



Falkirk Council

Education Matters

Learning to Achieve

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Supporting Improvement Across Children's Services: Early Years Collaborative (EYC) and Raising Attainment for All (RAFA)

Across Falkirk, practitioners are using the model for improvement to improve outcomes for Children and Young People, implement GIRFEC; change culture, systems and practice, and move towards earlier intervention.

The EYC is Scotland's first national multi-agency improvement collaborative. The EYC has focussed on improvement work in 4 workstreams - from conception to children in Primary 4. Improvement ideas are tried out using small tests of change - making little improvements and if they work do more and make them bigger, if they don't work then stop doing them.

Falkirk EYC has refocused and restructured to make best use of resources in the current climate. EYC work in Falkirk will be under the National Key Change Theme of Attachment, Child Development and Learning. Our aim is to develop a common language and approach around attachment and ensure all work with children and families is attachment focussed.

The Scottish Government is extending the use of the improvement methodology outwith early years. The Raising Achievement for All (RAFA) programme extends improvement work into 8-16 plus years. This ties in with the vision of the Children's Commission that improvement

methodologies underpin quality improvement work across all Children's Services. Both Falkirk and Grangemouth clusters have been part of the National Learning Session at the SECC. The work will initially focus within these two clusters and will be extended to other clusters over the next year.

Improving our services is crucial. Using the model for improvement can help us to test new ideas in a small way and then use our successes to help us to improve faster and more successfully. It is important that all services working with children and families understand the methodology and are able to use it in their day to day work. Tests are happening in settings from schools to midwifery and the Commission wishes to roll out the methodology across Children's Services to provide increased focus to our work. The improvement methodology has been used across the Early Years Collaborative (EYC) for the last 2 years with some notable successes: Handover of information from midwife to Named Person and Named Persons in education receiving Police Concern Reports when a child's wellbeing could be affected by an incident. These are two Falkirk examples of good practice using the improvement methodology to implement GIRFEC and recently highlighted by Scottish Government at national events.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Early Years News	2-3
School /Staff News	3-7
Calendar of Events	8

MY FUTURE'S IN
falkirk

We will continue to host events (previously known as Home Team Events) to share the learning from EYC and RAFA national sessions, upscale good local practice and capture local test data. We will also continue to forge links across the Commission to support learning and development around the improvement science and how we can best use the methodology to improve Children's Services as a whole.

If you'd like more information on using the improvement methodology, EYC or RAFA please contact Jude Breslin.

jude.breslin@falkirk.gov.uk
or 01324 508788.

Learning in the Outdoors at Rannoch Nursery

At the start of this session we decided, as part of our Early Years Improvement plan, to develop a storage space which was partly outdoors, into a Learning in the Outdoors area. This was to be accessible to all children at Rannoch Nursery and to cover all 8 curricular areas. Lorraine and Laura took on the accountable role in this RACI task with input from staff, children and parents.

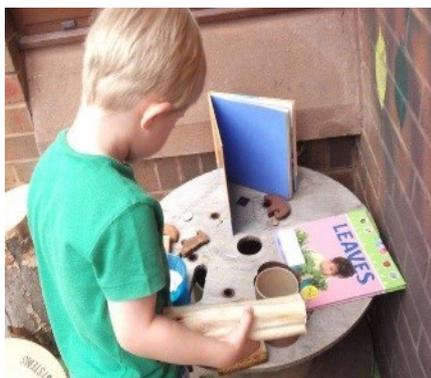
Our aim was to further encourage the use of the outdoors as a learning environment in order to develop children's health and well-being. We also wanted to further enhance children's curiosity and inquisitiveness outdoors.

After a considerable amount of hard work we now have an inspiring and experiential area for all our children which was discussed with parents at our Open Evening at one of our workshops. Children enjoy exploring outside and are demonstrating their natural curiosity through their senses. Lorraine compiled a Learning in the Outdoors folder which is available for children and parents to access at any time.

It was important to ensure that all curricular areas were covered in our new learning area.

Expressive Arts

The children have the opportunity to use the natural resources to glue, create, solve problems and paint, using their imagination and curiosity to design pictures and collage.



Other objects in the baskets can be investigated and the children are being creative with them.

The children can listen to music in this area, as well as woodland sounds from birds, frogs, rain makers and chimes. The children dance freely to the music.

Role play is used by children taking on the role of adults in preparing food dishes with the bark and wooden discs and being woodsmen, chopping down the tree with an imaginary axe. Children have the opportunity to create imaginary fires and toast marshmallows.

Health and Wellbeing

The children show respect for each other by sharing and taking turns with the resources.

They can help to water and care for the plants.

