



Castletown Primary School

Standards and Quality Report

The Highland Council
Education, Culture and Sport Service
Caithness Area

Session: 2010-2011

Our school vision and values

Our Vision

Castletown Primary School prides itself of making every effort to meeting the needs of all pupils. These needs, whether they be academic, social, personal or emotional form a common thread that runs through all activity. We try to create a supportive atmosphere where success at all levels and in all domains is valued and where pupils recognise the achievements and successes of others. We have a school where there is laughter and enjoyment, fairness and equality. We aim to offer the highest quality of teaching and learning so that we maximise attainment and achievement for all. We are a school which responds quickly and fairly to incidents and to concerns and where parents feel their voice is being heard and their opinions respected. Our school supports its staff and fosters a team ethos where reflection and openness are characteristic. The staff, both teaching and non teaching, form a team who co-operate effectively in the best interests of the pupils. Our school is forward looking and optimistic. We offer a rich and varied curriculum and exploit opportunities that arise during the school year. The curriculum is always under review and evolves to meet the changing needs of our pupils. We aim to place our school at the heart of its community and to create effective and long lasting bonds with the residents of Castletown.

Our aims

- 1. Castletown Primary School aims to be a happy and dynamic learning environment in which pupils are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Every member of our school community should be treated equally and with respect.**
- 2. Learning and caring are at the heart of school activities, both formal and informal. We aim to promote a positive attitude to learning, to encourage pupils to be proud of their school, to celebrate their own efforts and achievements and those of others and to feel that all their contributions are valued.**
- 3. Through effective learning and teaching we aim to raise attainment by providing a variety of challenging experiences that cater for all our pupils' needs and prepare them to take an active role in their life long learning.**
- 4. We want our pupils to become active and caring citizens who respect the needs and feelings of members of their own community and understand the responsibility they have within the wider community. Our pupils are encouraged to be involved in the community and we welcome members of the community into school. We value the contributions they make and the example they set in providing positive role models.**
- 5. We value the role parents play in encouraging pupils to become independent and enthusiastic learners. With open and honest dialogue we will work together to support our pupils and provide good quality resources to enhance their learning.**
- 6. We aim to provide a professionally fulfilling environment for all staff, teaching or ancillary. All staff are encouraged to work together as an effective team within an atmosphere of mutual support. Opportunities for professional development are given a high priority.**
- 7. We aim to work closely with other agencies in order to meet the needs of every child and, with them, help overcome obstacles to learning and successful development.**

Our Key Strengths

- Attainment is as high as, or higher than, that of comparator schools and our ASG. This is evident from statistical returns over the last few years (5-14). Attainment has remained consistently at this level. Each Stage of the school demonstrates a broadly similar consistency of attainment.
- The School Improvement Plan has clear and manageable targets. It recognises the impact of high quality learning and teaching in raising performance and builds reflection and self evaluation into the process.
- Academic, social, emotional and personal successes of children are identified. Opportunities are consistently used to recognise the educational value of such successes and to build upon them in school. Pupils are involved in activities such as the Pupil Council, house teams and J.R.S.O. etc. There is a newly established 'House' system. Children play a part in the wider community through taking part in the Music Festival, Christmas Shows, Charitable Events and Active School events.
- Almost all learners are motivated and keen to learn. (Questionnaire 3/2011). The Accelerated Reading programme motivates many pupils to read for enjoyment. Collaborative and Active Learning strategies are now being developed in classroom practice.
- Vulnerable children and children with learning support needs are well supported. Activities are suitably differentiated and appropriate targets are set. Learning progress is tracked and reviewed regularly and all pupils who require a Child's Plan or an Individual Education Programme (IEP) have these in place in full consultation with parents. Rigorous application of GIRFEC is evident in meetings and minutes. Effective inter agency working occurs where the need arises. A Review of the role of the support for learning teacher was undertaken in March and a more strategic role adopted. There is an effective management plan in place to monitor and support individual needs and plan and assess the work of auxiliary staff. Time is allocated for regular meetings between the Support for Learning Teacher, class teachers, auxiliary staff and the head teacher.
- Almost all children feels they are encouraged to work as hard as they can and that teachers tell them how to improve their learning. They understand what is expected of them in school and classroom (Questionnaire Mar 11). Children overwhelmingly feel they are understood as individuals by a teacher, that they are safe and happy in school and are well cared for and liked by staff. (Questionnaire Mar 11)
- Parent questionnaires (Apr 2011) reveal a high level of overall satisfaction with the school. The majority believe their children are well cared for, are encouraged to work hard, are treated fairly and are understood as individuals. Parents also believe that the school responds well to issues or concerns.

Our Current Priorities For Improvement

- **To develop interdisciplinary and contextualised learning** in order to maximise opportunities available within the curriculum. To review timetables and to explore alternative structures to the day. To embed formative assessment techniques into day to day working and to develop and apply generic and subject specific thinking skills and problem solving approaches across the curriculum.
- **To develop systematised self evaluation** within the school improvement plan. To make more explicit the self evaluative components of the SIP and to build staff capacity and confidence in self evaluation. To develop scheduled and systematic co-operative planning and evaluation. To establish planned opportunities for joint working and class visits
- **To continue to develop and implement a Curriculum for Excellence effectively across all areas.**
- **To extend and develop the role of the school in the community and improve parent / school communication.** To utilise the outcomes of formative techniques to provide information for pupils and parents and to put in place a means of communicating effectively about individual progress and achievement.
- **To monitor and review of management structures for support for learning** in order to ensure we continue to meet needs effectively. To extend Makaton training into mainstream school
- **To develop nursery / P1 work at Early Level and to work with the ASG to develop cross phase working at P6/7 to S1/2 particularly with regard to learning and teaching.**

The Core Areas of our Practice

This report summarises the strengths of our school and what needs to improve. We gather this information throughout the year in a variety of ways so we can make sure our report is as accurate as possible. We take time to compare what we do with national examples of best practice. We visit each others' classes to share standards in learning and teaching. We look at children and young people's work to see how they are progressing. We make use of factual data and information including attainment results. We gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We use all of this information to arrive at our view of the quality of education we provide.

