

## **East Dunbartonshire Council**

### **Education Service**

#### **Quality Improvement Review (2015)-Follow Through Visit**

**School: Castlehill Primary**

**Date of Follow-Through Visit: 14<sup>th</sup>- 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

#### **Purpose of the Follow Through**

The purpose of the follow through was to evaluate the school's progress with the areas of improvement identified in the review carried out on 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

The follow through review team visited classes, sampled pupils' work, and scrutinised key documentation and met with groups of staff and pupils.

#### **Background**

Castlehill Primary School is a denominational school situated in Bearsden.

The school has an extended day/year nursery , a Language and Communication Resource (LCR) and a Mainstream Primary.

The school roll is 121 pupils in primary 1-7, accommodated in 5 mainstream classes and 3 LCR classes. The nursery roll is currently 112.

The FME is 12%

### **QI 1.1 Areas for Development:**

- *The use of Principles and Practice papers, Progression Frameworks and Significant Aspects of Learning support material will enable teachers to continue to develop their planning across all curricular areas, including literacy and numeracy, to enhance appropriate learning, teaching and assessment for their pupils. This will ensure that all children can make very good progress in their learning in all curricular areas.*
- *Staff should provide more opportunities to develop numeracy and literacy understanding and skills across all areas of the curriculum to improve their application of these skills. Teachers should consider the provision of more relevant and challenging contexts for children to apply these skills.*
- *In literacy, staff planning should show less reliance on worksheets. This will support children to become more independent learners and enable them to recognise links and express and apply their learning across the curriculum. There is variation in the standard of written work across classes and clearer quality feedback of next steps is needed to allow children to progress at the appropriate level. Staff feedback of next steps should provide clear expectations to enable children to speak with confidence about what they need to do to improve their learning.*
- *Pace and challenge in lessons for some children across some stages should be increased. In almost all classes visited the quality of learning could be improved through greater opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in learning activities for example by having better differentiation of tasks. This would increase fun and challenge for learners and contribute to an increase in the pace of learning.*
- *All nursery staff should continue to ensure that they have ownership of relevant priorities within the improvement plan.*

### **The school is making good progress in these areas.**

- Staff are beginning to use the Significant Aspects of Learning and Progression Frameworks in planning for assessment and learning and teaching across the curriculum. They have focussed on adapting their planning using the Progression Frameworks and Significant Aspects of Learning within numeracy. This was achieved through a collegiate approach where staff discussed and analysed the framework, then integrated them into their forward planning. Staff spoke with confidence about their involvement in this process, and now have capacity to further develop other areas of the curriculum in this way.
- A clear tracking system is in place across the school, focusing on literacy and numeracy. Through termly assessment weeks, pupils are assessed in their most current learning and teachers input scores onto an electronic traffic light system. Results are analysed through termly tracking meetings with SMT and a clear record of discussion with action points is collated. Staff are confident in using the tracking system to analyse their own class data and to use whole school data to ensure pace of learning is appropriate. This was particularly relevant within the LCR classes as it supports teachers to ensure that pace and challenge is appropriate for inclusion within mainstream.
- There was evidence of children applying their skills in relevant and challenging contexts in most classes observed. For example P7/6 were very motivated by the context of an Alex Rider novel which provided an opportunity for pupils to design a 'spy gadget' and children in the same class were applying the skills they had learned in angles to a design task to create a

mosque. In an LCR class, pupils enjoyed using Lego Therapy as a context for developing talking and listening skills. Individual needs were considered within the LCR to ensure that topics were relevant for everyone. In one example, a specific context involving the outdoor woodland area had been planned for an individual pupil, to make his learning experience more relevant and engaging.

- Children are given opportunities to apply their literacy skills across learning through presenting at assemblies organising and implementing a Junior Road Safety Competition, taking ownerships of 'Family Time' groups and opportunities for Outdoor Learning. They have a wide range of learning experiences meeting a range of learning styles. Examples included; group challenges, 'show me' boards, ICT games, board games and Co-operative learning tasks. Children were also observed using their listening and talking and presenting skills in a class debate to their parents. This was very well received and children were encouraged to self-reflect on their performance to gauge their next steps in learning.
- Differentiation was evident in all lessons and with further opportunities to build staff capacity should lead to clearer planning reflecting different ways to differentiate. This will ensure the most able learners are challenged and those requiring support have their needs met. Staff's professional learning in this area will help embed practice more consistently across the school.
- The nursery teacher is new to the nursery and Scottish curriculum and is being supported by the SMT to lead the nursery team in developing the relevant priorities of the improvement plan.