Children can stand on the stumps and balance whilst others look on, showing their balancing skills and confidence.

The children are given opportunities to taste foods that grow in woods and other areas of the outside environment e.g. apples, strawberries, carrots potatoes and many more from various countries e.g. avocados, mangos and passion fruits. Children learn about where things come from and about how they grow.

Literacy and English

To help us understand and learn to identify and recognise letters, writing implements have been provided, as well as wicker letters, wooden puzzles, paper and books. The white board is used well by the children, they write their names and draw pictures of insects and trees.

The children look at the books and compare the pictures to the items in the Learning Outdoors area. Story telling is also held in this area.

They listen and take part in conversations about bugs and birds and can listen to the various wildlife outdoors as part of their play.

Children have the opportunity to discuss with peers and adults the different resources in this area and to ask questions and offer ideas and opinions.

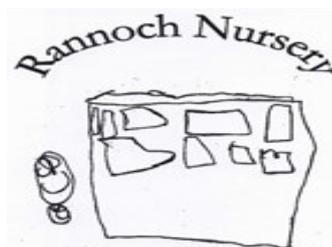
Mathematics

Children explore the wooden numbers and identify them. The wooden discs can be counted and used like money, or can be grouped in size. Children are given the opportunity to see numbers in various forms e.g. Wicker numbers, wooden clock and dolly pegs with numbers and dots. Children can glue the discs to the pillar and then count or group them or make patterns.

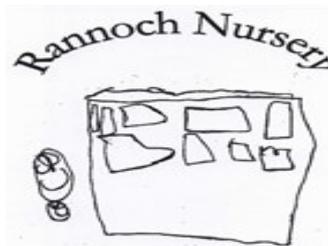
Children also build towers with the natural wooden blocks, investigating and consolidating their learning in size, shape and number.

Religious and Moral Education

When the children are using the Learning Outdoors



Learning in the Outdoors at Rannoch Nursery



area they are aware of what is fair and unfair and the importance of thinking of others, taking turns and sharing.

Science

Children can see how the water bottles work, how they are made and encouraged to ask questions e.g. "What if it doesn't rain?" "Why are you using balloons?" and "Why can't we just water them with the hose?" thus understanding the importance of using the rain and of plants having water when the nursery is closed. Children can identify smells in the area, cinnamon sticks, pot pourri, damp bark and plants. Through play the children explore various ways of making sounds, realising the frog will croak when they pass it and asking why this occurs. Sticks can be used to rub the tree to produce a crackle sound and children can squeeze the bird to hear it chirp. Grass and bark can be put into the glass box to make a house for the wood lice.

Social Studies

Children can talk about their own experiences outside the nursery when they walk in the woods with their parents. They can speak about the pine cones and insects and how to care for them. Children can look for insects and put them in the

box where they can lay grass and bark. Children can discuss how making a fire is dangerous.

Children also learn about how people lived in the past with no electricity, houses etc.,

Technology

Children are given the opportunity to talk about the items and resources in this area. They can discuss the fact that majority of the resources are recycled. They can use their ideas, questions and discussions to

discover, explore and investigate the resources provided. Children use cameras to record their play and findings as well as magnifiers, magna spectors, binoculars etc.,



The Big Lunch - a one day get together for neighbours!

The Big Lunch is a very simple idea from the Eden Project. The aim is to get as many people as possible across the whole of the UK to have lunch with their neighbours annually on the first Sunday in June in a simple act of community, friendship and fun. Since starting in 2009, thousands of Big Lunches have taken place in all types of communities. In 2014, 4.83 million people took to their streets, gardens and community spaces for the sixth annual Big Lunch.

In this first 'Big Lunch' competition, you could win a family trip to the birth place of The Big Lunch, the spectacular Eden Project in Cornwall. Described by many as the 8th Wonder of the World, Eden is home to the World's largest conservatories, the biggest rainforest in captivity, stunning architecture, more than 1 million plants, and fabulous, fun educational events and exhibits. A must-see attraction!

Don't miss out on this amazing prize; request your Big Lunch organiser pack and complete the simple competition form to enter the prize draw. Closing date is Friday 5th June and terms and conditions apply. www.thebiglunch.com



Comely Park School News

Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS)

This session, for the first time, our P6 pupils are taking part in The Junior Award Scheme for Schools. JASS was developed by as a pilot exercise in 2010 by FOTA (Friends of the Duke of Edinburgh Award in Edinburgh and the Lothians) and City of Edinburgh Council. JASS is being used by schools in England and throughout Scotland. JASS helps children develop new skills and interests and expands their knowledge in a fun and rewarding way. It assists with pupil profiling and is a great way of evidencing the variety of work done within a school. JASS has 4 sections; Get Active, Stay Active, Me and My World, My Interests and Adventure

There are 3 levels - Bronze, Silver and Gold - which are designed to extend childrens' ambitions,



skills and knowledge. At each stage the participant receives an award certificate recognising their achievement. Our P6 pupils are currently working towards their Bronze Award. Staff and pupils are working closely with Mr Drew Barton of Falkirk High to make the most of this exciting new experience.

