiles, personal learning stories are shared with parents regularly through meetings, written reports and transition records.
- There were some good examples of quality written feedback to children using two stars and a wish to indicate their strengths and next steps and children were aware of what to do to improve their learning.

- Children are given regular opportunities for peer and self-assessment of their writing and children were clear about what they had to do to improve their learning. They are given many opportunities to use self and peer assessment and could explain how this helps their learning.
- In most classes co-operative learning and reciprocal learning is used effectively across the curriculum allowing children to complete collaborative tasks effectively.
- Children are using ICT very well to develop their skills for learning across the curriculum e.g. children were using I pads to record and discuss their learning as well as using it effectively for research and evaluation of what they were learning.
- Children are developing leadership skills and responsibility through membership of committees, planning wider school learning opportunities as well as participating in a range of classroom responsibilities.
- Parental engagement is encouraged throughout the school; parents of children in the Gaelic unit are given strategies to help their children at home while parents in both nurseries are encouraged to join in ‘stay and play’ sessions.
- The residential experience to Ardmay provides P7 participants with significant opportunity to develop independence, resilience and confidence through a range of challenges. All stages benefit from a range of trips and visitors linked to social studies topics and other aspects of their learning.

#### **Areas for Development:**

- **Continue ensure children understand how to improve their learning through further developing open questioning, encouraging children to be active from the outset of lessons to encourage independence problem solving and thinking skills.**
- **Continue to encourage formative assessment strategies for clearer feedback and to support some teachers to co-construct success criteria effectively.**
- **Continue to involve children and parents in their learning in nursery and throughout the school.**

## **5.1 CURRICULUM**

### **STRENGTHS**

- There is a clear curriculum rationale in place which encompasses the uniqueness of Meadowburn Primary School. Staff are clear about what makes their curriculum strong and relevant. The rationale was informed by parents, staff and pupils and allows for autonomy and creativity.
- The school is continuing to develop their curriculum through cluster working and authority initiatives, while embracing partnership working. It is based on strong values. The school has started to use a Practitioner Enquiry model to take forward changes and improvements in the curriculum.
- One plus two Modern Languages is well developed throughout the school with Gaelic being taught to all pupils as well as German from P5-P7. Pupils within the Gaelic stream are learning German through the Gaelic medium from P5-7.

- There is a very strong transition process between home, the nursery and school. It has excellent links with the early level in primary school and support materials for parents have been provided to strengthen home links. Transitions between nursery and P1 and P7 to S1 are supported well with a wide range of activities in place throughout the year, including enhanced transitions as appropriate.
- A Framework for Interdisciplinary Learning is in place using the ‘Worlds’ model, however there is clear flexibility within this and when gaps have been identified amendments have been made to ensure that the children are receiving their entitlements. Built into this framework is a three year cycle to avoid repetition and build in progression. Focus areas enable children to receive a breadth of learning including Scotland, the wider world and the scientific /technological world. Application of literacy, numeracy and health and well-being are integral to this.
- Progressive frameworks are in place for most areas of the curriculum with Art and Design being developed this year. There is strong evidence throughout the school of skills progression within this and pupils can confidently share the skills they are developing within this area.
- Staff are currently involved in revising planning formats across early level to further enhance transition and ensure continuity of progress.
- Staff are planning motivating and engaging activities and are providing children with opportunities to work independently and cooperatively in groups.
- Moderation of writing is strong and embedded this now needs to extend to other areas with more opportunity to look outwards and involve the cluster.

#### **Areas for Development:**

- **Continue to review and refresh curricular programmes to include progression frameworks and SALS in all areas.**
- **Continue to review IDL provision to ensure a curricular balance across the year.**

#### **QI 5.3 MEETING LEARNERS’ NEEDS**

##### **STRENGTHS**

- Children’s needs are being addressed very well within the primary and nursery settings. The SMT conduct meetings with staff termly to track learners progress through standardised assessment and CfE Levels. This is making an impact in addressing next steps in learning. There are effective procedures in place to monitor classroom practice. A few pupils could be further challenged in their learning through increased pace and support.

