



School Improvement Report

2016 -2017

MELROSE
PRIMARY SCHOOL



Context of the School

Melrose Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the Scottish Borders serving the town of Melrose, surrounding villages and rural areas. It is part of the Earlston cluster schools within the Earlston High School catchment area. There are eight primary schools and one secondary school within the cluster. Almost all children from Melrose Primary School transfer to Earlston High School for secondary education.

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence are at the heart of our planning and there is an emphasis on breadth, challenge and depth of learning. We recognise children as individuals and use our expertise to meet individual learner needs. We want our children to develop respect for themselves and to realise their importance and uniqueness in society, so that they grow into confident members of the communities in which they will live. A significant part of our programmes cover the teaching of core skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing which can then be transferred and applied in a range of contexts across other areas of the curriculum.

Melrose Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provides for up to sixty 3 and 4 year olds. The ELC environment is organised in a way that encourages children to play, learn and explore. Each area is carefully planned and includes various open-ended resources that encourage creative and critical thinking. Prior knowledge, curiosity and enquiry are used to constantly develop and resource the areas.

Our vision is 'To be the best we can be'.

This vision is embedded in our school's aims to:

- create a welcoming and happy environment where all achievement is celebrated
- listen to and consider all points of view
- provide a variety of stimulating opportunities and experiences to maximize potential
- equip children with the skills for life and for the future
- recognise and support different styles of learning and teaching
- work in partnership within our school and the wider community

Our values guide the way we work. Together we will:

- respect and look after each other and the world around us
- create a challenging, engaging and responsive environment
- provide a safe, supportive and inclusive community where we value everyone
- build on the strengths, interests and aspirations of all
- promote equal opportunities, respect diversity and value the special contribution everyone can make
- actively encourage and promote health and well being

At Melrose Primary School the Scottish Attainment Challenge Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) will be used to assist the delivery of a cluster approach to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. The approach will focus on research based interventions which address the barriers faced by our learners.

School priority 1: Raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy:

Develop a shared understanding of standards in literacy and numeracy to make confident professional judgements about levels of attainment.

NIF Priority

Improvement in attainment, particularly in numeracy and literacy

NIF Drivers

School improvement

HGIOS 4 Q.I's

3.2. Raising attainment and achievement

Progress and impact:

Mathematics

Learner's skills are being developed progressively through the use of a mathematics framework. A tracking system was developed; the system tracks pupil progress and pace of learning.

Interrogation of data and teachers self-evaluation identified that:

- the gap is closing for those working below the National expectations in understanding and knowledge
- for those working above the National expectations there needs to be increased challenge and improved opportunities for problem solving and enquiry.

We engaged parents/carers to further develop their understanding of teaching and learning of numeracy through a curriculum information evening and written guidance about the teaching and learning. Feedback identified the need to engage with parents/carers in alternative and innovative ways.

Literacy

Listening and talking

Teachers engaged with National benchmarks and professional discussion which increased their understanding of the progression of skills and their confidence in making end of level judgements about achievement of a level. Procedures and resources are in place for the moderation of group discussion skills across all levels. Teachers engaged in peer observation and professional discussion relating to pupils working beyond the expected level further developing their confidence and understanding of National standards based on valid and reliable evidence.

Writing

Teachers engaged with National benchmarks and professional discussion which resulted in a review of our school procedures for assessment and moderation of writing. The criteria were revised in line with National benchmarks for end of level achievement. Procedures for the ongoing assessment and moderation of writing were also revised and changes agreed within the Personal Learning Planning process. Examples of writing were used for professional discussion and moderation using the revised criteria, teacher confidence and understanding of standards and making judgements were increased.

Through professional discussion the tracking of progress has been streamlined ensuring the focus is on the identification of appropriate strategies to support and challenge pupils.

Critical literacy

The planned development work was evaluated in line with the publication of the National benchmarks for literacy. The decision was made to focus on moderation within listening and talking and writing.

Quality Assurance

We developed a responsive and differentiated approach to the quality assurance of teaching and learning which facilitated valuable professional discussion. The impact resulted in teachers making changes to their practice. Pupils across all stages had increased opportunities to lead their learning with higher levels of engagement and pupil choice. The planned review of the school monitoring and tracking system was superseded by a decision at cluster level. A system is being created at cluster level to ensure consistency of approach across all schools.

Reporting

Changes were made to our reporting procedures based on new National guidance in September 2016. Children, parents/carers and teachers were consulted about current practice. The resulting evidence identified the value of reporting through the Personal Learning Plan (PLP). An extremely high percentage (98%) of parents/carers responded positively to the effectiveness of reporting through the PLP. The long written report was seen as the least effective method of reporting progress and achievement. Clarity about pupil progress towards the attainment of a level is shared through parents/carer teacher consultations and yearly written summary.

