

# **Summarised Inspection Findings**

**Ochil Tower School**

**SEED No: 5381142**

**09 May 2017**

## 1.3 LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE

very good

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people. The themes are:

- *Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community*
  - *Strategic planning for continuous improvement*
  - *Implementing improvement and change*
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- All staff across the school community share a strong commitment to ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people. Social pedagogy is at the core of practice and underpins the school's successful approach to developing positive relationships and creating an ethos in which everyone feels safe and valued. Through collegiate and collaborative working, staff have a very good understanding of the additional support needs of children and young people and are sensitive to the contexts of their lives and their previous educational experiences.
  - Throughout the school there is a culture of reflection and collegiate professional learning. Staff are committed to improving their practice, supporting their peers and using national guidance to help them reflect on their professional learning needs.
  - All staff across the school demonstrate through their practice, an ethos of respect for all pupils and the importance of strong and positive relationships with individual children as the cornerstone of teaching and learning. This results in a safe, caring environment in which children and young people are happy, enthusiastic and feel valued. The school should now work with the whole community to articulate and promote these values.
  - The management and organisational structures within the school promotes a culture of dispersed leadership and collaborative decision making. The joint coordinators work alongside teaching and support staff to encourage and promote an ethos in which staff take responsibility and ownership for key areas of improvement. The Teacher's College creates opportunities for teaching staff to reflect on their work, share practice and participate in collegiate professional learning. Staff are beginning to engage with GTCS professional standards to reflect on their practice and identify their professional learning needs. They should continue to engage with the GTCS standards and ensure that professional learning results in improved outcomes for learners.
  - The views of all stakeholders are valued and everyone is seen as an important contributor to improving the school. For example, young people were involved in developing outdoor learning spaces. Priorities for improvement are appropriate to the context of the school and staff have a lead role in identifying and taking forward areas for improvement. The school should continue to use national guidance to help develop a more evidence based approach to identifying priorities for improvement. The school, together with the Board of Governors, should ensure that they identify the

planned impact of changes and improvements and evaluate if they have led to improved outcomes for learners.

- The school is preparing for a period of change in terms of the management structure. There has been recognition of the potential impact of future changes to the senior leadership team and the need to include staff in future decisions about any organisational changes. This has resulted in an appropriately paced and well considered plan for transition in which all staff feel fully involved in ensuring continuity for the school.
- Staff demonstrate creative approaches to learning, teaching and engagement. They are reflective in evaluating their practice and are strongly supported by the joint coordinators to adopt practitioner enquiry approaches to support learning and teaching.

## 2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences for children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Learning and engagement*
  - *Quality of teaching*
  - *Effective use of assessment*
  - *Planning, tracking and monitoring*
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- There is a strong emphasis on positive relationships across the school. Staff have developed an extremely supportive climate to enable children and young people to improve their confidence and resilience and help prepare them to be ready and engaged in learning.
  - Staff make very good use of the opportunities available to assess and apply learning in the outdoor space and this has a positive impact on children's and young people's engagement and motivation.
  - In almost all lessons, children and young people are happy and engaged learners. They are active participants in well planned activities that are appropriately matched to their needs. Staff are highly effective at supporting the complex needs of children and young people in each class group. Most children and young people work independently on tasks where possible. Staff are skilled at supporting learners at appropriate stages of lessons. In the best examples, children and young people understand the purpose of their learning and can communicate what they are learning either verbally or with effective use of digital technology.
  - Almost all children and young people behave well and are supported effectively by staff to get back on task quickly if they disengage with their learning.
  - Children and young people exercise choice in their learning. The views and interests of children and young people are valued and acted upon and this is having a positive impact on their engagement in learning. For example, they were consulted on the new layout for the playground including purchasing of new resources and plan jointly for celebrations.
  - Learners also exercise choice through very effective use of digital technology which greatly enhances their communication. The school should consider developing further approaches to increasing pupil voice and consider including children's and young people's rights' education as part of learning.
  - Staff use a wide range of contexts and learning environments to enhance their teaching such as the village library, local shops and cafes and the school gardens.
  - Staff use praise effectively to help develop children's and young people's self-confidence and emotional resilience. In almost all lessons observed, the use of

questioning, which in some cases involved concrete prompts, was effective. Staff should continue to develop their questioning skills to ensure that it promotes curiosity, independence and confidence. Staff should further extend opportunities to help children and young people know what they have done well and what success looks like.

- Staff use a range of information to support planning of learning and teaching. This includes information about children's and young people's individual learning and social and emotional needs, interests and challenges. Staff communicate very well with each other about the children and young people in their classes.
- Staff assess children and young people individually using a range of assessment data and professional judgement to inform their teaching and planning. Given the complexity and individuality of children's and young people's needs, staff should continue to develop their approaches to assessment and moderation to enable them to use a wider range of evidence to identify what learners need to do next. For example, the provision of helpful oral, visual and written feedback would help children and young people become more aware of their next steps in learning and improve consistency across the school. The school has identified the need for further development of moderation practices and shared understanding of standards.

