

Yester Primary

Standards and Quality report June 2020



Context of the school

Yester Primary School has been in its current building since 1968. The school is in the village of Gifford in East Lothian but the majority of the pupils come from outwith the village and are transported in by bus. The school comprises a nursery room, 7 classrooms, a general purpose room (library) and hall with a stage area where lunches are served. At present the school roll is 170 accommodated in 7 straight classes and the nursery which has a capacity for 20/20. At present there are 13 pupils in the morning group and 12 in the afternoon. There is a full-time HT post and a PT who is fully class committed. Two specialists visit the school for one day a week for PE and Music, and P4-7 pupils have the opportunity to play violin. The school is supported by a very active Parent Council and a good working relationship has been established with them.

How good is our leadership and approach to improvement? (Q.I.1.3)

Themes:

Developing a shared vision, value and aims relevant to the school and its community.

All stakeholders were involved in an extensive consultation to revisit the core vision, values and aims. Taking into account the understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of Yester as a farming community, remotely situated in relation to other schools with a large cohort of pupils bussed in. As a small single stream school, pupils support each other in the playground, on the bus via bus prefects, with loose parts play, Friday whole school learning (cardboard challenge learning day), P6 and Nursery and P7 and P1 partnerships in learning. Through this lens the following vision, with aims and values were borne:

Our vision is: Nurturing learning and people

Our values are: Included Supported Successful

Our aims are: We are proud of our school and community. We care about everyone in our school. We encourage each other to do our very best in everything. We learn in a way that suits us best.

As a result of this active collaboration, the school and community have ownership of the vision, values and aims. Through effective leadership at all levels, our school community works together to turn the shared vision into a sustainable reality.

All staff are committed to ensuring that we achieve the highest possible standards and success for all learners. All staff have consistently high expectations of all learners in their achievements, success and behaviours. Extra curricular achievements are celebrated via whole school assemblies, Twitter, Google Classroom, cup of tea with the HT, amazing work board and musical showcase. CfE levels are tracked and monitored. Restorative approaches and training have ensured consistency of approach to behaviour. The Headteacher provided strong leadership through lockdown which has enabled our school and wider community to continue to learn in challenging circumstances.

Strategic planning for continuous improvement.

Leaders create conditions and opportunities where staff feel confident to initiate well-informed change and are committed to collective responsibility in the process of change. Whole school RWInc training and reflective changes to approaches to Big Writing has ensured positive outcomes for learners in a sustainable way. We ensure proposed changes demonstrate the interconnectedness of the school and community in improving learning and outcomes for children and young people. Through family learning walks, meet the teacher sessions, and Friday afternoon workshop sessions for all stakeholders we have communicated our new approaches to literacy and numeracy to achieve a shared understanding of change and raised attainment for all. With effective management and communication of change including the direction and pace, reduced the amount of anxiety for all stakeholders. We protect time for professional dialogue, collegiate learning and self-evaluation, so that all members of our school community can contribute to our plans for continuous improvement. Working with our QIO to interrogate the data, identifying trends and patterns, teaching staff gained confidence and a shared understanding of our SIMD data in context. Through this lens, other problem solving like how we moderate writing and assess secure at a level changed the way we work at Yester. Using a challenge and support approach with teaching staff, we created a climate of trust to be able to share feedback on trios of teaching, our shared classroom practise, an inclusive classroom using the circle document.

Implementing improvement and change.