- There are very effective systems in place to support children with additional support needs. School Liaison Groups and Team Around the Child meetings are focused to support the needs of the child, both academically and emotionally.
- There is a strong ethos within the school and learners are confident and able to express their needs. The school has worked extensively on building emotional wellbeing and action research has taken place to evaluate this very positively.
- Management are aware of learners' needs and use data such as Risk Matrix and SIMD to tracking pupil learning and intervention takes place when required. Data is used to drive a focus of analysis and improvement. Very effective partnership working with the Educational Psychologist and external agencies is strong. There is regular Support for All Meetings to meet the needs of all nursery children. Staged intervention plans are specific and targeted to the needs of the individual. These are reviewed throughout the year.
- The school provides extracurricular activities to extend children's health and wellbeing, such as sessions to develop co-ordination and healthy lifestyles. Seasons for Growth is also delivered to support children through loss when required.
- The school has very good provision in place to meet the learning needs of pupils in both the school and nursery.
- The school are focusing on nurturing principles as part of their improvement planning cycle. Wellbeing is at the heart of the school and the SMT and Class teachers complete detailed wellbeing assessments using SHANARRI indicators for identified children; helping to track and improve their achievement and attainment. Wellbeing assessments are used with all pupils in Primary 4 to Primary 7. Support for children is flexible and adaptable to the needs of the individual. This is tracked by the SMT in order to put supports in place.
- Inter-agency work is well advanced, through the attendance and valuable contributions made by Named Persons in other services, for example Health Visitors at Support for All meetings. Effective systems and processes are in place to ensure that the decisions made during the School Liaison Group are disseminated and swiftly acted upon.
- Partners speak very highly of the commitment of staff at all levels to meet the needs of all learners, including those within nursery and Gaelic medium settings. They describe a genuine openness which results in successful child-centred approaches. In some cases, tasks, activities and resources are adapted following specialist guidance resulting in children more effectively accessing the curriculum.

#### **Areas for Development:**

- **Continue to provide challenge for more able pupils through the pace of learning in some classes and continue to review transition procedures to enhance the pace of learning at the beginning of the academic session.**
- **Further enhance practice to include clear differentiation of learning to support groups and individuals who require additional support in their learning.**



## QI 5.9 SELF-EVALUATION

### STRENGTHS

- The HT has a clear vision and commitment to the school and drives a very effective improvement agenda to meet the needs of all children.
- The staff are committed to raising attainment and seek to deliver the best for all children. The teachers and pupils are involved in evaluating their progress and achievements and parents are asked to comment on their children's progress through the learning stories. Staff are reflective and Professional dialogue is strong in teaching and learning meetings, collegiate sessions and one to one meetings and lead to improvements across learning. The Head Teacher has empowered staff to lead improvement priorities. All teaching staff have responsibilities to lead initiatives.
- The evaluation process results in interventions for pupils on individual, class and group basis. The school and cluster improvement plans are based on clear evaluations of what is needed to ensure progression, depth, challenge and application in learning. The school improvement plan is monitored regularly to inform the continuous cycle of school improvement.
- The school has a very effective Quality Assurance calendar with clearly planned activities to assess children's progress and ensure quality teaching and learning.
- An early level development working group has been established to share effective practice across the nursery and P1 stage and this has ensured more consistency in the delivery of early level experiences.
- Through the PRD process leadership opportunities have been identified and are beginning to make an impact on learning. Examples of professional learning include Post Graduate studies in Leadership and Management.
- Partners speak highly of the capacity of all staff to lead school improvements and ensure sustainability. New initiatives, such as developments in the curriculum in Support for learners have become well embedded through the committed, professional approach of staff.
- Parents are involved in evaluating school improvement through the parent council and are confident their views are listened to and acted upon. The school have worked as a community on their curriculum rationale and parents spoke very highly about how they had been consulted and have been included in sharing this more widely.
- The Head Teacher has a clear vision for school improvement, shaped around national developments and has already begun to scope actions with the Educational Psychologist on improving the use of data. Tracking of wider achievement using data from a range of sources (example Active Schools data) has already resulted in some targeted interventions and improved outcomes for individual learners.

### Impact of the School Improvement Plan

- There is strong evidence of the impact of the school improvement plan on improving outcomes for children. The working groups across the school and nursery have designed improvements that are clearly impacting on improvement. The approaches

taken to develop a more robust and effective assessment strategy are in the early stages and when embedded should continue to impact on raising attainment and increase pace of learning.

### **Areas for Development**

- **Continue to develop moderation opportunities across the curriculum and including the cluster and Gaelic inter authority group to allow staff to share standards and evaluate achievement of a level.**
- **Continue to develop data literacy skills in all staff to ensure all data is used to identify strengths, areas for development and impacts on learning and teaching.**

### **Capacity for Improvement**

The school are extremely well placed to continue to improve.

There is an extremely nurturing environment and a positive ethos and climate of achievement in Meadowburn Primary. The senior management team, staff, parents and the wider community are very committed to the school. Children are happy and achieving and are excited about learning and the opportunities they have. Although there have been recent changes to the senior management team the clear vision of the Head Teacher has been shared and built on by all staff. Staff in the Gaelic stream and in both nurseries are very well supported by the school management team and are clear on what they need to do to deliver excellence in all settings.

The robust processes of self- evaluation and strong and effective tracking procedures have and will continue to impact positively on children's progress. The commitment of staff to continued professional learning is improving the quality and consistency of children's learning experiences across the school. There are very good relationships between staff, pupils and parents and the enthusiasm and eagerness of pupils to learn in Meadowburn Primary and nursery will ensure continued progress.