## **1.4 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF STAFF: theme 1**

### **Governance framework**

- The Board of Governors work closely with the school and demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of children and young people. They are providing very good support to the school as they enter a period of transition and changes to the organisational structure. The Board's role in this is helping to provide the infrastructure that will allow the changes to occur, whilst minimising risk.
- The joint coordinators submit detailed reports to the Board on a regular basis and these help members of the Board understand key issues. The Board should continue to work with the school to help identify and evaluate priorities for improvement. As the school continues to develop the curriculum, the Board should use the expertise of members to support and challenge the school and help them develop partnerships in the local community and beyond. The Board should continue to work with the school to evaluate the quality of provision and apply appropriate scrutiny to ensure children's and young people's needs continue to be met.

## 2.4 PERSONALISED SUPPORT: theme 2 Targeted Support

- The school identifies children's and young people's needs very well and all transitions into the school have an initial focus on supporting children and young people to establish positive relationships. Children and young people benefit from this approach as it clearly helps them to feel safe and ready to learn. Staff's effective assessment of learning needs and resulting in-depth knowledge of children and young people helps them to identify relevant strategies that are specific to each individual child and supports them to engage in and enjoy learning. All children and young people have a high quality care and education plan that incorporates learning and welfare targets, risk assessments and behaviour support plans. Staff use the plan well to ensure continuity and relevance in learning and a consistency of approach.
- Targeted support builds on the strong ethos and climate of mutual respect and is timely and relevant. Children and young people have appropriate long and short term targets in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Long term targets are referenced against literacy and numeracy experiences and outcomes. There is scope to incorporate more language and communication targets in planned learning.
- The school has a range of partners in the community who support children and young people as they practise skills in various contexts. The school has identified the need to develop these partnerships further to extend and formalise the opportunities and learning available. Parents are invited to attend reviews for children and young people and also to informal events. In particular, parents have enjoyed the family learning days where they have expressed that they feel more able to relax and enjoy spending time with their children. There is regular contact between the school and parents through telephone calls and email. The school also offers an online communication site for parents to link with the school and relevant professionals using a secure system and a few parents make use of this facility. For children and young people attending on a day placement, there is daily written home/ school communication although there is scope to develop this further to include pupil voice. Children and young people prepare a presentation for their reviews and, if appropriate, they attend and contribute in person.

## **2.1 SAFEGUARDING**

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and where appropriate, children and young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.



### 3.1 ENSURING WELLBEING, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

very good

This indicator reflects on the school's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
- *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
- *Inclusion and equality*

- The school community values the dignity and worth of each child and young person. Staff have created a calm, positive learning environment where children and young people feel listened to and valued. Ensuring the wellbeing of all children and young people is central to learning and the school is very effective in improving outcomes for children and young people. Almost all children and young people are improving their school attendance, engagement, and progress with learning in comparison with their previous education provision.
- All children and young people benefit from very positive relationships with staff that are based on mutual respect. Staff know and understand children and young people very well and plan learning activities that supports personalisation and choice and provides appropriate challenge. Staff are skilled at intervening to provide the right level of support. They have high expectations of children and young people and this is demonstrated in the highly personalised learning targets and detailed reports on progress. Outdoor spaces are used effectively to promote positive relationships and wellbeing.
- Children and young people feel included and valued as demonstrated by their increasing engagement and ability to lead learning. The very positive ethos across the school community helps to reduce the level of support required for most children and young people as they are able to take more responsibility for their learning. A wide range of flexible and responsive strategies are adopted to support children and young people to attend school and participate in their learning activities. Since starting at Ochil Tower, staff can demonstrate that children and young people have positive changes in their self-esteem, emotional stability, social confidence, and positive attitudes. This can be illustrated further by the consistently high levels of positive interaction across the school. Staff know and can demonstrate that all children and young people feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. The school should develop further the use of the wellbeing indicators to assess, track and report on children's and young people's progress.
- Children and young people are more able to recognise and take responsibility for communicating their emotions. Staff use of a range of communication and sensory supports very well to ensure that children and young people can understand, engage fully in their learning, and that they have a voice. Staff are increasing children's and young people's independence through the well-planned use of technology. There is scope to develop this further by giving more responsibility to staff for the use of

resources designed to improve children's and young people's social and communication skills. Children and young people are involved in reviewing their progress in learning regularly through reflection time, weekly reports and review meetings. Children and young people are able to take on leadership roles within the school community and contribute towards initiatives that make a positive impact to school life.

- The curriculum provides children and young people with some opportunities to explore diversity and different faiths. Staff discuss with individual children how to keep safe and healthy and children and young people have improved their fitness through healthy eating and increased physical activity. There is now a need to develop this further to include specific programmes for children and young people to develop their awareness and understanding of sexual health and what they need to do to keep safe and be responsible when using social media. Children and young people would also benefit from more curricular activities centred on safeguarding in areas including, child sexual exploitation and extremism. Children and young people are involved in a range of social initiatives which develops their awareness and understanding for the need for equality, diversity and social responsibility.

