

Argyll and Bute Council Community Services: Education



Follow Through Report on the Inspection of Taynult Primary School

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HMIE published a report on Taynuilt Primary School in February 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 point 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

Taynuilt Primary School serves the village of Taynuilt and the surrounding area. There have been no significant changes in the roll, number of children entitled to free meals and attendance.

There have been significant changes in management since the original inspection. During session 2007- 2008 the head teacher was on a secondment two days per week. Throughout that time, the principal teacher was acting head teacher. The head teacher left his post in mid June 2008 to take up post as a Quality Improvement Officer for the authority and a new head teacher took up post in August 2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The warm, enthusiastic and supportive ethos of the school.
- The confidence of pupils and their enthusiasm for learning.
- The widening range of pupils' learning experiences.
- Excellent relationships and the quality of pastoral care.
- Strong and productive partnerships with parents, the community and other schools.
- Leadership of the head teacher and the strong teamwork of all staff.

3. Examples of good practice

- A two day inter-agency conference on Puberty and Child Protection held at the school for all Primary 6/7 pupils from the three co-op primary schools allowed children to demonstrate a high level of development in the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Community involvement in a World War II interdisciplinary study, culminating in a themed tea-party event for retired residents, strengthened community links.
- A primary 6/7 enterprise project resulted in the production of a cookery book. This involved the children making recipes at home. Subsequently, parents were invited to the school for a “sampling session,” and had the opportunity to purchase the cookery book in aid of school funds.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Children are confident and all are making good progress. They are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons. Children have regular opportunities to work together in groups and share ideas. Children’s learning experiences have become more relevant through linking learning across the curriculum. Through a variety of opportunities, such as the organisation of a Burns’ Breakfast and poetry competition, children have enhanced their knowledge and understanding of Scottish literature.

Staff provide an increased variety of interesting and challenging learning opportunities, particularly in mathematics. Children are encouraged to be actively involved in the learning process. For example, children developed motivating mental maths games and

then presented these to others at an assembly. Real life contexts are used where possible to help children reinforce their learning. Use of the outdoor environment to enhance children's learning is being encouraged.

Attainment in English language and mathematics is high and continues to improve. Staff regularly review attainment for individual children to ensure a good pace of learning and appropriate challenge.

Children can confidently explain their learning targets and progress towards achieving them. Personal learning planning is being further developed to improve the target setting and review process following parental feedback.

Children have increased their use of information and communication technology, gaining confidence in the use of digital cameras and use of the internet to support their work in inter-disciplinary projects. Primary 3/4 successfully created a Roald Dahl movie to develop their expertise in the use of technology. This was then presented to younger members of the school.

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

Teamwork among staff is strong. They continue to care for children very well and support them appropriately in their learning. The staff have had opportunities to enhance their training in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. They have had opportunities to share good practice and to work together to evaluate and improve their teaching and classroom practice. This sharing of good practice is to be further developed by staff visits to neighbouring schools. The staff are focusing on developing confidence, responsibility, leadership and independence in children through the provision of opportunities for

them to plan, organise and work together cooperatively. Classes have presented information on European countries to others and planned a day for the school centred on a drugs awareness theme.

Pre Five and school staff are planning and working together to establish good links. This has resulted in regular early level active learning play sessions. This has enabled staff to share expertise and develop their knowledge of the children's learning needs.

New developments have ensured that parents have an even stronger role in the learning partnership. Revised arrangements for open parents' evenings were very popular and provided parents with the opportunity to become familiar with their children's learning in the classroom. Parents have opportunities to visit classrooms to take part in curricular activities, such as an Egyptian morning. Children also present aspects of their learning at assemblies and these are very well attended by parents. There was a very positive response from parents to the new reporting format, which is linked closely to Curriculum for Excellence and was devised following consultation with staff, parents and children.

Links with the community police have enabled the development of clan football as an afterschool event. This partnership will be further extended through the cycling proficiency scheme.

Opportunities have been taken to enable children to work with specialists to enjoy a series of samba drumming sessions, which culminated in a performance to the parents and a whole school audience.

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

Children enjoy many opportunities to influence the life and work of the school and community. Children are encouraged to make choices

about their learning, such as which topics they would like to do. This is being further developed through children having a greater role in the planning and organisation of the topics.

The school has a strong pupil council which is involved in many activities to improve the school community. They have been actively engaged in developing revised school rules. Playtimes have been improved by new ideas on wet playtime routines. Children in primary 5/6 have undertaken training as playground buddies through working with Active Schools. The school is continuing to develop this aspect.

The knowledge and understanding among children on health and well-being issues was commented on and recognised through the award of level 3 Health Accreditation. Children at the early stages have been involved in piloting an active learning resource which ensures regular physical activity within the classroom environment. Children decide which charities the school will support, linked to topic work and areas of interest.

Staff regularly work together to help improve aspects of the life and work of the school and are strongly committed to improving children's learning. Classroom assistants provide very valuable support in classes. Morale in the school is very good.

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

Staff continue to set high expectations for children's attainment, behaviour and wider achievement. Children respond well to these high

expectations and are polite, respectful and well motivated. They take pride in their work and standards are high

Children actively contribute to their learning process by identifying their own achievements, strengths and development needs. Whole school gatherings take place where children present their learning to

parents. The school regularly celebrates the wide variety of the children's successes and achievements at assemblies. Children are encouraged to develop their talents and skills both in and out of school and a display area in the school has been dedicated to the celebration of wider achievements. These achievements are shared with parents through regular newsletters and parents are encouraged to pass on information on out of school achievements to staff.

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

Staff continue to provide a high quality education for all children through a broad and well balanced curriculum. There is a strong sense of vision and a clear direction for the school, which involves the whole school community. Children have been developing their understanding of how to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The very good leadership of the head teacher and the staff's support and commitment ensures that the school has a clear sense of direction.

9. What happens next?

As a result of the continued strong record of improvement and the very 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.

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Argyll and Bute Council
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