

Summarised inspection findings

St James' Primary School

Renfrewshire Council

18 August 2020

Key contextual information

St James' Primary School is a denominational school serving the town of Renfrew in Renfrewshire. At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 580 pupils. The school was opened in August 2014 and provides a spacious and well-resourced learning environment for its diverse school community. The headteacher was appointed to the school in August 2019.

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 nurturing and inclusive culture and ethos, which reflects strong Gospel values. The senior leadership team and all staff nurture and support children well. They apply well the knowledge and skills they have gained and developed based on the local authority's nurturing relationships approach. As a result, children have a positive attitude to learning. The school's recently revised values; respect, commitment and kindness are visible throughout the school. Most children demonstrate these values appropriately in their day-to-day interactions.
- Across the school, children are learning about their rights and are developing their knowledge of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is enabling the children to grow in confidence as learners and to become responsible citizens. They are developing their leadership skills by being for example, digital leaders and 'mathletes'. They are also involved in and lead committees, for example, the library committee.
- Most children learn in calm, well-organised classrooms. Teachers motivate children to learn by creating interesting and enjoyable contexts for learning. In a few classes, children have regular opportunities to plan their learning and to learn independently. Senior leaders and staff need to increase the frequency and consistency of opportunities for children to lead their learning. Children should set individual learning targets in a range of curricular areas.
- Most teachers provide children with clear explanations and instructions about their learning and the steps they will need to take to be successful. In a few classes, children co-create the steps to success with the teacher. Across the school, teachers should develop further children's understanding of the purpose of their learning and their next steps. The majority of teachers use questioning effectively to clarify children's understanding of learning. Teachers should plan more opportunities for higher order questioning during the course of lessons. This should increase the level of challenge for higher attaining children and improve differentiation. Senior leaders deploy effectively pupil support assistants across the school to support children with identified barriers to their learning. Pupil support assistants receive training to deliver effective targeted interventions to support children.
- Children use digital technology well in the majority of learning experiences. Children research, take photographs, note-take using their devices and are learning to code and use a barcode matrix to support learning. They also contribute well to the school's social media platform

highlighting school events and their daily work. The majority of teachers use digital technology creatively to motivate and enthuse children. Teachers should develop further their digital technology skills and ensure equity of opportunity and access for all children. In a few classes, children have the opportunity to learn outdoors, for example, developing practical mathematics skills. Senior leaders and staff should develop a progressive pathway for outdoor learning. They need to ensure that all children have the opportunity to experience quality learning experiences outdoors.

- Teachers use a range of assessment information to support their professional judgement of children's progress. This includes summative assessments for literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. They use National Benchmarks well to support professional judgements of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (CfE) of attainment. Senior leaders should continue with their plan to develop a framework for assessment to provide valid and reliable assessment information across the curriculum. As recognised by staff, this should include high-quality assessment demonstrating the application of learning.
- Teachers use formative assessment well to support learning and teaching. They create learning intentions and success criteria for each activity. In most lessons, teachers offer specific feedback to groups of children. Children then reflect effectively upon learning intentions and success criteria and consider next steps in learning. This allows children to demonstrate awareness of what they have learned and to consider how they can be successful learners.
- Teachers participate in moderation of learning, teaching and assessment, within CfE levels and with stage and cluster partners. This professional development is strengthening their understanding of children's progress in writing and numeracy. Senior leaders should continue, as planned, to embed approaches to moderation to improve teachers' understanding of children's progress across the curriculum. Moderation of literacy, numeracy and cluster planning for science is supporting transition planning for children in P7 moving to secondary school.
- Teachers make appropriate use of long, medium and short term plans for all curricular areas. All teachers participate in planning with stage partners. This approach ensures that they have a shared understanding of progression in learning. As a result, teachers and senior leaders are developing improved approaches to planning to ensure that they meet the needs of all children. Teachers use progression pathways for literacy, numeracy, science and modern languages. These enable teachers to ensure progress in learning for almost all children. Senior leaders should now update and develop progression pathways across all areas of the curriculum. They need to ensure children have progressive experiences and depth of learning.
- Senior leaders are making improvements in how they support teachers to track progress and analyse data. Although in the early stages of implementation, teachers benefit from meeting senior leaders on a termly basis to reflect upon children's progress, attainment and wellbeing. They use information and data effectively to identify children who would benefit from additional challenge or further support. Senior leaders and teachers should continue with their plans to improve the analysis of interventions and outcomes for all children. This should include children who face additional barriers to their 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.

