

Moray Council – Education and Social Care Portessie Primary School - Progress Report – June 2019

1 Introduction

Portessie Primary School was inspected in March 2018 by Education Scotland and the resulting report was published in June 2018. The report can be accessed from the school or on the Education Scotland website.

Since the inspection, the local authority has monitored progress and the school's QIO and a Primary Adviser have visited the school to assess the extent to which the school is continuing to improve using a clear set of target areas. This has ensured that the school has a more robust self- evaluation culture in the school, supported and led by the school community.

The inspection findings were identified as follows:

Areas of Strength

- Children who are articulate and proud of their school. They are willing, and able, to take on responsibilities and improvements.
- The focus on encouraging children to read for pleasure and the range of books that children are able to access.
- Partnership working with the onsite playgroup and the positive impact this is having on children when they transition into the school.
- The teamwork and commitment of the headteacher and staff and their knowledge of children's strengths.

Areas for Improvement

- There is a need to improve approaches to self-evaluation and improvement and provide further opportunities for leadership at all levels.
- Improve learning and teaching to raise attainment and help children develop a better understanding of their skills.
- The school community should work together to develop a shared plan to further improve the school ethos and ensure everyone feels valued and respected.

2 Continuous Improvement

The headteacher continues to lead the school in a positive manner and distributes leadership across the school community where it is appropriate. Children are encouraged to express their opinions in terms of Pupil Voice which feeds into school improvement and also in pupil learning and next steps.

The headteacher is working with the Primary Adviser to develop the capacity of the school and has worked to distribute leadership across the school community where appropriate. This has helped to give the children a way of giving positive contributions on improving their school. The language of learning is now being developed across the school and is beginning to pay dividends in terms of pupils knowing what they are learning and why, and in identifying their next steps.

The school is working with Northern Alliance curricular progressions in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Well-being to inform learner pathways and school improvement. There is ongoing work on moderation of Writing which is leading to improved staff confidence on assessing the achievement of a level by learners. An example of this is 'Cold Writing' activities to assess where children are in their writing skills and to facilitate moderation with shared discussion. There is an emphasis on play-based learning in P1 to P3 which has been extended into P4 to help children to transition out of play-based learning and access the curriculum and achieve First Level more confidently by the end of P4.

The school has redrafted the School Vision as: Believe, Achieve and Succeed which is encapsulated in the Draft School Aims where children are to be supported and encouraged to work out these in their lives at school and beyond. The school effectively engages in the child planning process and ensures that the key adult responsibilities are carried out successfully using a positive partnership approach with parents/carers and allied professionals. There is some parental feedback regarding the prevalence of bullying although the school deals well with issues that arise and successfully works along with partners in the context of the principles of GIRFEC.

3 Progress with Areas for Improvement

The school, under the leadership of the headteacher, has taken a more robust view of self-evaluation for self-improvement in terms of focusing on the processes and practices that are needed to raise attainment. This has led to more informed discussions as to where the school sits with regard to its performance. This is enhanced by classroom observations by the headteacher and peer teachers. Staff have taken up leadership opportunities in order to improve the school and there have been some good work such as a study on developing higher order thinking skills. Allied to this, pupils have been encouraged to take on the leadership of their learning and are rising to the challenge.

Most children make good progress from their previous level of attainment and the attainment over time for P1 and P7 is good although there are challenges in P4. It is hoped that these will be addressed through the play-based transition arrangements in P4.

As part of their learning children have Passport Folders which they use to keep track of their learning in terms of their knowledge and skills, and next steps. These are shared with parents who are encouraged to use these to engage with their child's learning. This has enabled children to take more responsibility for their learning which has been enhanced by teachers using assessment information in a more measured way. They are planning learning with greater differentiation and activities

designed to meet pupils' needs. This means that learning intentions and success criteria are more accessible to children and they can therefore take more ownership of them.

The school has been working to include all members of the school community in a meaningful and productive way. This includes parental meetings three times per year and the use of surveys to gather the views of stake-holders. The co-created school Vision, Values and Aims has given a good foundation to build on so that all members of the school community can feed into the overall vision to help all the children be successful both academically and socially. A log is now being kept of playground incidents and this ensures that there is opportunity to look at any trends and identify issues which may present themselves. The school intends to continue to focus on the development of its relational approach which will ensure that all children will come to class ready to engage and learn.

4 Conclusion

The school has made progress in addressing the areas for improvement in the original Education Scotland report and the local authority is confident in the headteacher's and school's commitment to continuous improvement. Consequently it is recommended that Portessie Primary School is signed off from ongoing local authority post-inspection oversight and reverts to normal quality assurance processes. Parents and carers will continue to be informed of further progress through the school Standards and Quality Report.

5 Contact Details

Any queries about this report should be addressed to:

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