

St. David's RC Primary School

Kippielaw

Lauder Road,

Dalkeith

EH22 2PU

Tel: 0131 271 4675

Email: stdavids.ps@midlothian.gov.uk

Website: <http://stdavidsps.mgfl.net>

Twitter: @stdavidsprimary



Context of St. David's Primary School

Following an extremely positive evaluation with HMIe in August 2011, the school continues to build on the strengths identified:

- Well-behaved and polite children who are eager to learn and to work for the good of the school.
- The welcoming ethos, the effectiveness of support for learning and the good standard of pastoral care.
- Strong, effective leadership from the headteacher who is supported by staff who work well as a team

Following a period of consistency since August 2011, there has been a significant change in staffing at the start of session 2013-2014 as a result of promotion within the team and an additional class. In August 2013, the Principal Teacher secured a promotion to Head Teacher within Midlothian Council. A class teacher was then successful in promotion to Principal Teacher of our school, and one of our two temporary class teachers secured a permanent position at the school, highlighting the strength in leadership opportunity and the capacity for improvement provided within St. David's.

An increasing school roll resulted in an increase from six to a seven-class structure from August 2013. In total, 6 new appointments from seven classes were made: a new Principal Teacher, four class teachers and one newly qualified teacher were appointed between April and June 2013 to commence from August 2013.

A review of the Council's allocation of support staff resulted in an increase to four Learning Assistants from August 2013 in order to best support children's learning experiences and reflect the school's increasing SIMD rating.

The school's FME rating increased from 29% in 2013 to 31% in 2014.

The number of pupils where English is an additional language, has increased from less than 1% in 2006 to 10% in 2014.

In collating the Standards and Quality Report the school has drawn upon a range of sources. This includes children's ongoing assessment, feedback received from children, parents, school staff and other partners. A planned programme of visits to share classroom experiences by the Head Teacher, School Group Manager, colleague Head Teachers and colleagues from other Midlothian schools; the schools' Educational Psychologist and class teachers have helped inform the Report also. This planned approach to self evaluation has ensured that very good progress has been made over the school session where strengths have been celebrated and next steps in the school's journey to excellence identified and recorded within the School Improvement Plan for Session 2014-2015.

The next section of the Report provides you with an overview of how well our children learn and achieve.

How well do children learn and achieve at St. David's QIs 1.1 and 2.1

Learning at St. David's is at the heart of decision-making in the school. The school values learning and all children, staff and parents have the opportunity to engage in supporting and challenging children's learning and development. This is evident through the school's vision, values and aims and the way in which these values are immersed in the ethos, life and work of the school. Classrooms and communal areas celebrate children's learning, are presented to a high standard and make connections within and across the curriculum. Classrooms are vibrant, well resourced and make very good use of the space and flexibility offered by an open-plan environment. They are welcoming and accessible for all children and encourage high expectations and help create the correct conditions for learning to take place.

The school has robust transition arrangements. This is imperative in managing the transition from multiple nursery establishments across Midlothian and Edinburgh to P1. In so doing, the school ensures that children's learning is responsive to their strengths and next steps. Successful strategies in literacy and numeracy observed through class visits have ensured that children made substantial progress and increased attainment from below Midlothian and National average at the start of P1 to significantly above both Midlothian and National figures based on ongoing observations and standardised assessments (PIPS) – this has remained consistent over the last three years. This good practice has been shared across the St. David's associated schools' group (ASG) and at Authority level through Literacy and Numeracy Champion teach meets and good practice events.

Class teachers maintain a variety of assessment evidence of what children say, write, make and do and combine both formative and summative assessment, respectively, in order to move children's learning forward. Assessment is planned for across all learning and collegiate planning and moderation across the school ensures appropriate pace and challenge of all learners. Standardised assessment is used to track progress over a period of time and to identify children's strengths and next steps. It is used as a means for dialogue with children also to affirm their self evaluation and identify next steps in learning and discuss how this is to be achieved. Class teachers also analyse individual, class and whole school progress comparative to local Authority and National figures. St. David's consistently achieves above both Midlothian and National averages and trends in the last few year years has seen an increase in children's attainment at P7 where National and Authority trends are for this to decline. As a next step it will be important to support children new to the school within P2-P5 stages in their understanding and application of number. Furthermore, it will be important for class teachers to ensure an appropriate balance of assessment, to analyse assessment information, to use assessments to inform next steps in learning and to feedback regularly to aid children identify their strengths and agree and plan next steps.

Class teachers value transition information and conversations in order to share professional judgements of children's progress and achievement as well as next steps. They plan learning experiences within and beyond the classroom environment thus ensuring opportunity for breadth, challenge and application of learning. Through classroom visits it is evident that meeting children's needs is of paramount importance. Activities are differentiated to suit the needs of all learners leading to increased engagement and success. Children with additional support needs benefit from targeted support and specialist resources. Excellent relationships

within the school: class teachers, support staff, support for learning teacher and partner agencies ensure that adults' expectations of children remain consistently high and ambitious and ensure consistent engagement with parents and the child themselves in planning and assessing learning and ensuring their needs are being progressed. Feedback with the learner, in particular, is integral to the success of the children's progress and class teachers ensure this is timely and specific to their needs and is shared with the child and other partners as appropriate.