Next steps:

Mathematics

- Those working above the National expectations challenge to be increased
- Improve opportunities for pupils to transfer and apply numeracy skills within problem solving and enquiry
- Develop alternative and innovative ways to engage parents/carers to improve their understanding of teaching and learning

Literacy

Listening and talking

- Further embed teaching approaches and methodology of group discussion skills to ensure consistency of listening and talking experiences across all stages.
- Peer observation and moderation of group discussion skills, focus to be on pupils who are borderline below or on track to achieve the expected level.

Writing

- Moderation of writing using the revised criteria

Critical literacy

- Further develop practice in applying and transferring critical literacy skills across the curriculum
- Further develop practice of moderation

Reporting

- Develop parents/carers understanding of National expectations
- Further develop parents/carers understanding of how to support their child's learning
- Quality assurance of reporting through the PLP process

School priority 2: Vision, values and aims:

The school and the community have a shared vision, values and aims for the school.

NIF Priority

Improvements in children's health and wellbeing

NIF Drivers

School leadership

HGIOS 4 Q.I's

1.3 Leadership of Change

Progress and impact:

Children, staff, parents/carers and the Melrose community were consulted during vision, values and aims (VVA) consultation work.

A representative working group of children, staff, parent/carers and the Melrose community analysed the consultation responses and produced revised VVA statements ready for implementation throughout session 2017/2018. A basic operational plan for implementation was discussed. This collaborative approach effectively involved the whole school community in our VVA.

Plans for imagery and graphic designs were completed by a local graphic designer. Quotes for visual displays are being completed with associated works planned for the summer holidays.

As a result of this active collaboration the school and community have ownership of our revised VVA.

Next steps:

Translate VVA into daily practice within the school.

Ensure future improvement decisions are underpinned by VVA.

School priority 3: Practitioner enquiry and professional learning:

Staff engage in professional learning to develop a collective understanding of standards, pedagogy, assessment and strategies for raising attainment.

NIF Priority

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children

NIF Drivers

Teacher professionalism

HGIOS 4 Q.I's

1.2 Leadership of learning

Progress and impact:

Through collegiate working and professional dialogue, teachers are confident in discussing how they have improved their practice as a result of their professional learning activities.

Teachers accessed educational research and applied the findings to their personal enquiries.

A range of data was used to measure the impact for learners. This included both qualitative and quantitative information gathered through the enquiry. From the self-evaluation, teachers identified more time should be given to allow for systematic analysis of data focussing on improvement.

Through engagement in professional learning (practitioner enquiry) staff have developed a deeper understanding of pedagogy, thus ensuring that the needs of learners are better understood and met.

Teachers are at varying stages of developing their skills as enquiring practitioners.

Next steps:

Structure development time in a way that ensures enquiries are regularly revisited throughout the year:

- more time to be given
- time to be distributed across school year
- time to gather research and analyse evidence

Practitioner enquiry to be linked to school and national development priorities.

Ensure that practitioner enquiry impacts on school and national development priorities and professional dialogue to be strategically planned.

Key Improvement Priorities for 2017-18

Evaluate the following Q.I.'s against the six point scale:

Excellent	this aspect of the school's work is outstanding, high quality and sector-leading.
Very Good	major strengths, very few areas for improvement
Good	important strengths, yet there remains some aspects which require improvement.
Satisfactory	the strengths within this just outweigh the weaknesses, basic provision for learners
Weak	important weaknesses, there may be some strength, the important weaknesses, either individually or collectively, are sufficient to diminish learners' experiences in substantial ways
Unsatisfactory	major weaknesses within which require immediate remedial action

Quality indicator	School self-evaluation	Inspection evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Good	
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good	
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Good	
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good	
Any other Q.I		
1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	Good	
1.2 Leadership of learning	Good	
2.2 Curriculum	Good	
2.5 Family learning	Good	
2.7 partnerships	Good	

Our capacity for continuous improvement is:

Good

- We have a clear understanding of where we are in terms of school improvement and our next steps
- We are realistic about our capacity for improvement and are able to prioritise effectively, keeping both the learner and the development of their core skills at the centre of improvement decisions
- We have a collaborative approach to self-evaluation and are responsive to the school's improvement needs
- There is a strong focus on improving learning amongst staff across the school
- We have high quality professional dialogue embedded in our practice

List the key priorities for 2017-18 which will feature in your school improvement plan for 2017-18:

- PEF
- Raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy (moderation and teaching and learning)
- Practitioner enquiry and professional learning (teaching and learning)
- Early Years