Staff at all levels take responsibility for implementing change and promoting equality and social justice across all their work. Recent press coverage of 'black lives matter' was used as a springboard to cover curriculum areas relating to social justice. This is an example of dynamic and responsive teaching led by class teachers on Google Classroom. At Yester we create opportunities to encourage creativity, innovation and professional enquiry. Using play based learning in Primary 1, as well as the class teacher using this for her Professional Enquiry, gives full value to strategic change. Other staff are engaged in PE relating to CLPL. Staff work collaboratively in pupil leadership groups to develop approaches to effectively facilitate change for all learners at Yester underpinned by equity for all. An example of this is that our Charities Champions ensure that all activities promote equity in our learning community. Vertical leadership groups as well as the Headteacher Meeting Mats worked together to bring about change at Yester. These groups reported to parents at a Parent Council meeting and were responsible and informed a good discussion with parents as well as a lengthy Q and A.. Vertical groups will form our core approach across the school to implement Rights Respecting Schools and a connected curriculum. Using a skills based transition at key points in the school (Nursery and P7) as well as between year stages we aim to ensure that pupils are well equipped for change. We continually reflect on and develop our practice taking account of our self-evaluation and vision for continuous improvement. Staff, learners and partners engage regularly in critical and creative thinking. As a result, children and young people have developed increased capacity to respond and adapt to change. Collegiate support for RWInc for all staff involved as well as parents was planned for in various formats so that everyone understood how we planned to implement, teach and assess using this scheme. We have effective strategies in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of changes on outcomes for learners and the work of our school.

Future developments

- Blended Curriculum delivery underpinned by the Reopen and Reconnect website for our ELCC and the Connected Classroom for P1 - P7.
- Practitioner Enquiry will be further encouraged for all staff.

- Building on innovative approaches to Google Classroom during lockdown to inform the blended learning approach.

How good is the quality of the care and provision we offer? (Q.I.2.3)

Learning and engagement

At Yester we build our learning environment on nurturing relationships and learning from Nursery to P7. This is reflected in our school vision of 'Nurturing Learning and People'. All stakeholders are committed to developing deep and meaningful relationships in our wider community. The Gifford Community Woods, Bleachfield Park, Yester House Woods and the Village Hall are all an extension of our learning environment. Pupil engagement and participation in community events is valued and recognised in and out of school. Pupils display qualities such as resilience, intrinsic motivation, curiosity, full engagement, challenge and ultimately enjoyment. Thematic approaches using child centred planning and KWL walls where whole school interdisciplinary learning topics have been covered have resulted in sharing of learning, successes and personal attitudes to learning across the school. At key points the Nursery joins in this learning journey. During lockdown the key approach to delivering the curriculum was via Google Classroom and the appropriate use of digital technology. Pupils took increasing responsibility and became more independent in their learning. This should continue to be a focus as we move to blended learning. Through the teacher's craft and good practice of sharing the Learning Intention and co-creating the Success Criteria, pupils understand the purpose of their learning and the intended outcome. Pupils' views are frequently sought, especially their reflective views. Pupils understand the importance of consultation as their views are valued and acted upon. Pupils from P1 - P7 designed the layout for outdoor learning. This has become the blueprint from which we developed this context for learning.

Quality of teaching

Our teaching is underpinned by our shared school vision and values, with a key focus on developing and understanding of the link between feedback and improvement. Starting lessons with clear explanations and instructions links directly to evaluations and feedback at the end of the lesson. Pupils are encouraged to give peer feedback and next steps in learning and to apply this to their own learning too. All staff use observation and well timed intervention to offer feedback and next steps. In Nursery we scaffold play with these interventions. In school we scaffold learning with higher order questions. There are pockets of good practise amongst staff across the school, but in order to achieve greater consistency this must continue to be a key focus.

Effective use of assessment

Assessment is integral to our planning of learning and teaching. Teachers plan with the assessment and moderation activities in mind. This is well understood by all staff so that we can moderate and track attainment successfully. Everyone's contribution is pieced together to give a holistic view of the child's learning. Our SIMD profile is closely related to the context of our school with no pupils in SIMD 1,2 or 3 and a high incidence of pupils in SIMD 6 and 7. At key milestones, we share transition information to support pupils when change is due. We use our assessments to provide reliable evidence which we use to report on the progress of all children and young people. Across our single stream learning community we have shared expectations for standards to be achieved. We are developing moderation activities across stages and the curriculum to support this. CAT sessions, agenda specific staff meetings and collegiate activities all endorse this approach.