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

- The school's attainment data for literacy and numeracy indicates that overall, most children achieved expected CfE levels in June 2019. Most children experiencing barriers to their learning are making good progress from their prior learning. Senior leaders have recognised the need to develop consistent approaches to the teaching of writing in order to improve attainment from first level on.
- Overall, the range of evidence of children's learning supports the accuracy of the school's attainment data. Data provided by the school indicates that almost all children are on track to attain expected levels in listening and talking by June 2020. Most children are on track to attain expected levels in reading, writing and numeracy.

Literacy and English

- Overall children's attainment in literacy is good. Most children are making good progress across CfE levels.

Listening and talking

- Across all levels, children listen well to adults, are respectful when others are speaking and follow verbal instructions correctly. At early level, children listen attentively to their teacher and are developing skills in listening to each other and taking turns. At first and second level, most children contribute relevant ideas when working independently and in group work. Children should continue to consider and build on others' points of view as well as their own during group discussions.

Reading

- Most children are making good progress in their reading. The school has successfully developed a culture of reading across the school. The school received a national award as part of the First Minister's Reading challenge.
- At early level, children have access to a range of learning opportunities to develop their knowledge of letters and sounds. At first level, children show confidence when reading aloud. They use expression and share a range of strategies used to support them when reading. They explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction. At second level, children share their favourite authors, giving reasons for their preferences. They summarise the main ideas within texts read. Most children are confident to answer both literal and inferential questions.

Writing

- Most pupils are making good progress in writing. At early level, children have developed well their letter formation. They are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to write a sentence independently. At first level, most pupils write independently using correct punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. At second level, children write effectively for different purposes including persuasive and recount texts. School staff have recognised the need to develop both a progressive pathway and consistent approach to writing across the school.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Teachers' professional development is having a positive impact on children's progress and understanding in number and number processes. Children need to consolidate and apply a wider range of numeracy and mathematical skills regularly across learning.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children use practical materials effectively to help them understand addition and subtraction. Almost all children identify accurately half of a given shape. At first level, most children round numbers accurately to the nearest 10 and 100. Most are confident in adding and subtracting two and three digit numbers. Across the school, most children are making good progress in telling the time using analogue and digital clocks. At second level, most children select the correct calculation to solve real life problems. Most children describe well aspects of budgeting and financial management, for example, the benefits and risks of using bank cards. Across the school, children should continue to develop their mental agility skills in order to increase their speed and accuracy of recall.

Shape, position and movement

- As children progress through levels, most name and describe, with increasing detail, features of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At first level, children identify right angles in their environment. They use mathematical language associated with movement accurately to describe directions and turns. At second level, most children describe the relationship between three-dimensional shapes and their nets. Across the school, children need to apply and consolidate regularly their skills in shape, position and movement.

Information handling

- As they move through the school, children collect, display and interpret data within a few contexts. At first level, children demonstrate well their understanding of Venn and Carroll diagrams. At second level, children use accurately mathematical language to describe chance and probability. Overall, children across all levels need more regular opportunities to develop their information handling skills and to apply these across learning. This should include the use of digital technology.

Attainment over time

- The school provided a range of data indicating children's progress in achieving CfE levels over the last three years. This data demonstrates improving trends in attainment across all areas of literacy and numeracy. The school predict a further increase in attainment levels by the end of the current school session. In the last year, senior leaders have taken steps to improve data analysis by teachers and to strengthen professional judgements. This should ensure that the reliability and accuracy of attainment data over time continues to improve. Senior leaders should monitor more rigorously the progress over time of children who require additional support.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements both in and outwith school are valued and celebrated in a range of ways including at assemblies and the use of an online platform. Staff have worked effectively with partners such as Active Schools enabling them to provide a range of out of school activities. This has supported the school to achieve the sportscotland sport award at Silver level.
- The school is at the early stages of tracking children's participation in clubs, committees and activities within the school and local community. Senior leaders should track the skills children are developing for learning, life and work through their achievements in and outwith school.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a shared understanding of the socio-economic background of their school community. Senior leaders have taken steps to reduce the cost of the school day and ensure that extra-curricular activities do not incur costs to pupils attending. This session, Pupil Equity Funding is empowering staff to develop their skills in the analysis of data. Increasingly, staff make effective use of data to target support for pupils. Pupil Equity Funding is also enabling staff to participate in wellbeing professional development. The school has supported further the development of literacy through the effective use of a patron of reading. She works effectively alongside staff, pupils and families to develop their literacy skills. Senior leaders should evaluate the impact of these approaches on children's learning.

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.