

# Summarised inspection findings

**Kirkcudbright Primary School**

Dumfries and Galloway Council

10 September 2024

## Key contextual information

Kirkcudbright Primary School is situated in the harbour town of Kirkcudbright in Dumfries and Galloway. There have been a number of recent changes to leadership and staffing in the school. The headteacher has been in post since April 2024. They are supported by an acting depute headteacher who has been in post since February 2024. There are 234 children in the school organised across nine classes. The majority of children are in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 5 to 8. This does not accurately reflect the socio-economic challenges families face in the rural setting. There have been no exclusions in recent years and attendance is in line with the national average.

Kirkcudbright Primary School nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- The staff team create a climate where children feel safe, happy and supported to engage well in learning. Children benefit from positive nurturing relationships with adults, with a high level of trust and care demonstrated in daily interactions. Staff are encouraging children to begin to develop the language of children's rights. The headteacher presents a different right at assembly each week which is helping most children to understand their own needs. Senior leaders have plans to further extend this work. All staff promote a high standard of behaviour and expectation across the school. This supports children to aspire to and reach expected standards in behaviour and, as a result, almost all children behave well.
- Almost all children are highly motivated to learn. They are enthusiastic and articulate learners who talk confidently to adults about their learning and what they enjoy in school. Staff have developed attractive learning environments both inside and outside the school building which support and enhance learning well. In a few classes, outdoor learning is a regular and skills-based feature of learning and teaching. Children are highly motivated when learning outdoors and share enthusiastically their learning on number, measure and teamwork. Staff are developing a whole school outdoor learning pathway. This will support all children to experience more frequent, progressive outdoor learning experiences.
- The newly-appointed headteacher and acting depute headteacher have built trusting relationships with children, staff and parents in a short time. They have high aspirations to develop consistent, high-quality learning and teaching approaches where teachers regularly evaluate and share good practice. Senior leaders have made a positive start to implementing

systems to review and improve learning and teaching. This includes, for example, observing and monitoring learning and teaching regularly with teachers. Teachers' engagement with high-quality professional learning is impacting positively on the quality, frequency and variety of children's writing.

- Almost all teachers share with children the purpose of learning and explain how they can be successful learners. Children should now be more fully involved in discussing and agreeing what successful learning looks like and the steps required to achieve this. Children engage well when learning is planned to include opportunities for choice and creativity. The majority of lessons are overly teacher-led and the pace of learning in a few classes is too slow. Teachers should increase opportunities for children to have greater ownership of their learning. This will support all children to make the best possible progress, particularly children working beyond expectations.
- All teachers use questioning well to check for understanding. A few teachers use questions effectively to challenge and extend children's thinking, encouraging them to explain their answers with evidence. Most teachers help children to use self and peer assessment, creating helpful checklists linked to learning. This is beginning to enable children to understand how well they are learning. In written tasks, teachers provide appropriate verbal and written feedback. Teachers should now plan regular opportunities for children to review and improve learning after feedback. This will help children to have a clearer understanding of their progress and next steps. Most teachers plan learning at the right level of difficulty to meet the needs of most children. In a few lessons, teachers should provide greater challenge and depth in learning, particularly for children who are working beyond expectations.
- Teachers have engaged in purposeful professional learning to extend their digital skills. Teachers' confidence in regularly integrating digital skills into learning has improved as a result. In most lessons, children have access to computers and teachers use interactive whiteboards well to support learning. This is impacting positively on children's motivation to learn. In a few classes, digital technology is used creatively to help learners develop new skills. These include, for example, the use of micro bits, artificial intelligence and to record daily mile progress. Teachers successfully develop children's knowledge in using digital tools and have plans to extend this work further next session across the local schools group.
- Staff deliver effective learning and wellbeing interventions for children who require help with learning or face barriers to learning. They evidence well the progress children make in reading, numeracy and in wellbeing as a result of these interventions.
- Staff are at the early stages of developing play-based learning. Children are demonstrating increased motivation in play-based activities that support them to be curious and creative. As planned, staff should engage in professional learning to understand the value of play. This should help them to be more confident in their approach and decide which model of play best suits their children.
- Teachers across the school use a variety of formal and informal assessment approaches to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They use standardised assessments extensively to monitor children's progress. Staff evaluate children's wellbeing and monitor any changes during the year. Teachers regularly share assessment information with support staff which helps them plan collaboratively for children. Teachers increasingly use assessment strategies well in their everyday practice.

- All teachers have high expectations for all children's learning. They make judgements on children's progress against their 'Kirkcudbright' standards. Teachers in upper stages have begun moderating standards in writing with secondary colleagues. Senior leaders rightly recognise the need to increase moderation of learning across the curriculum, within and beyond the school. This will support the further development of a shared understanding of children's progress and achievement of a level.
- Teachers effectively use local authority progression pathways to inform planning. They link Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to support coverage and delivery of the curriculum. Teachers involve children in the selection of contexts for learning. Moving forward, teachers should align assessment information more closely with planning to build on children's progress as they move through the school.
- Senior leaders have recently implemented more rigorous processes to monitor and evaluate learners progress through a whole school tracking system. They meet with staff regularly to discuss the progress of children and specific cohorts. Senior leaders should continue to build the capacity of all staff to use a range of data. This will increase staff confidence in the use of data to effectively plan interventions which support, challenge and meet the needs of all learners.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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

satisfactory

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

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, most children achieve national standards in literacy and numeracy. A few children are working beyond national expectations. A minority of children could be achieving national standards earlier and making even better progress in literacy and numeracy.
- The new senior leadership team have identified the need to strengthen further the accuracy of teachers' professional judgements across the school. They should extend the use of assessment, data and moderation to ensure attainment information is increasingly robust and reliable.
- Most children who require support with learning are making appropriate progress from their individual levels of attainment.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make satisfactory progress in literacy and English.