Local Area Art and Writing Project in conjunction with Ruth Nicol, artist.

In the spring term 2015 our P7 pupils worked closely with the artist, Ruth Nicol, to produce four wonderful paintings of Falkirk landmarks. Both classes visited Ruth's exhibition, Three Rivers Meet, which is currently on display in The Park Gallery. Ruth explained to the children what influences her as an artist and how literature and poetry can complement and deepen our understanding of artwork and the area we live in.



All the children were involved in researching, drawing and photographing local landmarks and writing poetry about these places. Eight pupils also visited Ruth's studio in Edinburgh and worked with her to create four amazing paintings. The project meets the demands of Curriculum for Excellence on

many levels; our learners have the opportunity to deepen their learning of their local area and to respond to their environment through the written word. Working with Ruth, the children learned how to interpret their environment through the medium of art and experience how powerful that can be. By recognising and planning learning around different contexts and experiences, the curriculum aims to make better connections across learning.



Revisiting skills like writing or drawing from different perspectives deepens understanding, and can also make the curriculum more coherent and meaningful from the learner's point of view. This is exactly what the children had the opportunity to do through working with Ruth Nicol.

The purpose of the curriculum is encapsulated in the four capacities - to enable each child or young person to be a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor. The curriculum aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future.

The proposed project takes an interdisciplinary approach and takes advantage of opportunities to work with partners who are able to offer and support enriched learning experiences and opportunities for young people's wider involvement in society. The curriculum should be designed on the basis of the following principles:

Challenge and enjoyment, Breadth, Progression, Depth, Personalisation and choice, Coherence, Relevance

The project met all of these principles and the artwork and poetry produced was of a high standard. The paintings and poetry are going 'on tour' in the coming months. Watch out for them at Trinity Church, Falkirk Library and Camelon Education Centre!

World Book Day: 5th of March

Children's literature and books play a fundamental role in developing children's academic

Comely Park School News Cont'd

engagement, development and life chances, providing the framework and stimulus through which to deepen their understanding of themselves and the world around them. Comely Park is committed to developing a love of reading within our pupils and at the beginning of March several events were held to support World Book Day. The Pupil Council organised a quiz, an assembly, classes took part in book themed lessons, our P5



pupils read favourite picture books to our nursery pupils and finally there was a 'dress as your favourite book character' event. Pupils also raised £230 for Book Aid International, an

organisation which supports libraries in Africa.

Cross Country Achievements

Comely Park has a thriving Cross Country Club who regularly train and take part in local events. This session our P7 Girls were overall winners of their stage in the Forth Valley Cross League. Well done to the girls and all the children who take part.



Comely Park School Choir

Our school choir raised the fantastic sum of £1,096.62 in aid of Strathcarron Hospice. The choir sang at a 'Coffee and Carols' event in school. The choir also sang in the Howgate Shopping Centre at Christmas. More recently the choir

performed at the Holocaust Memorial event in the Municipal Buildings. Holocaust Memorial Day is an international day to remember and commemorate those who died in holocausts around the world.



Scottish Opera: Warriors! The Emperor's Incredible Army

Our P7 pupils and staff worked with a team of professionals from Scottish Opera in January. The children learned about the story of the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang Di. This amazing but megalomaniac man conquered and united China from a collection of warring states to become its First Emperor. He built the Great Wall and amassed great works of art. Obsessed with a quest for the secret of immortality, 70,000 workers built his tomb said to be filled with legendary treasures. Over 8,000 fantastic life-size clay warriors



protected his tomb. The famous Terracotta Army - is now referred to as the eighth wonder of the ancient world. The children learned a range of songs and the project culminated in a performance for both the whole school and parents.

Transition Events

Our P6 and P7 pupils have been involved in an interesting range of transition events with Falkirk High. P7 pupils regularly work with Jenny McNeil from Falkirk High. Pupils also attended a Seafood Scotland event with their peers from other local primary schools. The workshops promoted the benefits of eating seafood as part of a balanced diet. The children were involved in tasting, identifying and cooking seafood. Young Sport Leaders from Falkirk High also work with our P6/7 pupils to provide football coaching during 'Golden Time'. The One Voice Concert which was held in February saw our P7 pupils performing with other feeder primary schools and working with the staff of the Music Department. Parents and carers attended this wonderful evening's entertainment.

