

Summarised inspection findings

Tarbolton Primary School

South Ayrshire Council

SEED No: 8235023

07 March 2018

Key contextual information

During school session 2016-17 Tarbolton Primary School and Tarbolton Nursery School merged to become Tarbolton Community Campus. The school and nursery serve the village of Tarbolton and surrounding rural areas. At the time of the inspection there were 191 children from P1- P7 arranged into nine classes.

The new campus provides very good accommodation for children to learn. In addition to the school, the campus provides accommodation for the local community including the local library.

1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	very good
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This indicator defines rigorous self-evaluation as a responsibility of all stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasizes the need for strong leadership and robust analysis of a range of intelligence and data as essential features of effective continuous self-improvement. A key factor in this indicator is demonstrating the impact of self-evaluation in relation to outcomes for all learners. Their active participation in self-evaluation is therefore essential. The themes are:

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
- Ensuring impact on learners' successes and achievements

- Under the headteacher's very positive leadership, there is a strong culture of self-evaluation for improvement across the school. Self-evaluation is successfully built in to all aspects of school life and involves staff, children, parents and other partners. There is a shared understanding of the school's strengths and the direction it intends to take to ensure further improvements. The school improvement plan clearly states the annual priorities and how these will be achieved. This plan takes full account of local and national priorities for education and children's services.
- School staff use a range of methods including questionnaires and focus groups to seek out stakeholders' views. Children, parents and other partners know that their views are valued and taken into account. Parent workshops and the regular use of a number of digital platforms to share news about the school and examples of children's learning have helped parents to feel that they are partners in their children's learning.
- Children play a significant role in self-evaluation which has helped them become increasingly involved in school improvement. They give their views through a range of formal committees including the pupil council, Junior Road Safety Officers group, Rights Respecting Schools group and the Dyslexia Friendly School group. Children feel that the school offers them real choices in their learning and listens to their voices. They are increasingly confident in expressing their ideas and actively pursuing change where they think this is needed. They have played a significant part in helping the school to achieve the Gold Dyslexia Friendly Schools award and the Rights Respecting School award.

- Children are becoming skilled at reviewing their own learning and identifying their own areas for development. They also have opportunities to reflect on their lessons with their class teachers and the senior management team, and make suggestions for improvements.
- Increasingly, the school is finding helpful ways for children to be involved in the school's self-evaluation of learning and teaching. Children have undertaken learning walks through the school and visited classrooms. They are becoming skilled in identifying good practice and sharing their views about what makes a good teacher, a good lesson and a positive classroom environment. Last session a small number of P7 pupils participated in an innovative exchange with pupils from a neighbouring school. This allowed the children to evaluate their learning environment and compare this with children's experiences in the other school.
- The headteacher and depute headteacher engage with all staff in a range of monitoring and tracking activities which support and challenge school improvement. They visit lessons, sample children's work and hold termly discussions with teachers. In these discussions they focus on individual children and the strategies that can be put in place to support and challenge them to ensure they make progress in their learning. Teachers make very good use of a range of data to track children's progress in learning. The school's approach to raising attainment includes a focus on increasing teachers' confidence in assessment approaches through a range of moderation activities. This has had a positive impact on attainment.
- Staff are committed to working collaboratively across the school and supporting school developments. Teachers work very effectively with each other and with colleagues in cluster schools to moderate standards. They are continuing to develop a shared understanding of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels across all curriculum areas, and in particular, in literacy and English, and numeracy and mathematics. They are using this deeper understanding to develop holistic approaches to assessing children's progress. Teachers from Tarbolton Primary School are taking a lead role in a school cluster development to produce a range of holistic assessments to determine children's progress in numeracy and mathematics.
- Teachers and support staff are very well engaged in their own professional learning and development. They regularly undertake relevant professional learning activities which relate to, and support, the development of identified school improvement priorities. Effective collegiate working across the school helps staff to share their learning with each other. Teachers value the opportunity they have to influence and support the on-going improvement of the school and they very willingly take on distributed leadership roles in a range of areas. They are the lead learners in their classes.
- The school's approaches to self-evaluation have led to improvements for children. The school compares favourably with similar schools in the local authority in children's attainment in aspects of literacy and numeracy. The school's work around Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) resulted in the achievement of Level 2 award. The assessors stated that the pupils' knowledge of their rights and their ability to talk about how this work has made their school a better place for learning. Attendance levels in the school are above the local authority average.
- The school's well-established monthly Healthy Tuesday, where all aspects of health and wellbeing are reinforced through the curriculum, has had an impact on improving children's