### Listening and talking

- At early level, most children take turns and share ideas. At first level, the majority of children listen well to each other and are confident when talking to adults. A few children would benefit from revisiting the skill of good listening. At second level, most children articulately answer questions and add their own view, with supporting evidence, during discussions. Most children demonstrate well the skills required to present to an audience. They need further opportunities to engage in discussions, asking questions of each other and building on their answers.

### Reading

- At early and first level, most children read aloud confidently and answer questions about a text. A few children would benefit from opportunities to form and share opinions with more confidence. At second level, most children explain why they prefer an author or genre. They answer questions accurately, with evidence, to show their understanding of the text. They are less confident at explaining the techniques a writer uses to influence or engage a reader. Children across first and second level should now have further opportunities to discuss texts in groups in order to improve further their reading skills.

### Writing

- At early level, most children write simple sentences accurately. At first level, the majority of children write at length using appropriate punctuation. They should now write in an increasing variety of different genres. At second level, the majority of children regularly write in a range of genres including factual reports and letters. They are developing the skills to make their writing more interesting to the reader. Children at second level should use a wider range of figurative

language to engage the reader. At all stages, children need a clearer understanding of their next steps in writing to know how to improve their work further. Across the school, a minority of children should be supported to improve the presentation of written work.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, most children at early and first level make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. At second level, children could be making even better progress.

### **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, almost all children correctly recognise and order numbers from 0 to 30. Most children are becoming increasingly accurate in counting on and back. They should continue to develop their skills in number formation. At first level, most children accurately round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They understand the place value of each digit in numbers up to thousands. At second level, most children are confident in place value. They would benefit from more practise in solving complex problems. At first and second level, children need further revision of fractions.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, almost all children identify and sort common two-dimensional (2D) shapes accurately. At first level, most children identify a few properties of 2D shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. They require additional focus on describing the features of 3D objects. At second level most children accurately plot co-ordinates and describe the location of points on a grid. They would benefit from further revision of scale in maps and models.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, children create pictorial displays of data collection. At first level, most children interpret data and answer questions from a range of graphs and tables. At second level, most children collate, interpret and present clearly a range of data linked to a topic. They use this data to successfully answer questions and explain the results. As a next step, children should use digital technology to display the information they collate.

### **Attainment over time**

- Senior leaders have reviewed attainment data for over five years to understand trends in school attainment. They understand where there have been dips in attainment for cohorts and individuals and use this information well to inform planning to raise attainment. Over recent years, a range of factors, including COVID-19 and a lack of moderation, has meant that attainment data over time is not fully reliable. Recent attainment data shows that children do not build on the positive levels of attainment gained in P1 as they move through the school. Senior leaders should now develop a raising attainment strategy to ensure all children maximise their progress.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Staff celebrate children's achievements in a variety of ways, including assemblies and posts on social media. This helps children to feel proud of their success. All children have opportunities to participate in the recently established LEAP (Leadership, Expression, Action, Partnership) pupil leadership groups. These groups provide children with a voice in improving their school. Children's involvement in LEAP groups is beginning to promote the development of skills in citizenship and communication. Staff have established meaningful partnerships with the local Rotary Club, Active Schools service, community choir and other businesses. These links further enhance the opportunities available to children to develop a range of skills.
- Staff, partners and parents provide opportunities for children to experience a wide range of clubs and develop skills in leadership and teamwork. A few pupils have worked towards



accredited Scottish Qualifications Authority awards in recognition of their wider achievements. These activities are developing learner confidence in sharing their successes as confident individuals and successful learners.

- Staff should develop plans to track children's achievements and capture the skills they are developing through these opportunities. This should help to ensure that no child is at risk of missing out and that children's skills are developed progressively.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff understand well the social and economic factors that impact on the lives of children and their families. They have taken positive steps to minimise the cost of the school day and signpost families to support. These include the local foodbank and breakfast club. The Parent Council successfully fundraise activities that reduce the cost of school trips.
- The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide targeted support for identified groups and individuals through additional staffing. Focussed intervention on literacy has resulted in children making progress, and in a few cases accelerated progress, in reading. This is developing children's confidence and resilience in learning and has been extended to provide targeted numeracy intervention. Senior leaders have recently developed approaches to track the impact of interventions. As part of this work, senior leaders should continue to regularly monitor interventions. This will result in approaches which sustain and accelerate progress and improve outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders follow local authority guidance to maximise attendance. They have implemented helpful procedures to support a few children and families, where attendance is below appropriate levels. They build trusting relationships with families and work in partnership with agencies to help children to reengage with education. This is impacting positively for a few children. Moving forward, they should continue to ensure attendance is a high priority which will support all children to reach their full potential.



## Other relevant evidence

- Children access an attractive school library with well-resourced books as well as class libraries.
- All children receive two hours of high-quality physical education every week.
- Children learn French as part of 1+ 2 language programme. In a few classes, children are beginning to learn British Sign Language.
- Currently parents are not consulted on the use of PEF. They are also not involved in discussion around school improvement priorities. Senior leaders should ensure parents are more fully included and consulted in these decisions and discussions.

## 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.