### **QI 2.1 Areas for development:**

- *Aspects of Assessment is for Learning (AifL) should be revisited to support its continued implementation. This should include a more consistent use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria, higher quality feedback and identification of individual's next steps in learning and plenary sessions. This would improve all children's engagement with their learning. Staff engagement with the Taking A Closer Look at NAR documentation will help support this.*
- *The school and nursery should consider the opportunities offered by the large outdoor area around the school to further develop outdoor learning. EDC's Outdoor Officer will be able to support with this. Staff should now consider building on the good practice that has been observed in outdoor learning to motivate and encourage active and independent learning within the classroom.*

### **The school is making good progress in these areas.**

- Assessment is for Learning (AifL) has resulted in a significant improvement in staff engagement with Learning Intentions & Success Criteria. Teachers spoke with confidence and enthusiasm regarding their personal development and their understanding of using Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to improve learning and teaching. Staff are working with Glasgow University and are in a good place to continue their professional enquiry. Learning Intentions and Success Criteria were evident in every lesson and pupils

were familiar with how they supported learning. In some classes pupils were involved in creating success criteria with support from their teacher; this could now be further developed.

- Plenary sessions were evident in observed lessons and teachers used success criteria to question and assess understanding. Feedback in writing jotters was evident and pupils are now more confident on how to improve their work through the use of formative assessment strategies. Through the work on the numeracy hub staff have been encouraged to engage more readily with NAR. The Senior Leadership team continue to highlight this as a useful resource in assessing children's learning and progress. Future professional learning sessions using this resource will support teachers in deepening their understanding and expertise in assessment.
- Staff throughout the school, LCR and nursery have engaged very well with outdoor learning. The whole school are 'Running to Rio' by doing the daily kilometre and counting the distance they have run, they expect to get to Rio by June and use this context for further study of the Olympics. Classes were observed using the outdoors to enhance their learning for example children were using compasses to determine the position of their school. The nursery use the outdoor space very effectively for their learning they have created very good learning areas including an owl garden and mud kitchen. In the nursery further use could be made of the space with minor adjustments. The HT should continue to pursue how this could be done. Outdoor learning is a regular feature of class work and is relevant and motivating for children. Classes were observed using school grounds to work out the orientation of the school to the points on a compass. The nursery were making good use of the mud kitchen.

#### **QI 5.1 AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- *The Senior Management Team (SMT) should identify a clear vision and rationale for the curriculum through whole staff and partnership discussion. Teachers should develop a shared understanding of curriculum architecture, the four contexts for learning and the design principles. This will identify a shared language of what the design principles mean for each teacher in their planning and how the four contexts for learning contribute to every child's broad general education.*
- *Assessment planning should continue to focus on Significant Aspects of Learning and curricular Progression Frameworks. A continued focus on developing skills will ensure progression in all curricular areas. Continued participation in the work of the cluster should occur in order to add value to professional learning.*
- *Across the Early Level staff should continue to develop additional approaches to enhance transition arrangements. For example, reciprocal visits or joint projects for both children and staff throughout the year could be introduced.*

#### **The school is making good progress in these areas.**

- The school vision, values, aims and rationale have been agreed and staff, parents and children consulted, this now needs to become a living, breathing part of the school with everybody able to articulate them and link them to their planning, learning and teaching. Teachers

consider the 4 contexts and design principles in their planning and discuss this in teaching and learning meetings.

- Teachers have started to use the Significant Aspects of Learning and Progression Frameworks particularly in maths where a working party have linked the Progression Frameworks to their existing planners. They use the Progression Frameworks as a guide for setting assessments at the planning stage. Staff worked with the cluster to focus on aspects of the Progression Frameworks particularly for example on the place of zero. Learning and teaching is differentiated to ensure children make appropriate progress...The school are now at the stage of revising their maths policy.
- Planners are designed to ensure skills progression in numeracy, literacy, science and ICT. IDL, Expressive Arts and Technology are currently being revised to ensure skills progression. There are plans to revise all other curricular areas.
- Writing criteria has been developed and discussed as a cluster. Self- evaluation of Cluster Work has resulted in a plan to take a more focussed approach to one or two curricular areas for next session.
- Staff in the Early Level have reflected on their transition arrangements and take part in reciprocal visits across the school and nursery, visit local nurseries and have plans to take part in a joint project in the final term of this session.