Both P6 and P7 classes



Comely Park School News Cont'd

have had the opportunity of cookery lessons in Falkirk High this term. The children worked with staff to produce some lovely recipes which they could take home. One class even prepared a wartime recipe! Thank you to the staff of Falkirk High for supporting these events.

Health and Wellbeing

There are several lunch and after school clubs running for pupils. Staff, Active Schools and even some of our senior pupils help to organise the clubs. Pupils can enjoy Cross Country, Football, Dance, Fun Fitness, Tennis and badminton. These clubs are well attended and run on a regular basis. Our latest venture is our Dodgeball league, which will run after Easter and will be attended by over 100 of our pupils!

Four of our P6 pupils attended a dance training session with The Active Schools Team. These pupils now organise a weekly lunchtime dance club for younger pupils with the support of Miss Haggart. Lunchtime can be quite long for younger pupils and these clubs certainly help keep our pupils busy, happy and healthy. We continue to plan new ideas for sports clubs and listen to the views of our pupils through our Sports Council. They meet on a monthly basis to discuss and plan new sporting opportunities for the children in our school. We continually seek to enhance the development of sport within our school and are working towards the Sport Scotland Gold Award.

Sporting Achievements

There have been a number of children who have been recognised for their achievements in sport recently. Hollie and Torin were given awards by Falkirk Council. Hollie has been selected for the Scotland National Squad for Gymnastics and Torin has been awarded for his achievements in cricket. Four P7 girls were celebrated during our assembly for their achievements in basketball (Abby), swimming (Anna and Darcey) and running (Cara).

Basketball - Jump2It



A team of our P6/7 pupils enjoyed success in the Jump2It event organised by Active Schools. Our team reached the finals which

were held in The Emirates Arena in Glasgow. It was

a healthy and exciting venture to be involved in and our pupils developed in confidence and skill throughout their involvement.

Earth Hour

Our pupils took part in events for Earth Hour. The global event raises awareness of the need to cut back on our energy use which is having a detrimental effect on our climate. The children took part in class lessons, an in school 'Earth Hour', an assembly and they wore bright colours to school to remind them of the need to reduce their energy use whenever possible.

Fundraising

Comic Relief – Our kind hearted pupils raised £789 in aid of Comic Relief in March. We held fun fitness, hip hop dance and a scooter event. Three of our P6 girls also organised a 'Guess Teddy's Birthday' competition. Everyone had fun and we helped those less fortunate than ourselves too.

Rachel House Children's Hospice

Comely Park pupils also donated over £863 to Rachel House recently. The hospice supported one of our families recently and we all wanted to show our gratitude for the amazing work they do.

Jump Rope Challenge

Last term our pupils took part in a fun, skipping challenge and they raised over £1,000 in aid of the British Heart Foundation.

Children in Need

Each year Comely Park reaches out to help others less fortunate. We raised the amazing total of £816.45!

We are so proud of our pupils, teachers, families and friends for these heart-warming donations to worthwhile charities.

Scots' Language

In January all our classes took part in curricular work linked to the Scots' Language. The children learned songs, produced beautiful artwork, listened to stories, wrote stories and poems in Scots. The work culminated in two Scots' Language assemblies where all their hard work was presented to other classes.

P7 Burns Supper

Our P7 pupils hosted a wonderful Burns Supper for their classes and invited guests. Songs, poetry and speeches were performed and our kitchen staff cooked the traditional meal.

Educational Psychology Matters

What are Solution Orientated Approaches?

Solution focused thinking is a way of looking at the world that is associated with change and hope
(Y. Ajmal, 2001)

The only solutions that are ever worth anything are the solutions that people find themselves.

Satyajit Ray

Looking back, I realize that nurturing curiosity and the instinct to seek solutions are perhaps the most important contributions education can make.

Paul Berg

Solution Orientated Approaches (SOA) is the practice of moving forward in difficult situations through an interest in solutions rather than problems, the future rather than the past and people's resources rather than deficits. SOA provide a structure for achieving positive change which is encouraging, effective and economical of time and resources. SOA used within education are evidenced informed ways of:

- Supporting the assessment and intervention planning for individual young people
- Identifying desired outcomes
- Managing planning and expectations to promote learning
- Knowing yourself better and others: skills, strengths and areas you want to improve
- Promoting and supporting the involvement of young people and their families in the process.

