



**Today we used
literacy across learning**

It was poetry in motion

Curriculum for Excellence in action

Bringing life to learning and learning to life

**Birds on Loch Leven project
at schools in Kinross**

www.curriculumforexcellence.scotland.gov.uk





Today we visited
Vane Farm, a nature
reserve near school.

Bringing life to learning and learning to life

We went with secondary school kids. It was good. They were nicer than I thought they'd be. It was snowing but after a while that didn't matter.

We talked to the people who run the farm, about what a reserve is. It was good to hear what they had to say. It made it seem real. It's run by the RSPB, which stands for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Jim Wallace asked why they were 'royal'. I can't remember the answer, but we all had a laugh. So the day got off to a good start.

The teacher told us to check out the birds. There were loads of different species. In maths we worked out how far they had migrated and we compared this with the migration distance of other bird species. What were their names – did we know? What were their markings – record them. How did we think they flew?

The art teacher gave us all pens and pads. We made drawings and sketches. Later we turned these into cards which we sold to help raise money for the RSPB. It felt good to be helping them.

Raising standards

A poet called Gerry joined us. Some of us had never met a poet before. Whatever we were expecting he was quite normal. He made us really look at things. The colour of the water. The shape of the rocks. Another word for the cold we felt in our fingers. We climbed to the top of the hill and had a bird's eye view.

Improving knowledge

I made up a word: 'blainsie'. Sounds Scottish. Gerry said that would be a good word to use in a poem he was writing and wrote something in his notebook. I reckon he nicked it.

Jenny Smith wrote something called a haiku. It's a Japanese form, Gerry said, with 17 syllables. I thought it was very good but I didn't say anything. Gerry said it was brilliant.

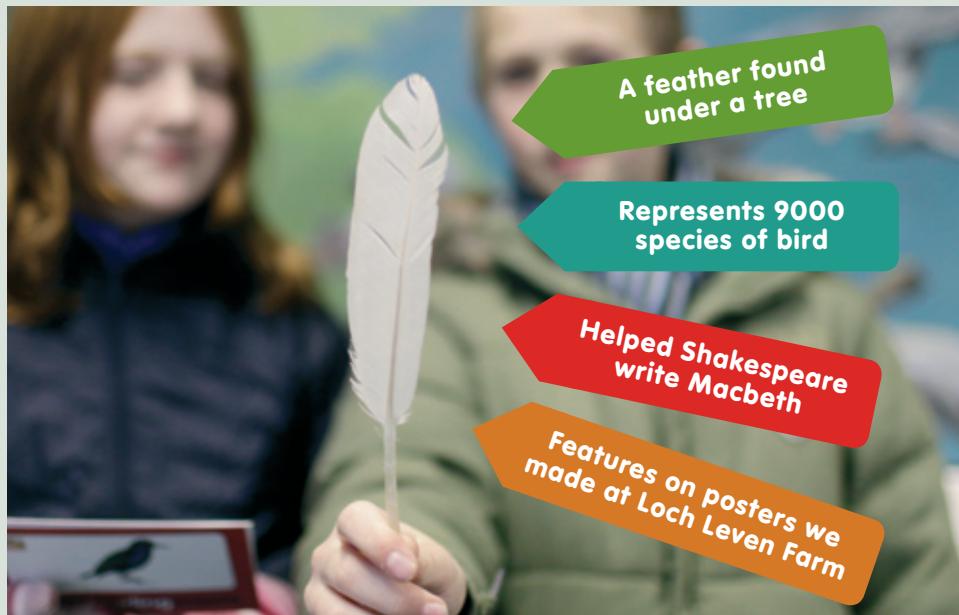


Developing skills

In the next lesson, back in the classroom, we used the internet to find out more about the birds, especially the ones that come to Loch Leven.

It's amazing how much more interesting things are when you know their names and something about what they do. We worked in groups to produce a PowerPoint presentation and posters with facts about the birds at Loch Leven. We also designed leaflets on the computer, putting our new knowledge to good use!

We were told that other school kids will see the leaflets when they visit the farm. I took great care over mine. It felt like we were doing something in the real world.



Curriculum for Excellence in a nutshell

Curriculum for Excellence is about bringing life to learning and learning to life. It has been introduced to raise standards of learning and teaching and help improve our children's life chances.