wellbeing and in particular their confidence and resilience. Staff regularly evaluate this programme and make adjustments as necessary to ensure that the day continues to meet children's learning needs. The strong commitment to health and wellbeing resulted in school reaching the final of the Scottish Education Awards session 2016-17.

2.1: Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy
- Attainment over time
- Overall quality of learners' achievement
- Equity for all learners

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The school's data shows that all children are making very good progress from their prior learning in reading, writing, listening and talking, numeracy and mathematics. The school uses a wide range of data to identify and plan for children at risk of missing out in their learning, and provides well-planned interventions where necessary. A gap in children's learning at second level was identified by school staff and interventions were put in place to close this gap. Interventions included professional development in moderation to increase staff confidence and produce more accurate assessment of children's progress. The impact of this has been very positive and almost all children are now on track to achieve appropriate national standards. Overall, almost all children at P1, P4 and most children in primary 7 are achieving national standards in reading, writing, listening, talking and maths. Across the school, a few children exceed these standards.

Literacy and English

- Almost all children are making very good progress in literacy and English and from their previous levels of learning. Those who experience difficulties in developing literacy skills are helped to improve by a range of well-targeted support strategies. In all observed lessons differentiated methodology and resources supported all learners in achieving their targets. Across the school children talk about their learning with confidence. They know where they are on their learning journey and how to progress to next stage.

Listening and Talking:

- Across the school, almost all children listen well and respond to each other, and to adults, in a friendly and respectful manner. Most children at the early level listen well in their lessons and are learning to respond to questions about their learning. Through the Healthy Tuesday activities they listened to a story and identified the emotions of the characters. At the first and second level, almost all listen well to each other and respond appropriately and clearly. At all levels children talk enthusiastically about the opportunities they have to talk about their vision for the school. They are proud of their movie productions, assembly presentations and debating opportunities. In observed lessons and focused discussions inspectors found children to be very articulate and knowledgeable about their targets and pathways to achieving progress.

Reading:

- At the early level, most children are making very good progress in developing their reading skills. They are learning to read familiar texts with expression and to sound out words and blend sounds to make words. Most engage well with written texts. At first level, almost all children can read aloud familiar texts with understanding and expression. They identify

fiction and non-fiction texts and understand the different purposes of each. Almost all children at second level can discuss the characters and plot of their novels. They talk confidently about authors and genres explaining why they like certain styles of writing more than others. An increasing number of children enjoy reading and talking about books. They regularly use the community library after school.

Writing:

- Across the school, children are given regular opportunities to write at an appropriate length and for a variety of purposes in real-life contexts. At early level, they are making good progress in writing sentences using appropriate punctuation such as full stops and capital letters. They recognise question marks and exclamation marks. They use planning frames to correctly sequence events. At first level, children are building banks of commonly used words and learn to spell these. Most children are making good progress in writing independently. By the end of the second level, most children can create a range of extended texts for different purposes using appropriate punctuation and spelling. Persuasive writing was linked to developing resilience and determination. Spelling is assessed each week and children are encouraged to improve on each week's score. There are good examples of children producing quality written work across other areas of the curriculum such as science and health.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Staff in the school, and across the local cluster, have identified numeracy and mathematics as an area for further development in order to continue to raise attainment. There has been an increased focus on improving children's ability to handle data. Across the local school cluster, teachers are developing better shared approaches to teaching numeracy and mathematics. Overall, children are making very good progress from their previous learning.

