

Thematic Review- City of Edinburgh Council
Attainment Adviser-Jennifer Ross
Canal View Primary School

Area of Focus:

Literacy. Numeracy. HWB.

Case Study

Canal View is a school in the Wester Hailes area of Edinburgh city . Over the last three years, the school's attainment has been steadily rising as demonstrated by both their standardised test scores and CfE levels in both maths and reading at P1, P4 and P7. The school has enthusiastically embraced the opportunities afforded by their inclusion in the Scottish Attainment Challenge by adopting a holistic approach which includes an interesting range of both universal and targeted interventions to close the gap.

Universal interventions include a range of whole school approaches such as weekly mild, spicy and hot maths challenges, structured word boost programmes designed by Speech and Language Therapists to address the vocabulary gap, the prevalent use of drama as a tool across the curriculum to bring learning alive and stimulate and develop children's imaginations, and a wide range of approaches designed to build reading for pleasure. The school identified early impact of a very structured approach to embedding the "Growth Mindset" philosophy across the school. Year 1 challenge monies were used to buy in the services of a professional research organisation (OSIRIS) to deliver Growth Mindset CPD to staff and provide 1 to 1 coaching over a year's period for the 14 staff and PSAs who have volunteered to carry out action research projects focussed on an aspect of the Growth Mindset development in their daily work. Concepts such as the, "Learning Pit" and, "Austin's Butterfly" are embedded in daily practice in order to raise children's aspirations and focus them clearly on the experiences involved in deep learning. The final significant feature of their universal approach is to develop a rich range of partnerships with Arts organisations such as Imagine Festival, Catherine Wheels Theatre Company and Lickety Spit who have been funded with this year's challenge monies to deliver their "Porridge and Play" Nursery Project focussed on using drama workers to model play with parents and toddlers.

Targeted interventions, again afforded by using challenge monies, have included the use of a Home link teacher whose role includes taking the philosophies of Growth Mindset into family homes and building parents' understanding of the ideas which are used to raise their children's aspirations. In addition the deployment of a Maths Recovery teacher works with targeted pupils and models approaches for class teachers in order to build sustainability.

Canal View Primary is a school focused on transformational change with the whole team, under the leadership of their Head teacher, united in the common purpose of closing the equity gap for their pupils.

Quotes

Head teacher

"I have LOVED being part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. It has given me the freedom and the permission to follow my instincts built up over my career and to do things that I passionately believe in to enhance the lives of my children. It's giving a platform to demonstrate what I have always believed, that the power of the Arts can change children's lives when part of an approach that includes rigour in the core curriculum and a clear focus on developing pedagogy. The SAC is helping to build an ethos of aspiration at Canal View which is inclusive of all children but also targeted and focussed. We're using the belief that creativity is the way to enhance human potential. We want children to see that, to lift them up and to see that their potential is limitless."

Parent and PSA

"At home Ben wants to practice everything he does at school. He's constantly U-tubing things he's learned and saying, "I'm just going to teach my sister this". He really struggled with the constructive criticism at first but now he has moved away from the need for praise and he is thinking about the process of things. He is applying his learning more and thinking constantly about the process rather than just seeking positive feedback."

Teacher

"Children have really embraced Growth Mindset and now know that if they're getting everything right then perhaps it is too easy. They now celebrate their mistakes and say, it's just my first attempt". They are really brilliant at working things out together. They are developing the passion I want them to have for Maths."

P6 Pupil

"Ages ago I used to fake being sick and I didn't want to come to school but now, I get up at 6.30 am because of all the drama. My improvement has gone up because I'm sticking in and all the teachers are helping me. All the teachers are talking now about Growth Mindset."

P4 Pupil

"I don't know what used to make me want to come to school. But now, when I go to sleep I can't wait for the next day. When I wake up I'm desperate to go to school."

P5 Pupil

"I think this school is passionate about our values like love"