

Summarised inspection findings

St Palladius Primary School

North Ayrshire Council

30 October 2018

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

- Children are very proud of their school. They respond well to the varied teaching approaches that encourage them to work collaboratively on tasks and activities. The majority of children participate fully, are appropriately challenged, and sustain interest well. A minority of children are not motivated sufficiently well, slowing the pace of learning for themselves and others in the class. This session, improvements in resourcing are beginning to remove some of the barriers to children's learning and improve their progress. We asked the school to continue to seek improvements in the learning and engagement of all children.
- Active learning approaches are in place across the school. These approaches develop well most children's skills of working together and independently. In active learning contexts, the majority of children's thinking is sufficiently challenged. Older children demonstrate their learning through a range of media, for example, video animations to show their learning about substance misuse, and record their reflections on books that they have read. There remains scope, particularly for children working at early and first levels, for staff to extend the use of play-based approaches, to capture children's motivation and respect their choices and interests.
- The positive ethos, promoted by staff across the school, is valued by children, parents and the wider community and supports children's positive engagement. Children speak about how inclusive the school is, and how the sense of 'family' supports them to learn. Rights education is developing well and reflected in policies and practice, and the school has achieved Rights Respecting Schools level one status. Children have worthwhile opportunities to set targets in their learning, helping them understand what they need to do to improve their work. Staff proactively encourage children to participate in the wider life of the school and community.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan very well, integrating assessment for learning confidently. Planning sessions with support staff are developing well. The school should continue to extend the active contributions and learning leadership from support staff. Teachers use questioning well to deepen children's understanding. Staff are focusing appropriately on developing their skills to support high quality feedback for children. 'Let's talk about our learning' discussions provide effective periodic assessment opportunities.
- The close working relationship of staff, and their strong teamwork, support their progress in sharing standards in learning, teaching and assessment. For example, shared learning sessions, peer observation and joint planning with the associated secondary school are having a positive impact on classroom practice and children's experiences in writing. These collaborative approaches are also improving teachers' skills in assessment. Children's skill development across the curriculum is carefully tracked using 'dot planners'. Staff have created

new guidance to plan and record children’s progress, based on effective self-evaluation of their literacy planners. Teachers effectively plan assessment as part of learning and teaching.

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.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- We found that, at the early stage of the school year when the inspection took place, most children are making progress towards attaining good overall standards in literacy and numeracy. The school is investing in improving the reliability of staff's assessments, for example, of children's achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level. The school is taking effective steps to address the needs of children at risk of underachievement, for example, using the Scottish Government's Pupil Equity Fund to provide focused staff support. Children's attainment in reading is supported by the school's partnership with parents, for example, encouraging the children to spend longer on personal reading to supplement their reading in school.

Literacy

- In literacy, children's attainment in reading and writing is good, and satisfactory in listening and talking.

Listening and talking

- A majority of children across the school are on track to achieve the level appropriate to their age and stage. Most children discuss features of familiar text. However, they are less confident in talking about their skills in depth. In group discussions, a minority listen well and respond appropriately to each other's ideas. At second level, most children understand inferential questions and a few articulate complex ideas and use specialist vocabulary in, for example, discussions about energy sources in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics contexts.

Reading

- Most children are attaining appropriate levels as they progress towards early, first and second levels in reading, appropriate to their stage in the school. The majority are developing higher order skills across different purposes of reading. In conversation with inspectors, most children working at first and second levels could name a favourite author. Building on the promising start at P1, staff should develop further children's reading for enjoyment, and extend their vocabulary through a wider range of authors and genres .

Writing

- Across the school, most children are developing good skills in writing. They respond well to the structured approach to writing which is taught in the school. Most develop an understanding of authors' techniques which they apply to their own writing. Staff should continue to improve the

quality of children's writing across the curriculum, developing their knowledge of appropriate styles and use of language.

