

Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services : Education



Follow Through Report on the Inspection
of Furnace Primary School

Inspection: March 2007

Date of Publication: 19 June 2009

HMIE published a report on Furnace Primary School in June 2007. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action.

This follow-through report tells you about improvements since the original inspection in the quality of education which the school provides. It also comments on how the school is getting on with the main points for action.

First we focus on changes in the core work of the school. We explain how the school has got better at helping children to learn and benefit from being at the school. Next we look at the key processes which enable this to happen, including the involvement of parents¹.

Our report also describes developments in the 'ethos' of the school, by which we mean how well children are cared for and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally we comment on improvements in leadership to help the school achieve its aims.

Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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1. The school

Furnace Primary School is situated in the village of Furnace on the shores of Loch Fyne. The school's catchment area stretches from Crarae to Brenchoille. The school is the focal point for many village activities and enjoys a strong link with the wider community. The school is a member of the Lochfyneside Schools Co-operative with Minard and Inveraray Primary Schools. Since the inspection the school has gained from extending effective partnerships with the other co-operative schools. This has involved sharing of staff expertise, team teaching and pupil participation in joint curricular events.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Continued development of an effective and productive partnership approach to education involving pupils, staff, parents, neighbouring schools and the community.
- The supportive and caring approach to improving pupils' health and well-being and the pastoral care and support for pupils.
- The commitment of staff to further develop pupils' achievements in enterprise education.
- The development of the curriculum in the light of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- The continued commitment of the Head Teacher to improving the school.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

All children are making good progress at their appropriate levels. They are developing confidence and have regular opportunities to work together and share ideas.

Staff are successfully developing aspects of the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence*. Interdisciplinary learning has been a successful development area and a good example of this was the children's involvement in the Christmas service. The children planned, wrote, produced and performed the event which they shared with the wider community. The children have regular opportunities to work together in groups such as writing stories and understanding the wider world. All children in the school are actively involved in their learning, frequently using the outside environment to develop their understanding and reinforce skills. A recent project on marine life involved visiting the local seashore. The culmination of this topic was the children's production of "Ocean Commotion" a musical journey into the deep sea.

The Eco committee have recently led a review of how the school playground reflects the interests and meets the needs of the current children in the school. Their interest in active play as part of health promoting schools has resulted in new adventure play equipment being introduced.

Children are now more able to listen when sharing ideas and can agree co-operatively on actions and ideas for development. This is demonstrated in the recent Jacobite theme which has resulted in the production of a joint booklet designed and researched by the children working in groups. This booklet gives their own views and accurate historical facts on the Jacobites.

Staff have worked hard to ensure that children are confident in taking responsibility and leading and evaluating aspects of their learning. The successful implementation of co-operative learning has been useful in this development.

All the children work towards specific targets and plenary sessions provide opportunities for them to discuss and evaluate their work and learning.

4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

Staff continue to work well as a team and with outside agencies to fully support children's learning. Support staff have had opportunities to advance their training to provide effective quality support. Staff ensure that activities planned are carefully matched to pupils' individual needs.

The children's learning has been enhanced by inputs from a variety of sources from within the local community including the local fisheries workers who helped deliver Rivers in the Classroom project. Commendably the development of team teaching across the co-operative schools has enabled staff to access staff expertise in Music, PE and RME. A recent example of this joint approach was the Carnival event at Lochgilphead Joint Campus where Mid Argyll Schools came together to share their joint learning in samba drumming.

Staff have worked closely with relevant departments of the Council to ensure that accommodation issues regarding water penetration and heating have been addressed.

5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?

Children enjoy a variety of activities to help improve the school. A very successful Health and Wellbeing week has resulted in the pupils organising a community jog and producing a recipe book of healthy meals. The children have been actively involved in preparing and making healthy food which is served as part of their school meals. The school has now successfully moved from level 2 Health Promoting Schools to level 3.

Children are developing well as responsible citizens, taking responsibility for organising and assisting with fund raising. At the recent sports day the children from the Gardening Club stocked and ran a plant stall raising money for school funds.

6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?

Staff continue to set high expectations for children's attainment and wider achievement. Through the personal learning planning process, children are encouraged to set their own learning and personal targets and evaluate their success. Children's successes and achievements are regularly celebrated. Standards of presentation are continuing to improve.

The pace of learning has improved and the Head Teacher is promoting self evaluation and a shared school reflection of teaching and learning.

7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

Staff continue to provide a good quality education for all pupils through a broad and well balanced curriculum. Staff are enthusiastically developing aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

The Head Teacher has led and developed a review of the school's values, vision and aims which has involved a wide range of stakeholders. This has resulted in a very clear vision for improvement being established and has been shared with the wider community. The good leadership of the Head Teacher and the staff's support and commitment ensures that the school has the capacity to realise this vision.

8. What happens next?

As a result of the continued record of improvement and the effective leadership of the school, the school has demonstrated a strong capacity to continue to improve.

Community Services: Education will continue to monitor the work of the school as part of its procedures for ensuring quality

Douglas Hendry
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Argyll and Bute Council
June 2009