Planning, tracking and monitoring

We plan appropriately over different timescales to meet the needs of learners across all areas of the curriculum. Some learners are fully involved in planning learning, this needs to become more compliant across the whole school. As a result of our in house devised spreadsheets and our training in data analysis we now have manageable processes to provide clear information on pupils' attainment across all curriculum areas. The spreadsheet we use tracks attainment over time in literacy, numeracy and HWB. We capture protected characteristics as well as young carers, LAAC children and those living with financial hardship against the backdrop of pupils' SIMD data. We use this data to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve outcomes for all learners.

Future Developments

- Use Google classroom to develop increasing pupil responsibility and independence in their learning. This should include pupil voice, transferable skills and reflective processes.

- To develop consistency in approach to HOTS with learners, between learners and modelled by all staff.
- Moderation of writing across the curriculum using benchmarks is well embedded in our practice. Moderating numeracy using pupil groups was planned pre lockdown. We need to develop consistent approaches to moderation of listening and talking and reading.
- Some learners are fully involved in planning learning through PLODs in nursery and KWL walls in school. This needs to become more compliant across the whole school through staff sharing good practice.

How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion (Q.I.3.1)

Wellbeing

Every staff member knows every child and their family in this close knit community offering a high degree of pastoral care. Interpersonal relationships are characterised by a sense of security, safety and sensitivity to the needs of the individual. As a result of our approach pupils feel worthy and valued. Our core values of included, supported and successful are at the centre of all we do to support our pupils and their families to improve outcomes for all. Relationships across the school community are very positive and supportive, founded on a climate of mutual respect within a strong sense of community, shared values and high expectations. Our 'over and above board' is owned by the entire learning community. Behaviour is modelled and high expectations ensure that everybody buys into this approach. An altruistic approach to promoting positive behaviour is evident in the classroom, playground and wider learning community. We prepare children for times of change through well managed transition activities.

Fulfilment of statutory duties

All staff have an understanding of statutory requirements and codes of practice. Training is delivered and refreshed to keep staff updated of any changes. Rigorous approaches to pastoral notes, child protection incidents, family disputes, police concern forms are recorded and actioned with due diligence. We consider each child and young person as an individual with his/her own needs, risks and rights. We ensure children and young people who require a child's plan are involved in decisions which may affect their lives.

Inclusion and equality

At Yester we have acknowledged there is no diversity within our school community. There is also significant gender imbalance across some cohorts. We also find that in some cohorts there are individuals and groups of children with significant barriers to learning. We only have 2 EAL pupils attending Yester. We therefore look for opportunities to promote equality, celebrate diversity and ensure inclusion for improved outcomes for all learners. We always try to ensure that the protected characteristics are not barriers to participation and achievement. All pupils are encouraged to take risks and be creative in their thinking and learning. Learners, parents and carers, staff and partners feel that they are treated with mutual respect and in a fair and just manner. We are solution focussed and resolve complaints and concerns as soon as possible. We have interventions in place using PEF funding and community involvement to help pupils facing challenges like LAAC, young carers and those with additional support needs.

Future Developments

- Using the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child to promote each individual child's needs, risks and rights to ensure pupils are active participants in decisions that may impact on their lives.
- We seek opportunities to be proactive in promoting equality and diversity rather than reactive to incidents/issues locally and globally.

Raising attainment and achievement (Q.I.3.2)

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

Teaching staff looked at prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy in preparation for the review. We recorded pupils' progress that was on track, very little progress or those with concerns. There was a strong correlation between protected characteristics that are a barrier to learning and pupil progress. Through robust tracking of spelling attainment we recognised there was poor attainment in spelling from P4 - P7. We changed our approach to the teaching of spelling and ensured that pupils understood the purpose of spelling as a skill for life, learning and work. Our focus was to aim to have the majority of P4 - P7 pupils on or above their spelling age in June 2020. P 1-3 pupils have been assessed every six weeks to ensure progress in synthetic phonics. Pupils migrate groups as a result of these assessments.

