

# Summarised inspection findings

**Moorfoot Primary School**

Midlothian Council

20 December 2022

## Key contextual information

Moorfoot Primary School is located in the village of North Middleton. The school has 88 children in four composite classes across P1-P7. In 2020, 79% of children from P1-P7 were living in some of the least deprived areas in Scotland. In the September 2021 Pupil Census, 3% of P5-P7 children were registered for free school meals, compared to 15% in the local authority and 20% nationally. The school experienced COVID-19 related difficulties through staff absence in 2021. This session, the headteacher is head of two schools and the recent appointment of an acting principal teacher full time, ensures the school has a leader present at all times

### 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 school has a warm, inclusive and caring ethos underpinned by a commitment to the principles of nurture. The positive ethos is supported well by the school's vision, values and aims of learning, inspiration, friendship and enjoyment (LIFE). Staff work hard to maintain nurturing relationships and carry out regular emotional check-ins with children to support their wellbeing. Children interact very well with each other and staff. Most older children are articulate and confident. They show kindness and empathy towards younger children by supporting them as buddies in their play and learning and by modelling positive behaviour. The school provides calm, nurturing spaces for children who require quiet time or emotional check-ins. This impacts positively on learners' readiness to learn.
- Across the school, children use digital technology very confidently to enhance and support their learning. Children at early and first levels of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) used digital music to learn a song about Autumn. They accessed matrix barcodes to manage their own learning. Children progressed from rounding numbers to tasks which extended their understanding of numbers. At first and second level, children used assistive tools independently to support them to use adjectives in descriptive writing tasks. Children at second and third levels of CfE used online platforms skilfully to research a range of topics including trench conditions in World War 1 and biomes in science.
- Children engage particularly well with learning tasks when they understand clearly the purpose of learning and have a voice in shaping learning tasks. In most lessons, teachers build on children's prior learning by reviewing the learning outcomes from previous lessons. Teachers organise learning environments to support independence in learning and encourage children to take ownership of tasks. Younger children use visual timetables to sequence their day and ensure they are ready to transition to the next learning activity. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is too slow. This results in gaps in learner engagement, particularly when moving from one activity to another, when children need help or have completed a task. Staff should review approaches to managing learner transitions from one task to another.

- The headteacher and principal teacher have recently empowered all staff to take on leadership roles including nurture, literacy, numeracy and diversity. Staff carry out their roles with enthusiasm and a commitment to improving outcomes for learners. In all classes, teachers ensure that children understand the purpose of learning and check whether they have been successful. In the best examples, they revisit the success criteria to remind children about the purpose of learning and check their understanding. In most lessons, teachers give clear explanations and instructions supported by visual prompts for children who require additional support for learning.
- Senior leaders are working effectively with partners to develop projects to support professional development through research. These projects are linked to school improvement priorities and teachers' professional learning and development. Teachers aim to improve learning outcomes for children and share their professional learning through collaborative working.
- Staff continue to improve communication with parents and provide more opportunities for parents to support their children's learning. Parents value the recently introduced snapshot jotters because they illustrate clearly the skills that children have achieved and how well they are progressing. Staff should further develop their approaches to sharing children's next steps in learning with children and their parents. In doing so, they should involve children in setting personal learning targets.
- Staff are at the early stages of developing play-based learning at the early stages Staff should ensure that there are more purposeful interactions between adults and children to extend children's learning through play. Teachers need to develop further the school environment to support learning through play. They should continue to engage in ongoing and robust self-evaluation to ensure this approach offers sufficient challenge and builds on prior learning of children. In doing so, staff would benefit from professional learning and use of the early years national practice guidance, *Realising the Ambition: Being Me*. This will strengthen staff's understanding of learning through play and develop a full understanding of the role of the adult in the learning environment.
- Assessment is becoming an integral part of learning and teaching. Staff understand the need to use assessment data more effectively to inform planning and ensure children are appropriately challenged. Senior leaders have implemented a range of assessment approaches including Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA), single word spelling tests, a new reading programme and Midlothian Mathematics Planners. Together, these approaches are providing reliable data to benchmark children's progress and inform next steps for learning. The principal teacher samples children's writing, highlighting key strengths and areas for improvement and shares these helpfully with staff. Staff should continue, as planned, to increase opportunities to work together within the school and with colleagues in other schools to develop further their approaches to moderation.
- Teachers take children's interests and ideas into account when planning interdisciplinary projects. They ask children what they already know and what they would like to learn. Teachers include children's ideas in their planning. The support for learning teacher provides effective advice and guidance to colleagues to help them assist children who require additional support for learning.
- Senior leaders are clearly improving the school's procedures for planning, tracking and monitoring individual children's learning and progress. The principal teacher who is located permanently at the school has made a notable difference to leadership across a number areas. These include improvements in learning, teaching, assessment, professional development and support for staff.

- Staff now have appropriate plans in place to track children's progress over different timescales in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders recognise that they need to develop further these approaches across all curriculum areas and across the four contexts for learning.
- The school has effective systems for planning and tracking the impact of personalised support programmes for children with a range of additional support needs. Parents valued the quality of planning and monitoring for the most vulnerable children. Teachers should now use individual targets to support children to understand their next steps in learning.

