NARRATOR :

Curriculum for excellence has been introduced to raise standards of learning and teaching, and help improve children’s achievements and life chances, the most extensive consultation ever on Scottish education, involving parents, pupils, teachers, employers and others. The national debate on education in 2002 widely recognized that if Scotland’s children and young people are to gain the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for life in the 21st Century we need a forward looking, coherent curriculum that will inspire them to achieve at the highest levels.

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning and to all aspects of life. Within Curriculum for Excellence the literacy experiences and outcomes enable young people to develop their knowledge and the skills of listening and talking, reading and writing in order to successfully meet the experiences they will encounter in their educational journey and in their lives. The birds at Loch Leven was a literacy across learning project that involved Kinross High school, Fossoway Primary School, and Blairingone Primary in Kinross to help smooth transition from primary seven to S1.

In this example, we hear how teachers planned a series of connected learning experiences. We see learners develop their literacy skills in a real and relevant context, and across a range of curricular areas including English, Sciences, and Expressive Arts. We listen to the ways in which they make connections between learning tasks in the classroom and the world outside the classroom. We hear them explain how they have used their literacy skills to select, sort, and summarise information and to present that information in a variety of ways. As posters, poems, power points, and leaflets. We are aware of the choices they have made and how they have developed their listening skills by working co-operatively. We hear from a parent who shares her experience of the positive impact that Curriculum for Excellence has had on their child’s development. But most of all, we can see the enjoyment young people get from learning this way and the pride they take in what they have accomplished.

Birds on Loch Levin project: schools at Kinross

HELEN BLACK (Teacher- Blairingone):

We used active learning during this project in lots of different ways. Co-operative learning is a way of the children being active because they are having to think for themselves and work in a group co-operatively.

SUZANNE MILLER (Headteacher – Portmoak):

In particular we looked at things like information writing, how the children would carry out their research skills, what kind of skills they would need in terms of ICT and their ability to use the internet to find relevant information.

HELEN BLACK (Teacher – Blairingone):

During the project we went twice to Vane Farm. The first time we went we met with Jerry Cambridge who is a Scottish poet and we went out onto the reserve and it made such sense to climb up to the top of the hill and Jerry talked to the children then about this is the birds-eye view, this is what the bird sees when their over the Loch and that really inspired the children.

CALLUM and LEWIS:

We climbed up to the top of the hill and we used all our senses to see all the different birds and hear the birds.

BLYTHE:

We got to feel what the bird would feel.

CALLUM and LEWIS:

And one went up to the hill. We picked up some leaves and grass and birds feathers and everything, and when we went back into the education room we put them all on a stick. That was like a journey stick to remember what we done on that day. And I have still got mine in my room, and it reminded me of that day we went to the top of the hill.

I learned that pink-footed geese don’t actually have pink feet, they have orange feet. But I really didn’t know that before.

HELEN BLACK (Teacher – Blairingone):

The children just become so much more enthusiastic when they can see for real what we are talking about, rather than just looking at a picture or looking at something on the interactive whiteboard. I think if children have a reason to write, then it’s much more relevant for them if they know they are going to have an audience who are going to look at their writing. All the proof-reading skills are also developed when they have a real audience, and they know that someone from out with the school is going to look at it.

KIRSTY:

I think we came together and we shared all of our ideas and then we went off separately and wrote our own poems.

HEATHER (Parent):

I absolutely do see a difference. She quite likes doing her homework the minute she gets home.

KIRSTY:

For our homework we did a project and you could either to a power point, a poster, or a booklet.

BLYTHE:

And we went to Kinross High School and we worked with four of the S1’s I think, and we did an information leaflet. It was good going to High School because we got to work with some of the people we might have to work with when we are at High School.

KIRSTY:

Well I didn’t really like English before, but then now that we have done that and we all came together, and we shared our ideas, and we wrote the things that was much better.

HEATHER (Parent):

I just think it’s all just circled around the particular child, it seems to have been written particularly for her almost, it’s such a lot of fun.

CALLUM and LEWIS:

This kind of helped me because when I was writing I actually really enjoyed it, and I don’t really like writing poems and that, but I thought I wrote it very well and I think I can write better now.

MARGARET LOWTHIAN (Teacher – Kinross):

I think they achieve more, but I think they also achieve earlier. Because they come to secondary school more familiar with the whole situation, they settle to work in the secondary school a lot more comfortably and quicker than they used to do.

With thanks to the pupils, staff and parents at Fossoway Primary School.