Attainment over time

Across core curricular areas we have tracked attainment continuously over time. Regular data and attainment meetings with all teaching staff together has helped us to see the bigger picture of attainment in Yester and where children are making progress. The benchmarks are used to show gaps in learning and targeted support. At Yester we had a key focus on triangulating evidence giving equal value to quantitative and qualitative data, teacher personal judgement and pupils' views. Moderation activities are in place for writing and numeracy.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

Overall, our learners are successful, confident, exercise responsibility and contribute to the life of the school, the wider community and as global citizens. Through pupil groups children lead change on matters that are important to them. Charities, ECO, World of Work, STEM, JRSOs, Playground Pals and Singalong are all pupil led groups at Yester.

Equity for all learners

Attendance overall is good and is monitored on a monthly basis by the Headteacher. Only two pupils with significant challenges at home had poor attendance throughout the year. There have been no exclusions at Yester this year. We have obtained funding to promote equity of opportunity for all our children to access the same activities as Haddington pupils. We are all ever mindful of our most disadvantaged pupils and their barriers to engagement. We are conscious of the cost of the school day. We observe school colours rather than uniform. We limit the amount of money we ask for trips and subsidise as much as possible.

Future Developments

- Our recovery curriculum will be determined by baseline assessments to inform where pupils are at with their learning after lockdown.

What is our capacity for continuous improvement? (Q.I.1.1)

Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation

All staff understand the importance of self-evaluation and feedback to inform our approaches to school improvement. We use opportunities to gather feedback after learning events and family workshops. Through formal and informal meetings we seek suggestions and comments on improvements already in place. We share the results of questionnaires with staff, parents, and pupils, as appropriate. The SIP is shared with parents via our website along with our Standards and Quality Report (S&Q). Leaders at all levels support reflection by individuals, groups of staff, and with partners across our learning community. Pupil participation in self-evaluation using wee HGIOS, meeting mats with the Head teacher and pupil leadership groups help to drive school improvement. Through regular and effective collaboration our community has a shared understanding of the school's strengths and improvement needs. We work closely with Gifford Horticultural Society, Gifford Community woods, all shops on the high street, the Parish Church and Village Hall as well as Intergenerational work within the community as part of our learning community. Parents are actively involved in a range of improvement work including leading and/or taking part in Bikeability sessions and outdoor learning, ordering and cataloging resources for the school and library, improving parental engagement, organising whole school events and fundraisers. Almost all teaching staff have lead roles as champions in a curricular area that entails whole school responsibility e.g. digital champion, HWB champion, Numeracy champion, etc.

Impact on learners successes and achievements

Our self-evaluation focuses on key aspects of learners' successes and achievements. We can show clear evidence of improvement based on actions taken as a result of self-evaluation. We can demonstrate the impact of improvement arising from self-evaluation on learning and teaching and the attainment, achievement and wellbeing of all learners. All stakeholders, including children and young people, have shared ownership of this evidence and use it to plan continuous improvement.

Staff and pupils fully engaged in the self-evaluation process through HGIOS4 and have identified strengths and next steps for the school. We have engaged Parent Council in self-evaluating their work in relation to representing the whole parent forum and developing an ethos and culture of inclusion, participation and positive relationships across the whole school community. They have also been consulted for their ideas and opinions for the School Improvement Plan. Parent's opinions have also been sought on the work of the school through various surveys at Parent's Evening as well as exit passes at events. Our recent parental engagement survey results were very pleasing with mostly positive results.

Future Developments

- There is very little diversity in our parent council so we need to look at ways of reaching a wider range of parents to be involved in this forum. Parents are more inclined to be actively engaged in the wider life of the school through sub-committees and fund raising activities.

Level

Q.I. 1.1	Self-evaluation self-improvement	for	Good
Q.I. 1.3	Leadership of change		Good
Q.I. 2.3	Learning teaching assessment	and	Good
Q.I. 3.2	Raising attainment achievement	and	Good
Other Qi's staff evaluated on were:			
Q.I. 1.2.	Leadership of learning		Good
Q.I. 2.2	Curriculum		Good
Q.I. 3.1	Improving wellbeing, and inclusion	equality	Very Good