Approaches to learning and teaching are varied and ensure the children are both supported and challenged, they reflect increased pace of learning and make learning engaging and enjoyable. High quality interactions observed through class visits and follow-up professional dialogue sessions with class teachers demonstrate a consistent approach to learning and teaching and are reflected in children's confidence and growing understanding of themselves as a learner evident through pupil focus group discussions.

Children reflect on prior learning; learning intentions are focused on learning and success criteria is explored and created with children, appropriate to their needs. Through discussions with individuals and focus groups, learners share that this makes them more aware of their learning, what is expected of them and how they are going to achieve. Children also commented on how they are responsible for assessing self and peers and how much this has helped them develop a greater understanding of themselves as a learner, their strengths and next steps.

Our planned programme of classroom visits confirms that all children have regular, planned opportunities to discuss their learning in class with peers, their class teacher and other adults. All children are fully involved in identifying what they know, want to know and what and how they wish to learn, guided by their class teacher. Well established transition at all stages and collegiate planning ensures that levels of pace and challenge is maintained. Children reflect regularly on their learning, celebrating their strengths and identifying their next steps.

All class teachers plan opportunities for children to present their learning to one another, to other classes and at whole school events and assemblies. This is extended further to a variety of audiences such as parents/carers and the wider community through 'sharing the learning' events where the children lead the adults through their learning.

All children share enthusiastically about the encouragement and support of all staff and how they enjoy opportunities to learn independently as well as being part of a team through, for example, cooperative learning approaches where they work together towards both academic and social skill development.

Next steps:

- *Ensure all children are aware of their strengths and next steps across all areas of learning and understand how they are going to achieve this*
- *Improve the use and effectiveness of questioning and further develop children's use of higher order questioning*
- *Support children new to the school within P2-P5 stages in their understanding and application of number*

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

QIs 5.1 and 5.3

Our planned programme of class visits confirms that children's learning experiences are very good in all classes. From regular discussions with staff, all class teachers are working confidently with Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to plan children's learning and when assessing and tracking children's individual progress. School staff communicate regularly with children and parents to share strengths and agree next steps.

Well established procedures are in place for supporting children's learning. Children with individualised education programmes (IEPs) are well supported in school. Parents/Carers have the opportunity to meet regularly with school staff and partner agencies to discuss progress and agree next steps. The Support for Learning (SfL) teacher meets regularly with the Head Teacher and class teachers, including learning assistants, and partner agencies, where appropriate, to discuss plans and next steps for supporting children's learning. This has impacted positively on children's learning and development as there is a shared, high expectation of each child and a common understanding of their strengths and next steps. The children also benefit from the use of child-friendly IEPs where strengths and next steps are communicated and displayed in a manner appropriate for the child and developed by the child thus ensuring ownership. Continuing this excellent practice through regular liaisons with class teachers and support for learning will impact further positive outcomes for children. Furthermore, the SfL teacher has been working with partner Midlothian schools and SfL teachers and partners in Borders Council sharing this good practice.

Transitions from Nursery – Primary 1 and P6 to Secondary School are well established and impact positively for all children, especially those with additional support needs. The Head Teacher, Support for Learning Teacher and the new Primary 1 class teacher visit all nursery establishments regularly throughout the pre-school year and liaise closely with each establishment and with other partner agencies, especially those children identified with ASN. The school leads an open week in October for all parents/carers to visit the school, discuss their child's learning and development with the Head Teacher and observe learning and teaching in classrooms. In so doing, the children and parents are able to develop a connection with the school and to witness its values first-hand. This has contributed positively when communicating our vision and values with our new families and immersing them in the ethos, life and work of the school.

All pre-school children and their parents/carers attend transition visits in the summer term. Feedback from parents/carers and school staff confirm that this is an extremely worthwhile experience in helping to prepare the children as fully as possible for a smooth transition to Primary 1. Enhanced transition visits for children with additional support needs are planned for in consultation with parents/carers and partner agencies. The Head Teacher attends all meetings for children with additional support needs in their pre-school year. Between April and May, the class teacher observes and meets with all children individually in their nursery environment and discusses their progress and next steps with each establishment. The impact of this is evident in the ease with which the children and their families engage with the school and the school community from day one of Primary 1. Children's needs are being supported throughout the transition and all staff are aware of needs in order to maintain consistent approach from pre-school to Primary 1.

Children are provided with many opportunities to lead within the school community. Many opportunities exist for children to take on additional responsibilities such as Pupil Council, House Captains, Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs), Playground Activity Leaders (PALs) and Eco Committee. Primary 4 act as the steering group for the school's promotion and awareness raising of Fair Trade, presenting to peers and the local and wider community as well as planning and implementing whole school events. This has impacted very positively on the school's evolving programme of global citizenship as well as raising the profile of fair-trade within the local and wider community and the school attaining '*Fair Trade School Status*'. The efforts of P1-7 in learning more about children's rights and responsibilities through UNICEF's Rights Respecting School led to level 1 achievement and recognition of commitment.

