

As part of inspection activity, HM Inspectors identified highly-effective practice in the approaches Portmoak Primary took to develop children as leaders of their own learning.

Read this blog by the head teacher of Portmoak Primary School on how they have worked for a number of years on improving children's ability to talk about themselves as learners.

“We have been on an improvement journey over the last seven years, with a focus on ensuring high quality learning and teaching over time. This has helped us to raise attainment for our learners. Teachers engage in Teacher Learning Communities focusing on Assessment is for Learning (AifL) principles.

“Children recording their learning and the school evidencing progress in learning to children and their parents has evolved to a place where children are able to talk about themselves confidently as learners. The voice of children and their families has informed the direction of travel and shaped our plans for improvement. Staff engaged with research on metacognition – it was important that all staff understood the theory sitting behind the practice.

“We started experimenting with learning logs and developed portfolios of evidence. We made use of national and local advice on profiling and used the Perth and Kinross Skills Framework and Indicators to help to illustrate progress within levels and ensure a shared language of learning.

“There was a disconnect between the learning logs and the portfolios: teachers found the two methods time-consuming and over-bureaucratic and children were not making links within their learning. We moved to Learner's Journey Jotters (LJJs) which contain children's learning plan and individual targets, reflections on their learning, examples of work, photographs and records of teacher talk time (we do three of these per year, two focused on learning and one on wellbeing). Staff worked together to agree the format and content of these books. Moderation sessions are planned in collegiate time to ensure consistency and the LJJs are monitored through the quality assurance calendar. I take part in 'learning chats' with pupil focus groups across the year where all of the questions are based around children being able to discuss their learning.

“Our current focus for the LJJs is to thread digital learning through the books. We recently received the Digital Schools Award: digital teaching and learning is a big part of our work in school but it is really important for us to keep the magic of the books. There is something incredibly valuable about being able to lift your book and take it along to your granny's house and snuggle up on the couch to share your learning. Parents agreed that this was something we didn't want to give up by going fully digital. The children take pride in completing their LJJs, enjoy flicking back through them when working on a new page in class as well as taking them home to

share with their families and can look back on them in years to come. As well as improving children's ability to talk about themselves as learners, it has helped us improve reporting and parental involvement in their children's learning.

By Louise Gordon, Headteacher of Portmoak Primary School