## 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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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 attained expected CfE levels for literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Most children experiencing barriers to learning are making good progress from prior learning.

### **Attainment in literacy and English**

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and English. Staff have used interventions well to continue to close gaps in learning as a result of the pandemic

### **Listening and talking**

- At early level, almost all children listen well to their teachers and peers. A few require support to listen during group activities and taking turns to speak. At first level, almost all children listen and respond appropriately during group and class discussions. At second level, almost all children can express their ideas and views. Children at first and second levels now need to listen better and respond to the ideas of others using verbal and non-verbal cues.

### **Reading**

- Overall, most children are making good progress in reading. At early level, almost all children can use text maps to identify words and match these to pictures. At first level, most children can read aloud a familiar text with fluency and expression. A few require support to decode unfamiliar words. At second level, most children apply a range of strategies to read and understand new texts. At first and second levels, children answer literal questions confidently. They would benefit from more opportunities to develop skills in answering or generating evaluative and inferential questions.

### **Writing**

- The majority of children are making good progress in writing. At early level, almost all children can use a capital letter and a full stop in at least one sentence. At first level, most children organise writing in a logical order and use relevant and interesting vocabulary as appropriate for the context. At second level, most children create texts for a range of purposes and audiences. They select appropriate structure and vocabulary to engage or influence the reader. Children understand and can provide examples of figurative language such as similes and metaphors to engage the reader. They should now include these in their imaginative writing.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good, with most children making good progress.

## Number, money and measure

- At the early level, all children use practical maths materials effectively to help them understand addition and subtraction. Almost all children can double numbers to 10 and identify patterns. Children at early level use their visual class timetable effectively to link routines to time sequences. At first level, almost all children can confidently identify the value of each digit in a whole number with three digits. They can estimate and round to the nearest 10 and 100 successfully. They can find a simple fraction of a whole number and use a variety of coin and note combinations to pay for items within £10.00. Children can confidently tell the time and now need greater opportunities to apply these skills to solve practical time problems. At second level, most children can round to one decimal place and can demonstrate the relationship between simple fractions, decimals, and percentages. Children can solve successfully simple algebraic equations with one variable and can read and record time in both 12 and 24-hour notation. Children should continue to develop and apply learning in number, money and measure across the curriculum.

## Shape, position and movement

- At early level all children are beginning to explore, recognise and sort common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They explore the qualities of simple three-dimensional objects through construction activities. At first level, almost all children can confidently name the four main compass points and recognise a right angle. They are less confident in using appropriate mathematical language to describe the properties of three-dimensional objects. At second level most children understand the relationship between three-dimensional objects and their nets and can identify the radius and diameter in circles. Children need to consolidate and extend their understanding of mathematical language to describe a wider range of angles .

## Information handling

- At early level children are beginning to interpret simple bar charts and apply this knowledge including through their gold star display. At first level most children have successfully undertaken surveys using tally tables, to gather information about areas of strength and development within the school. They have analysed their results to provide feedback to their fellow pupils. At second level most children are confident in interpreting bar graphs, lines graphs, charts, and tables to extract relevant information..

## Attainment over time

- Accurate information provided by the school demonstrates that they are successfully raising attainment for most children. School data indicates that strategies are helping to close identified gaps in learning as a result of the pandemic. Senior leaders have identified inconsistency in attainment outcomes for children at second level. Senior leaders are aware that they need to continue to increase opportunities for professional dialogue to ensure consistency in attainment. They should do this through regular monitoring and clear feedback on improvements in learning and teaching. This will ensure professional judgements are reliable and contribute to plans to raise attainment.

## Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children's achievements both in and outwith school are valued and celebrated in a variety of ways including assemblies, gold stars, house points, the golden class book, and learner quality certificates. This is enabling children to better understand and celebrate that their work can impact positively on their school and wider community. As a result, children are developing their skills as responsible citizens, effective contributors, successful learners and confident individuals.

- Staff are beginning to track children's achievements, capturing personal achievements, wider achievements and their involvement in pupil voice groups. Staff should now use this data to identify children who are risk of missing out. They should plan appropriate opportunities to ensure that all children have opportunities to achieve more widely.
- Across the school, children participate in a range of committee groups that seek the views of children to help shape the life and work of the school community. The school values are helping children to work successfully together in teams. Through involvement in these committee groups, children are developing a good understanding of leadership roles and opportunities to improve their school.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is used well to target and support children's progress. Staff work successfully with a range of partners to provide equity for learners. Teachers identify children who require additional support. They track interventions and programmes to support literacy and numeracy have been implemented.
- Senior leaders monitor the progress of individuals and groups of children closely. Staff provide a range of effective interventions for children who do not make expected levels of progress or who have barriers to their learning. PEF is supporting learning and teaching to target and improve children's progress. The school works effectively with a range of partners to target and support children and families affected by poverty and adverse circumstances. The use of digital technology to support children in literacy and numeracy is having a positive impact on learning and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Teachers are collaborating with the local authority through the Equipped for Learning Programme to enhance children's learning through the use of assistive technologies. Children who receive targeted support to develop resilience in a nurturing way have improved their emotional wellbeing.



## 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.