All St. David's High Associated Schools' Group (ASG) staff has been involved in developing a new transition approach from P6-S1. Enhanced transition commences from P6 and a series of learning experiences across all aspects of Secondary school are enjoyed over the final two years of primary school including Maths and Numeracy Challenge, Library Skills and Health and Wellbeing. Guidance staff meet with the Primary 7 class teacher and SfL teacher to discuss every child's strengths and next steps. S1 representatives meet with the Primary 7 children to discuss their experiences of Secondary school and give a child's perspective. The impact of this following feedback from P7s has been positive and has helped ease anxieties and worries associated with the transition to Secondary school. P7 profiles are shared with St. David's High School (SDHS) for use in the first few weeks within form classes in S1. Feedback from Secondary staff and former P7 children has been that it has allowed them to share first-hand their strengths and next steps, their skills and qualities and how they learn best.

Next steps:

- *Ensure all children are aware of their strengths and next steps across all areas of learning and understand how they are going to achieve this*
- *Enhance the relationships with the partner nursery establishments and*
- *Build on the very good pastoral transition from Primary 6 to Secondary school with a focus on Health and Wellbeing – developing resilience – for session 2014-2015.*
- *Development of 1+2 Languages capacity within the St. David's ASG year 1 of 3*

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

QI 5.9

Self evaluation is an integral part of the life and work of St. David's and the school's commitment to continuous improvement.

Staff provide a high level of support for one other and are keen for the school to continue to improve. All staff have very clear leadership roles within the whole school, from their classroom learning and teaching, organisation and management to taking the lead in curricular development and school improvement action plans. They take pride in their school and their roles within the team to ensure high expectation at all levels. The impact of this is evident in the communication and teamwork experienced daily and through professional dialogue sessions. It has helped build leadership capacity within the school for sustainable and continuous improvement. As a result, school staff have been identified for further leadership opportunities within the St. David's ASG, Midlothian Council and 4 class teachers have been accepted onto a partnership with University of Edinburgh, developing Teacher Leadership in the past two years.

Support staff provide a high level of support to class teachers and to children's learning. They feel valued and know the importance of their contribution to the life and work of the school. They communicate regularly with class teachers and liaise closely in planning and reviewing children's learning and progress. The impact of this is in the quality of support provided for all learners, particularly those identified with targeted support. It is also in the confidence and self esteem of support staff in feeling valued and important members in supporting children and improving the school. They are proud of the school and their contribution to making it even better.

The Sfl teacher provides a high quality support of children, school staff and is valued and respected by children and parents. The Sfl teacher and Learning Assistant gained valuable skills alongside Midlothian's Literacy Support Team in supporting and challenging children who were underperforming in literacy at First Level. This experience increased confidence and understanding and when further developed across the school has ensured that a wider group of children and staff benefit from the professional learning opportunity by transferring these approaches to challenge others who were underperforming.

Partnerships with St. David's High School (SDHS) continue to strengthen with a Depute Head Teacher working alongside the HT, school staff and School Group Manager to evaluate learning and teaching in both schools as part of the schools' programme of class visits. This is beneficial in establishing sustainable support networks, enhancing communication and sharing expectations of learning across the Primary and Secondary sectors, whilst sharing experiences and expertise in learning and teaching and in specialist areas, respectively.

Two class teachers led the introduction of the ASG improvement agenda for 2014-2015 developing resilience within Health and Wellbeing and will continue to lead this with two colleagues from SDHS.

From regular planned discussions with learners through the 'PuLSE' (Pupils Leading Self Evaluation), we know that almost all children at St. David's are highly motivated and eager to learn. Almost all children speak confidently about the different approaches to learning they experience. A learning rounds approach to self evaluation involving colleague Head Teachers and class teachers from partner Midlothian schools as well as our Educational Psychologist, a Depute Head Teacher, SDHS and our School Group Manager, confirms that all classes make

effective use of active and cooperative approaches to help engage learners more in their learning. Most learners can confidently identify their strengths and next steps. The Head Teacher and three class teachers were involved in reciprocal visits to partner schools to enhance this learning opportunity and provide the foundation for further capacity building within the staff team.

The Head Teacher has a clear vision as to how he wants to see the school develop – a vision shared by staff and the whole school community who work extremely well together in improving outcomes for all children at St. David's. The Head Teacher provides a high level of support to staff and children who, in turn, support and challenge one another.

There is significant evidence that staff, parents and pupils are clear about their roles and responsibilities. This will enable the school to deliver improved outcomes for all pupils and aim to enhance leadership capacity at all levels as the new staff team embed their practice within and beyond the school community.

Next steps:

- *Review the schools' vision, values and aims with pupils, parents, partners and school staff*
- *Develop and enhance the self evaluation skills of all learners*
- *Ensure all learners develop and enhance these skills through self and peer evaluation and improve their understanding and awareness of themselves as a learner*
- *Engage children more in the evaluation of school improvement priorities at individual class level*