Numeracy

- Children's overall attainment in numeracy is good, as they progress towards achievement of levels appropriate to their stage in the school. Children working towards second level show good problem solving skills in exploring aspects of mathematics which are unfamiliar. Whilst the majority of children demonstrate some basic mental skills, many working at first and second levels lack confidence in mental work. A small number of children attain beyond the minimum Curriculum for Excellence level expected for their stage.
- Most children working towards first and second levels show an awareness of the importance of numeracy in everyday life and across a wide range of careers. A few children working towards second level can discuss the importance of mathematics in the work of famous scientists.

Number, money and measurement

- Most children are progressing well towards achieving early, first or second level appropriate to their stage in the school. Children working towards first level show determination in finding the correct answer to mental sums, and in tasks involving simple time calculations. Most can identify numbers missing from a simple sequence. A few children working at second level can quickly identify number patterns, and most were skilled at calculating change in questions about shopping.

Shape position and movement

- Most children working towards first and second levels are attaining well in key aspects of shape, position and movement. Most children working at first level can describe a range of 2D shapes, and can point out examples of these shapes around the school. Most use an appropriate vocabulary of position and movement, when describing the location of items on a desk or on shelves, or when giving directions to find different rooms in the school. Most children working at second level show good knowledge of a wider range of 2D shapes, and of 3D objects. With support, most show thoughtfulness in estimating distances in a room, for example, adjusting their estimates as more information is made available.

Information handling

- A few children working towards the first and second levels can recall key skills in information handling, for example the use of simple graphs to present information. The majority of children have difficulty recalling skills or techniques used to gather and classify information. Few can give examples of how they have used appropriate computer software as tools for organising data. Evidence in children's jotters confirms that they have undertaken a range of relevant data handling tasks. However, at this early point in the new session, children's recall of previous learning in information handling is not strong.

Attainment over time

- Children's attainment has been consistently good, overall, in recent years. Across 2015/16, 2016/2017 and the most recent year to 2018, most children have achieved appropriate levels of Curriculum for Excellence in literacy and numeracy.
- Where children have not achieved these levels, for example, due to their needs for additional help with their learning, they have attained positive standards relating to appropriate individual targets. Staff monitor, track and record carefully the progress of children facing barriers to their learning, including those affected by social and economic disadvantage. Teachers and support

staff are skilled at working with these children, identifying specific needs and providing effective programmes of support. The school makes good use of the skills of partners, to enhance staff's capacity to provide well-focused support.

- The school recognises the challenge of making meaningful use of data when the numbers of children progressing through each stage of the school are small. Staff are skilful in using a range of assessment approaches to ensure that each individual child's performance is monitored and tracked carefully, and that a full range of complementary data is available. For example, staff make considered use of standardised assessments, alongside robust ongoing assessments, to form a rounded professional judgement of children's progress and any consequent needs.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- The overall quality of children's achievement is high. Almost all children achieve well across a range of experiences and activities, preparing them well as confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Children develop self-confidence through taking on duties to support classroom work and life in the school more generally. Almost all children enhance their skills through the school's broad programme of clubs and social events, which are led by teachers, support staff, parents, children themselves, the school's partners, and organisations and members of the community. The school monitors uptake closely, and takes action where staff identify children at risk of losing out, including those at economic or social disadvantage. House captains help at a local food bank, and pupil sports leaders work with children from a neighbouring school for a two-week programme of activities in a local sports centre. All children from P2 to P7 further extend their citizenship skills by serving on one of the school's committees. These include the pupil council, and eco, FairTrade, health and Rights Respecting Schools committees. Children from P1 organise and deliver the 'Christmas Post'.

Equity for all learners

- The school's approaches to equity are a defining characteristic, and relate directly to the value it places on all members of its community. For example, staff and parents cooperate with local partners to provide a free school uniform facility. Partners speak warmly of the sense of welcome and respect they feel in the school. Playing an important part, the Parent Council takes steps to ensure that it can provide advocacy for the whole community and parent forum. The school's arrangements for parents' evenings mean that all parents are able to attend, including those for whom work or other commitments make attendance difficult. These approaches to equity extend and enhance the school's work in striving for equity in learning and progress for all its children, through its commitment to providing support and challenge to meet all children's learning needs.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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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