### **QI 5.3 AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- *The school should continue to implement and effectively evaluate support plans and wellbeing assessments throughout the nursery and school. To minimise workload stage 1 plans should now be integrated into teacher's classroom planning and shown as differentiated support within forward plans.*
- *In the primary school staff should continue to provide meaningful challenge for more able pupils including consideration of the pace of learning. Nursery staff should continue to evidence observations and next steps for children, ensuring children's interests are taken account of. They should also continue to review the pace of children's learning and the challenge provided for children who stay all day.*
- *Staff should continue to encourage children in the LCR to take on the challenge of independent learning whenever possible.*

### **The school is making good progress in these areas.**

- Within the LCR there was much evidence of pupils developing independent learning. Children are encouraged to complete station tasks in their preferred order, study individualised topics, work cooperatively following cooperative learning style tasks and work independently through work programmes. Upper school children take responsibility for whole school initiatives such as JRSO and are given outdoor learning opportunities to meet their individual needs. Children in the LCR use talking mats to express their opinions and feelings.

- The school have given consideration to minimising workload of stage 1 support plans by integrating them into forward plans. This will be developed further through next session's School Improvement Plan to reflect recent training and focus on clear differentiation.
- Children in the nursery are involved in choosing their learning through voting boards and staff observe their learning, record it in profiles and intervene to take them to the next stage in their learning. Staff are beginning to use Building the Ambition as part of their self- evaluation and reflection. They have focussed on children's daily routine to help give clear feedback to parents on their children's learning within the nursery setting.

#### **QI 5.9 AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- *The electronic monitoring and tracking of attainment and achievement should be further developed to ensure that staff have an understanding of its use in self-evaluation so that progression in all areas of learning can be better identified and challenging targets set for children through discussion.*
- *Staff should continue to develop their moderation to cover all levels in all curricular areas. This will ensure that all staff have a shared understanding of standards and have agreed expectations.*
- *The school should continue to develop systems for parents to be regularly consulted and informed about developments in learning and teaching in light of Curriculum for Excellence. Consideration should be given to identify how the children and Parent Council could be actively involved in evaluating the work of the school, in making improvements happen and evaluating the impact of changes.*

#### **The school is making good progress in these areas.**

- The school have developed their tracking system to ensure that staff are fully engaged and involved in the process. Staff spoke confidently about accessing and using the tracking system to reflect on data and inform planning.
- Wider achievement achievements are tracked to ensure children are offered the opportunity to attend after school clubs on an equitable basis. SMT record attendance and target specific children to attend after school clubs.
- Staff are involved in a programme of peer coaching which involves peers visits with agreed targets for improvement with a follow up session of joint reflection and agreement for next steps. New staff are trained in the GROW model to help facilitate these sessions.
- The school have a long term plan in place to moderate levels across all curricular areas. They have most recently moderated writing outcomes and parents have been informed of how to support their children with writing. This was presented through an information leaflet which was well received by parents. Feedback from parents has resulted on a decision to present other school improvements through this model.
- The school have successfully consulted parents and children in their development of whole school vision, values and aims. Feedback was constructive and positive and a child's version has been created to promote a clearer understanding and ownership for children.

- Children are beginning to be given opportunities to reflect and pupil voice is heard through pupil groups. This could now be extended to give more children the opportunity for meaningful reflection on their learning and teaching on a more frequent basis.

### **Capacity for Improvement**

There is a very positive ethos in Castlehill Primary with a very strong commitment from staff and the senior management team for continued improvement. Children are very polite and well behaved.

The school are well placed to continue to improve. There are a number of contributing factors which support this:

- A shared vision of how to move the school, LCR and nursery forward;
- A highly committed staff who are eager to support one another, engage in practitioner enquiry and take part in professional dialogue;
- Good relationships between staff and pupils;
- Commitment to learning and teaching driven by the Senior Management Team.
- Enthusiastic and confident pupils who are eager to learn.