### 3.2 RAISING ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

very good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*
- *Attainment over time*
- *Overall quality of learner's achievement*
- *Equity for all learners*

- All children and young people have a care and education plan which details progress on all areas of the curriculum with a particular focus on health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. Almost all children and young people have made very good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy since beginning their placement at Ochil Tower.
- There is an increasing trend in the number and range of National Qualifications young people are achieving across all subject areas over time. Young people have successfully achieved a wide range of accredited qualifications and awards:
  - Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National 1-4 Personal Development Award and Personal Achievement Award
  - ASDAN Qualifications: Towards Independence, Transition Challenge Short Courses
  - ASDAN Awards: Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards, Focus Awards
  - Youth Development Scotland: Dynamic Youth Award, Youth Achievement Awards
  - Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society: Grow and Learn-Roots Award
- Almost all children and young people have made very good progress from their prior levels of attainment. A few young people who had no qualifications before their placement in Ochil Tower have, in a very short time, been successful in obtaining several SQA National awards. Staff track the children and young peoples' qualifications and awards effectively both individually and as a whole school. Staff in Ochil Tower have relentlessly worked to ensure that children and young people make the best possible progress given their significant additional support needs.
- A few children's and young people's attendance, prior to entry to Ochil Tower school was very low and for some, they were not attending their previous school at all. The attendance of almost all children and young people has improved.
- The school have been very successful in giving children and young people the security to achieve. Children and young people contribute well to the life of the school and have gained a wide range of skills. The close working relationships between house and school staff have ensured that children and young people are able to achieve essential life skills in a natural everyday setting. For example, having lunch with peers and staff for a sustained period of time.

- Staff at Ochil Tower have significantly promoted equity of success and achievement for almost all children and young people, taking into account their additional support needs. All children and young people engage in a range of school activities such as school assemblies, religious services and festivals. Children and young people successfully produced a school play “Peter and the Wolf” and performed to parents and people from the local community. This was a significant achievement for the children and young people. The school have successfully been involved in fundraising and donating food to animal centres and homeless units. For example, the children and young people harvest fresh products in the garden which they donate to the local animal centre. Children and young people subsequently visited the animal centre to feed the animals the food they grew themselves. This project allows children and young people to develop an understanding of the cycle of harvesting food. Staff should now look at further increasing children’s and young people’s opportunities by working more closely with partners in the community and investigating relevant college courses for young people. This may help young people move into more positive destinations when they leave school.
- Most young people attend a residential adult services provision when they leave the school. A few have been supported successfully in independent living accommodation. A few have also being supported at home and to attend college full time.

## **SCHOOL CHOICE OF QI: 2.1 SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION**

- Arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection
- Arrangements to ensure wellbeing
- National guidance and legislation

- The school recognises that ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people is a priority. As a result of regular and appropriate professional learning opportunities, staff understand their role in keeping children safe and carry out their duties with appropriate diligence and care. School policies and procedures reflect the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland. We have asked the school to make further use of the National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development guidance. Joint coordinators take responsibility for key aspects of child protection and safeguarding and ensure their own professional learning is updated to reflect national guidance and the needs of the school.
- Positive relationships and mutual respect create a culture in which children and young people are happy and safe. Pupils have access to a key worker and have a range of other staff who work closely with them. Children and young people are confident in voicing their opinions and feelings and staff respond appropriately. The health and wellbeing of children and young people is a key priority and all staff in the school and residences contribute to the pastoral care of pupils. Staff, including volunteers, have opportunities to understand the needs of children and young people and build relationships with them. As a result they are sensitive and responsive to issues which impact on children's and young people's physical, social and emotional wellbeing. As they continue to develop the curriculum, the school needs to ensure that programmes and courses build resilience, prepare children and young people for life beyond school and help them understand the challenges or risks they may encounter and how to deal with them.
- Staff have a good awareness of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe. Staff are beginning to use the wellbeing indicators to identify the strengths of pupils and we have asked them to further develop this work to help them identify next steps. Joint coordinators have a good awareness of legislation and national guidance and use it well to inform practice. Correct procedures and protocols are followed when incidents occur. Records are well maintained and appropriate agencies informed in the event of incidents.

### **PARTICULAR STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL**

- Staff across the school have created a nurturing environment based on shared values in which all children and young people are treated with respect. Staff recognise and build on the individual strengths of each pupil and use their interests well to help them engage in their learning.
- Staff are reflective in all aspects of their practice. They are responsive to the needs of learners and continually adapt their approaches to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- Staff and pupils make very good use of the learning environment, including outdoor spaces and the local community. This results in stimulating learning experiences which are enjoyable and relevant.
- The leadership of staff and organisational structure which results in collaborative approaches to improving the work of the school.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL**

- The school should continue with its work to develop and further improve the curriculum to ensure they are preparing young people for life after they leave the school. In taking this forward, staff should consider how they can better include partners in developing their curriculum to maximise opportunities for learning.
- The school has made a very good start in reviewing the progress that learners are making. Staff should continue with this work and develop ways in which they can best track the progress of children and young people to help them build on their learning.

### **WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE INSPECTION?**

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The Board of Governors will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.