It focuses on the importance of knowledge and skills. It offers a broad and deep general education to S3 with options in the senior phase. It promotes the ability to learn – a skill for life that will help young people go on to further study, to secure work and to navigate through life.

It brings real life into the classroom and takes lessons beyond the classroom. It promises to support children in every way possible so that they can fulfil their potential and make the most of their opportunities.

All those working with children and young people will be responsible for delivering skills in literacy and numeracy – skills that unlock other subjects and are vital in everyday life.

All staff will be responsible for young people's health and wellbeing and for identifying the personal support a child needs on a day-to-day basis. Parents can ask for help too.

Staff will work together to plan a child's 'learning journey' from 3 to 18. They will ensure young people can learn in a way that works for them, at a pace they can cope with and with enough challenge to stretch them. Staff will support them as they move up from nursery to primary, on to secondary and beyond.

There are new ways of assessing progress and ensuring children achieve their best.

There are qualifications for literacy and numeracy from 2012/2013 and new National 4 and 5 qualifications from 2013/2014, replacing the Standard Grade and Intermediate 1 and 2. Our well-regarded Access, Highers and Advanced Highers will be updated.

Professionals can teach subjects more creatively, work together and with others, and share best practice, ideas and innovation.

Ultimately, the aim is to improve our children's achievements and life chances, to nurture successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, and responsible citizens.



Fact file

Birds on Loch Leven was a literacy across learning project that involved Kinross High School, Fossoway Primary and Blairingone Primary in Kinross.

The primary and secondary schools worked together to help ease transition from P7 to S1.

Planning was focused around literacy, sciences and technologies.

The project included outdoor learning experiences, research, design, writing and the use of ICT.



What it means for parents

I was thrilled when Jamie told me about the project they were doing at school. It sounded great, bringing together so many different skills from listening to research, from writing to design to getting on and working with younger children. And I thought the way the different subjects of sciences, expressive arts and the environment were woven together was brilliant.

My older boy opted not to go to college because he wanted to get a trade – that's where the money was! Now it's Jamie's turn. Well, he's only at Primary but he'll be going into S1 next year, so he'll be one of the first to sit the new National 4 and 5.

I like the fact that Curriculum for Excellence has literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing built into every teacher's remit and that every kid is supported with that – and there are new literacy and numeracy qualifications.

I struggled a wee bit with the basics and it matters when you're looking for a job – for any job really, because it starts with the application form.

Jamie's already talking about the difference in teaching – working in groups, being encouraged to ask questions, learning outside of the classroom, seeing how the real world works. They've set up a newspaper and he's the Editor!

He loves it – I never thought I'd say it, but I wouldn't mind going back to school myself.

Jamie's mum, Fife

What parents can do – sharing, planning and learning!

- Listen, talk, share and encourage – this has a big influence on children's learning
- Do things together – learn together and have fun together
- Praise effort
- Encourage a 'can do' approach – 'give it a try, you might just like it'
- Help them to respect others
- Talk to them about their strengths and interests, and help them make choices based on these
- Find out what learning is happening at school and do what you can at home to build on that
- Help them work on tasks on their own and then talk about it with you afterwards
- Encourage any reading – books, online – it all helps!
- Look for opportunities at home to develop literacy and numeracy skills: Money, number problems, time, measuring, matching, size, reading, writing, understanding instructions, questioning information
- Encourage them to make their own choices
- Ask for extra help if you think your child needs it for any reason. Visit www.infoscotland.com/justask
- Be there – help, listen, support and encourage
- Talk to them about how they are feeling

Working in this way helps pupils see there are opportunities for learning all around us in everyday life. It helps to demonstrate the links between the skills they practice, what they learn in and out of class and how it all fits together. The projects evolve from the pupil's own ideas and questions so they can see the point of learning. It's a broader, deeper way of learning. They really engage with learning because it's relevant and fun so they don't want to stop at the end of the school day. We're developing learning skills for life!

Sam Nicholson, Headteacher of Fossoway Primary school

With thanks to Fossoway Primary, Blairingone Primary, Kinross High School and Perth and Kinross Council

For further information parents can find out more at:

www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk

Quotes are not word for word. They were inspired by listening to children taking part in real projects and by listening to parents during a major piece of research that told us parents wanted to hear about Curriculum for Excellence from the professionals who know their children. We've changed names to protect individuals' privacy.