Number:

- Across the school, children show strength in number skills and are developing their understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division appropriate to their stage. They have regular opportunities to reinforce their learning in numeracy across different areas of the curriculum. By the end of early level, children can count forwards and backwards with confidence within 20. They are learning about the use of ordinal numbers in everyday life. Children at first level have a firm understanding of the multiplication tables they have learned. At first and second level, children are confident in setting out written calculations. At second level, children have good strategies for addition, multiplication and division of whole numbers and decimal fractions. They have a sound understanding of place value for numbers up to 100,000. Across the school, children benefit from a continued focus on mental calculation.

Money:

- At early level, children can recognise a range of coins. At first level, children are able to calculate costs to £10 and work out change. At second level, children can apply their skills when working with money through calculating profit and loss. Children at all stages are developing very good understanding of the use of money through a range of real life contexts.

Measure:

- At early level, children show growing confidence when measuring and estimating during the well-planned free play activities. Children in a sample group working within first level confidently estimated length and height. Children in a sample group working within second

level are aware of ways of measuring and confidently estimated using metres and centimetres, for example height of a door and the length of a table. They can confidently calculate the perimeter and area for a range of shapes.

Shape Position and Movement:

- Children working within early level are able to recognise and sort 2D shapes and 3D objects. Children working within first level can discuss the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects. Children at both first and second level have a good understanding of angles appropriate to their age and stage.

Information Handling:

- Across the school children are increasingly confident in collecting information, through using tally marks to present information on bar graphs. The school provides children with experience of analysing a wide range of graphs and charts in real life situations. Older children confidently use the language of probability and chance.

Problem Solving:

- Across the school, children are enthusiastic about solving problems in groups and individually. Children at early level have regular opportunities to be creative and solve 'real' problems when they engage in loose parts play in the outdoors. At all stages, children can discuss strategies which help them to solve problems. Staff are committed to teaching mathematics and numeracy within a problem solving or real life context to develop children's understanding of the relevance of mathematics and numeracy in the wider world.

Attainment over time in literacy and numeracy

- Staff know children very well and monitor their individual progress very effectively. The school's attainment data consistently compares favourably with comparator schools in the area. The school has developed robust procedures to track attainment over time using a range of standardised tests and teachers' professional judgement. National benchmarks are used to record progress. This is enabling the school to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of children, identify underachievement at an early stage and put well-targeted interventions in place as quickly as possible. The school should continue to monitor children's attainment in a robust and rigorous manner to ensure the needs of individual children continue to be met timeously and effectively.

Achievement

- The school celebrates a wide range of children's achievements which is helping to develop children's confidence and self-esteem. Children's achievements in and outwith school are recognised and celebrated through assemblies and school displays. Children at all stages thrive on their responsibilities in school. They are developing a range of important leadership skills and gaining confidence through being involved in whole school committees and action groups. At all stages, children take responsibility and make positive contributions to the school and the local and global community. They are rightly proud of their status as a Rights Respecting School. The school has been accredited as a Dyslexic Friendly School. Older children enjoy supporting the learning of the younger children both in play and in shared reading. Children in Tarbolton Primary School have a highly developed sense of inclusion and justice. This is improving their understanding of sustainability and helping them to understand aspects of global citizenship. Children's voice is a strong feature in the school. Aspects of school development planning including learning activities and priorities are discussed with the children who are invited to comment and contribute. The children's respect for themselves and each other is evident as is the

respectful relationship between children and school staff. Attendance at the many clubs is monitored and recorded to identify any children in danger of missing out. The school could now extend their approaches to recording children's achievements to include tracking the skills for learning, life and work that children acquire across the totality of their learning, in and out of school.

Equity for all learners

- The school actively seeks ways to ensure equity of opportunity for all children. The headteacher and staff are very proactive in ensuring that all children participate fully in all aspects of school life. The school has used the Pupil Equity Fund to improve staffing with increased teacher numbers and employment of a part-time early years practitioner to support learning in groups of identified children. The assessment data shows that the attainment of these identified children is increasing and the gap is reducing. The headteacher has also used Pupil Equity Funding to organise a residential trip to an outdoor centre for children across the school who would benefit from broader life experiences. The school should continue with its plans to further engage families to support children's learning, to help raise attainment of all and to further reduce the equity gap between those living in disadvantage and their peers.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91% – 99%
Most	75% – 90%
Majority	50% – 74%
Minority/Less than half	15 – 49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

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