

Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services : Education



Argyll and Bute Follow Through Report
on the HMIE Inspection
Tayvallich Primary School and Pre-5 Unit
March 2009

(HMIE Inspection took place week commencing 26 January 2009)

HMIE published a report on Tayvallich Primary School and Pre-5 unit in March 2009. That report set out key strengths of the school and main point 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

Since the inspection the school has benefited from extending effective partnerships with the other schools within the area cluster in developing aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*. This has included head teacher forums, sharing of staff expertise and pupil participation in joint curricular events.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Continued very good leadership and self-evaluation
- The high quality of children's written work with continued focus on presentation and content
- The continued focus on providing very good learning experiences in the primary and Pre-5 unit
- The continued quality development of outdoor learning and the extensive use of the local environment to support and extend the learning in the primary and Pre-5 unit
- The effective staff team which has established very effective partnerships with parents and other agencies

3. Progress with identified Action Points

The school has made very good progress in continuing to build on high quality education and care being provided for all children.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Under the continued very good leadership of the head teacher and with the hard work and commitment of staff and the community, the school and Pre-5 unit have continued to provide a very high standard of education for all pupils.

Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics continues to be very good and individual pupils are well supported in their learning through the quality of teaching and the knowledge of staff about their pupils.

Teaching staff ensures that pupils are challenged appropriately and that their confidence is developed through opportunities to work together and share ideas. All the children work towards specific targets and plenary sessions provide opportunities for them to discuss and evaluate their work and learning. Personal Learning Planning continues to evolve and the Pre-5 children are making very good use of their shared learning logs.

Staff are successfully progressing with the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence*, which includes the development of Literacy and Numeracy and the pupils' lessons are frequently contextualised, making their learning more relevant. The development of interdisciplinary learning has been particularly successful and has contributed to ensuring that breadth, depth and progression are key principles in the pupils' learning experience. An example was the integrated approach in the Early Years' class in which the children's learning in expressive arts, social studies and literacy culminated in a Viking Experience for parents that

included weaving, jewellery making, runic writing, a Viking Quiz as well as Viking songs and individual presentations.

P4-7 pupils participated in a joint school performance of 'Scotland, Our Scotland' at Ardrishaig Primary along with pupils from Kilmartin, Craignish and Inveraray, supported by members of Scottish Opera. In the lead up to the performance, the pupils undertook an interdisciplinary study on The Clearances and Emigration and they learned why Scottish people can be found all around the world. They studied the effects of The Clearances on their local area, utilising archived material and undertaking local visits.

All children in the school are actively involved in their learning, and pupil consultation has developed further by involving them in planning curricular events. The good practice of the Eco Committee is making an impact on the school and is currently being extended to include the establishment of improvements in the environment for the wider community. The senior pupils formed 'TIC' - Tayvallich Improvement Company - and produced greeting cards to raise funds. In turn, they contacted their area council, local business people, and villagers for advice and support and now have the first part of their plan, items of furniture, in their local park.

Active learning in the Early Level continues to develop as an integral part of teaching and learning. The Pre-5 unit and P1-3 studied animal life, initially within Tayvallich and then as part of a larger Mid-Argyll topic with other schools and pre-school units. The children made many visits to their local woodlands as well as integrating their studies with literacy and science. The children also enjoyed an informative puppet show about Argyll's Forests' creatures, followed by a field study trip to Barnluasgan forest trail.

Staff have worked hard to ensure that children are confident in taking responsibility for, and leading and evaluating aspects of their

learning. The pupils at all ages are confident to discuss their learning experiences and the impact this is making on their lives.

The pupils who are part of the joint Pupil Council of Mid-Argyll helped to organise, along with the Active Schools' Co-ordinator, a Mini Olympics for all children in P5-7, which was held at Lochgilphead Joint Campus. Round-robin games such as Space Hoppers, Throwing the Hammer, and the javelin were enjoyed, as were relay races. Funds raised from this event were donated to Robin House, Breast Cancer and Mary's Meals.

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

The head teacher has embraced the model of distributed leadership and has worked hard to ensure it is meaningful and making an impact in Tayvallich Primary and Pre-5 Unit. As a result, staff members have taken on the responsibility as leaders of numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing.

Staff continue to work very well as a team and with outside agencies to fully support the children's learning. A parents' evening with input from the Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist and Senior Teacher for the Hearing Impaired provided parents with the opportunity to meet these staff on an informal basis and find out about the type of support that is available.

As part of P4-7 pupils' developing health and wellbeing, the children participated in 'Your Shoes,' a project delivered through three drama workshops, they explored their own needs and the importance of being aware of those of others. This also included a P7 – secondary transition task by creating tiles illustrating major events in their lives. The pupils also undertook general fitness testing organised by the area's Active Schools Coordinator and the results were included in the children's report cards.

Staff work effectively as a team and a shared approach to planning and evaluating the work of the school has led to greater professional dialogue, which has had a positive impact on the teaching and learning across the school and Pre-5 unit. Self evaluation features highly across the school and staff members work effectively offering peer support in this area.

In turn, staff have had the opportunity to communicate and collaborate with other local schools in the Mid Argyll area through the use of GLOW.

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

Children enjoy a variety of activities to help improve the school. They have been actively involved in attracting a wider range of biodiversity within the school grounds, as well as expanding the range of fruit and vegetables they grow and share with their community by planting apple trees and growing peas, beetroot, and strawberries.

Children are developing well as effective citizens, taking responsibility for researching and organising sources of renewable energy, which they can use within school. The Energy group organised a visit to Clachan Primary School to learn how they use renewable energy sources. The information gained was then cascaded to the rest of the school and plans are already in place to erect a small windmill/solar panel to charge the laptop computers and camera batteries.

The whole school community is proud of the school's welcoming ethos, the attractive school grounds and the way in which the wider community is offered the opportunity to play an active, supportive role in the daily life of the school.

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

Staff continue to set very high expectations for children's attainment and wider achievement. In turn the children are aware of the high expectations through quality conversations related to their learning. All the children's successes and achievements are regularly celebrated and they continue to benefit from high quality support from classroom assistants.

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

Staff continues to provide a very good quality education for all pupils through a broad and well-balanced curriculum. Staff are enthusiastically and creatively 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 on a clear vision for improvement, which has been shared with the wider community. The very good leadership of the head teacher and the staff's support and commitment ensures that the school has the capacity to realise this vision.

9. 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

Cleland Sneddon
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Argyll and Bute Council
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