Improvements in performance

Our key strengths are:

- Attainment is as high as, or higher than, that of comparator schools and our ASG. This is evident from statistical returns over the last few years (5-14).
- Attainment has remained consistently at this level.
- Key Stages of the school demonstrate the same consistency of attainment.
- The School Improvement Plan has clear and manageable targets. It recognises the impact of high quality learning and teaching in raising performance and builds reflection and self evaluation into the process.
- Academic, social, emotional and personal successes of children are identified. Opportunities are consistently used to recognise the educational value of such successes and to build upon them in school.

Our required improvements are:

- To develop interdisciplinary and contextualised learning in order to maximise opportunities available within the curriculum and to encourage generic and subject specific thinking skills.
- To develop strategies to foster closer communication between school and home. A number of parents felt that communication about how children were progressing could be improved. (Parent Questionnaire Mar 11).

Learners' experiences

Our key strengths are:

- Almost all learners are motivated and keen to participate in their learning.
- The Accelerated Reading programme motivates pupils to read for enjoyment.
- Collaborative and Active Learning strategies are now being developed in classroom practice
- Pupils are involved in activities such as the Pupil Council, house teams and J.R.S.O. etc. There is a newly established 'House' system.
- Children play a part in the wider community through taking part in the Music Festival, Christmas Shows, Charitable Events and Active School events.
- Vulnerable children are supported by excellent Support for Learning Assistants. Activities are suitably differentiated and appropriate targets are set with pupils. Learning progress is tracked and reviewed regularly and all pupils who require IEPs have these in place in full consultation with parents.
- Almost every child feels they are encouraged to work as hard as they can and that teachers tell them how to improve their learning. (Questionnaire Mar 11)

Our required improvements are:

- To extend and develop the role of the school in the community and foster more effective parent / school links
- To embed formative assessment techniques into day to day working and utilise the outcomes of formative techniques to provide information for pupils and parents.
- To review learning and teaching in order to foster a greater sense of success in the classroom and to raise levels of interest and motivation amongst the small number of children who do not feel successful or do not find most school work interesting. (Questionnaire Mar 11).
- To continue to develop listening and group working skills amongst pupils. Whilst children are more attentive and show good skills in teacher led activity, some pupils still feel their voice is not heard in independent group work.

Meeting learning needs

Our key strengths are:

- Rigorous application of GIRFEC evident in meetings and minutes
- Effective inter agency working where the need arises
- The role of SLT. A review was undertaken in March and a more strategic role adopted.
- An effective management plan in place to monitor and support individual needs and plan and assess the work of auxiliary staff.
- Time allocated for regular meetings between the Support for Learning Teacher, class teachers auxiliary staff and the head teacher.
- Almost all children feel their teachers help them to learn and tell them how to improve their learning.

Our required improvements are:

- Updating and simplifying of secure storage of SL files in school and nursery.
- Development of resources to meet needs.
- Extension of Makaton training into mainstream school.

- To continue to evaluate, monitor and review management structures to ensure learning needs are met.

The curriculum

Our key strengths are:

- Transition arrangements from nursery to P1 and from P7 to S1 are good. Information is communicated effectively and a programme of transition meetings ensures individual needs are met.
- A programme of work which implements a Curriculum for Excellence in maths and language is in place. Strategies have been discussed to improve its implementation. There is a new spelling programme, a grammar continuum and a clear marking policy.
- A programme of learning contexts has been discussed and implemented.
- Staff are highly motivated to improve their knowledge of the new curriculum.
- Staff have begun to develop their knowledge of GLOW (A National Website for staff and pupils).

Our required improvements are:

- To continue to develop and implement a Curriculum for Excellence across all areas.
- To enhance the opportunities for cross curricular learning.
- To develop nursery / P1 work at Early Level.
- To work with the ASG to develop cross phase working at P6/7 to S1/2, particularly with regard to Learning and Teaching.
- To review learning and teaching and the curriculum in order to increase motivation amongst a minority of children who do not find school work interesting. (Pupil Questionnaire Mar 11)
- To review timetables and to explore alternative structures to the day to include inter disciplinary and contextualised learning.
- To develop and extend a practical understanding of GLOW.

Improvements through self-evaluation

Our key strengths are:

- Self evaluation is implicitly built into the School Improvement Plan
- The School Improvement Plan is clearly targeted, regularly reviewed and offers a strategic overview,
- Staff are aware of the importance of self evaluation and have a positive and pro-active attitude towards it.
- The staff team is capable of open and frank discussion
- There is evidence in the outcome of working parties and staff CPD that teachers are responding to their own and collective identification of need.

Our required improvements are:

- To build systematised self evaluation into the school improvement plan
- To organise scheduled and systematised co-operative planning and evaluation
- To plan, implement and build upon opportunities for joint working and class visits