Two simple ideas underpin Solution Oriented Approaches (SOA):-

1. Nobody is perfect

This applies to our problems as well as everything else. If no-one can 'do' their problem perfectly there must always be times when they don't do them so well. These are called **exceptions**. Whatever the person is doing differently at these **'exceptional' times** will be the basis of a potential solution.

2. Knowing where you want to get to makes the getting there much more likely

•One of the common consequences of a serious problem is that it clouds our view of the future. We know that we don't want the problem but we have lost sight of what it is we do want.

•Solution oriented practitioners ask lots of questions about what life might be like if the problem was solved. As the answers to these questions gradually unfold both practitioner and client begin to get a picture of where they should be heading. The clearer this becomes the greater the possibility of it beginning to happen.

Even when facing a problem, everyone has **skills; strengths** and **experiences** where they have previously been successful. Sometimes we all need help to think about what our strengths and skills are—*How often do we ask this question of ourselves?* Others are usually quicker at recognising our strengths and can tell us.

Help others solve their problems & leave work less stressed!

10 Good Reasons to Adopt the Solution Orientated Approaches (BRIEF www.brief.org.uk E.George 2012)

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Time Efficient. | 5. Builds co-operation. | 9. Enthuses staff who are finding things difficult. |
| 2. Flexible. | 6. Simple. | 10. Fits with current thinking & practice. |
| 3. Builds staff morale. | 7. Easy to Learn. | (Education Scotland agendas; GIRFEC; Inclusion) |
| 4. Inclusive. | 8. Effective and Evidence based. | |

More Resources

-Sign up now via CPD manager for sessions offered by the EPS Team. **More to come 2015-16**
-Education Scotland on SOA <http://bit.ly/1GKfMGs>
-BRIEF London
www.BRIEF.org.uk

To keep up-to-date with information and training find Falkirk Council Educational Psychologists on Twitter.

@EdPsychFalkirk



Calendar of Events

May 2015

Staff Development Day	01 May
Term Time Public Holiday	04 May
Children's Book Week	04 May
World Asthma Day	05 May
Larbert Cluster Meeting - Ladeside PS	06 May
Denny Cluster Meeting - Denny HS	12 May
International Day of Families	15 May
Braes Cluster Meeting - Maddiston PS	19 May
Bo'ness Cluster Meeting - Grange PS	26 May
Larbert Cluster Meeting - Larbert Village PS	27 May
World 'No Tobacco' Day	31 May

LK Galaxy Success

Young footballers from LK Galaxy based in Falkirk are celebrating after success at a prestigious European tournament. The boys, all aged under 14 became the first ever Scottish club to win the Euro Sporting Holland challenge Cup defeating teams from the host nation, Belgium and Denmark along the way.

The event, which took place over the Easter weekend, was attended by almost two hundred clubs from all over Europe and saw LK Galaxy triumph 4-3 on penalties after their final game ended in a 1-1 draw.

Coach Roddy MacPhee said he was 'delighted' for the players saying the victory was reward for years of hard work. 'To win a competition that has been won by either a Dutch or Belgian side for the past 18 years is a tremendous achievement. It was also very pleasing that the organisers took time to compliment the boys for their attitude and behaviour.'

LK Galaxy who play in the CSFA 'A' LEAGUE hope to return next spring and defend their title.



Learning Resource Service News

AUTHOR VISITS

One of the ways to motivate and excite children to read for enjoyment is to meet authors. Two author visits were organised by the LRC in March as part of their enhanced support to schools participating in the Scottish Children's Book Award. Nominated author E B Colin who wrote *Pirate's Boy* visited St Margaret's, Grange, Stenhousemuir and Westquarter Primaries.



Winning author Alex McCall who wrote 'Attack of the Giant Robot Chickens' visited Blackness, Wallacestone, Airth, St

Patrick's and St Joseph's Primaries in March.

The children could buy copies of the books and have them signed by the authors. Throughout the visits pupils were very enthusiastic and the authors were impressed by the children's interesting questions.

SCHOOL VISITS

Pupils and staff from Whitecross nursery recently benefited from a visit from LRC staff who refurbished their library. Old, out of date stock was weeded and all books were re-labelled and arranged thematically for easier retrieval.

SHORT SURVEY

Look out for the LRC survey which has been sent to all schools. We would really appreciate if you could complete this to let us know what you value about the service to assist us in planning. Thank you.

NEW RESOURCES

The LRC has now extended the 'Rapid' reading scheme stock to include Rapid series 2. Series 2 follows the same structure as series 1 and includes six Stages with eight Reading Books and one Benchmark Book per stage.

We have also added a new reading scheme to stock called 'Rapid Phonics'.

Rapid Phonics is a catch-up synthetic phonics scheme designed for children who struggle with reading and who need extra support in phonics.

