

Summarised inspection findings

Kilmory Primary School

North Ayrshire Council

27 August 2024

Key contextual information

Kilmory Primary School is a small rural school situated in Kilmory, a small village on the south coast of the Isle of Arran. Kilmory Nursery Class is situated within Kilmory Primary School. The acting headteacher has been in post since August 2023. The school is part of a six school cluster approach, previously overseen by one headteacher. The post of headteacher for six schools is currently being advertised by North Ayrshire Council. Two acting headteachers and three acting depute headteachers share responsibility for six primary schools and five early years classes. Both acting headteachers currently share operational and strategic leadership of Kilmory Nursery class.

At the time of inspection there are 21 children on the school roll, who are taught in two multi-composite classes. The staffing compliment is 2.1 full-time equivalent teachers and one pupil support assistant. Almost all children live in decile five of the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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 friendly, welcoming and proud of their school. Staff work well as a team and know children and families very well. There are nurturing and positive relationships between staff and children, as a result. Across the school there is a warm, caring ethos. Children's rights are increasingly displayed across the school and children are supported well to develop an understanding of these. Most children demonstrate well the school values and an awareness of children's rights in most interactions with their peers and adults.
- Most children across the school display consistent and high standards of positive behaviour. Teachers use praise well to promote positive behaviour. All staff have clear expectations of children's behaviour and make effective use of kindness tokens and the house system to recognise and encourage positive relationships. Staff have identified ways to improve the learning spaces to meet the needs of all children. They have worked together to create calm boxes and quiet spaces. This is contributing to children saying they feel respected and looked after.
- Teachers identify well, children who have difficulty regulating their emotions and behaviour. They work with senior leaders to identify appropriate interventions to support children. These include time for children to work with the area inclusion worker to develop strategies to enhance children's readiness for learning. A few children need further, planned support to regulate their behaviour in class and in the playground. Senior leaders should develop further formal training on restorative practice. This will continue to support all staff to use a common language and approach when resolving any conflict which may occur. Children talk positively

about initiatives such as playground buddies. Senior leaders should extend opportunities for children to provide peer support in the playground, around the school and in classes.

- Most children are motivated and engaged in their learning when they work independently, in pairs and in groups. They respond well to praise from staff and work well with others. This positive attitude to learning is most evident when tasks and activities are stimulating and well matched to children's interests. All teachers should provide children with increased opportunities to make decisions about their learning. In most lessons, teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. They share with children the purpose of learning and how they can be successful. In a few lessons, teachers support children to co-construct criteria to identify how they will be successful in their learning. Teachers should now consider ways to include children more regularly in co-creating what success should look like. This will help children to identify their progress and next steps in learning.
- Teachers use digital technology well to support children's learning. Children access online games to consolidate recent learning in literacy and numeracy. Older children are confident in the use of digital technology to extend their research skills and present their learning. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to using technology across the curriculum to enhance children's experiences. Senior leaders have rightly identified that a next step is to develop a digital technologies framework. This should support children to develop their digital skills in a planned and progressive way.
- Staff are beginning to develop approaches to play-based learning. They incorporate playful activities into younger children's daily experiences. Staff should continue to engage with national practice guidance to consider the quality of spaces, experiences and interactions to promote effective play pedagogy. This will help to ensure that learning is progressive and allow children increased opportunities to lead their learning, encouraging creativity and independence. Staff should continue to evaluate the impact of their approach regularly to ensure it is improving outcomes for children. This will help to ensure that children consistently experience learning more closely matched to their needs.
- Teachers use the outdoor environment, such as the local beach, frequently to take children's learning outdoors. This supports children well to learn new skills and apply their learning in different contexts. As planned, staff should continue to develop a progressive programme for outdoor learning. This will enhance further children's knowledge of their local area and learning for sustainability. In doing so, the senior leaders should enlist the help of parents and community members to support the school in developing further approaches to outdoor learning in the local area.
- Teachers use questioning well to check children's understanding and make links to previous learning. A few teachers use questioning to build on children's responses and extend their thinking. Teachers should extend their use of questioning further to develop children's higher order thinking skills. Teachers provide helpful oral feedback and are increasing their use of written feedback. Senior leaders and teachers should now ensure that approaches to feedback are of a consistently high quality across the school. This will support children's understanding of what they are doing well and their next steps in learning. Teachers set individual targets for children in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. As planned, senior leaders should continue to support staff to have a more consistent approach to target setting. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to review their targets more regularly. This will ensure that they have greater understanding of their personal progress and will develop further their confidence in creating personal learning targets.

- Teachers plan over different timescales using local authority progression pathways linked to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. They use a helpful three-year plan to ensure children experience breadth of learning across the curriculum. In a few classes, children are beginning to contribute to planning their learning by sharing their interests and preferences. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to lead their learning and for greater personalisation and choice. As planned, senior leaders should continue to improve the planning process to support teachers to provide high-quality learning experiences for all children. They should ensure that assessment is an integral, ongoing part of planned learning and teaching. This will help teachers to ensure that learning is informed better by assessment information, including for children who have additional support needs.
- Teachers engage well in moderation activities with colleagues from the other primary schools on the island, focusing more recently on reading and writing. Teachers speak positively about the positive impact moderation activities are having in supporting them to develop their understanding of national standards. As planned, staff should develop approaches to moderation across a widening range of curricular areas. This will develop teachers' understanding of progression within a level and will ensure that all children are appropriately challenged in their learning.
- Senior leaders have produced a helpful assessment overview. This outlines when summative and standardised assessments will take place across the school year. Teachers use assessment of children's work increasingly well to inform children's next steps in reading. Senior leaders need to continue to extend approaches to assessment. This should include planned, high-quality assessments which give children the opportunity to demonstrate a wide range of learning in unfamiliar contexts. This will enable teachers to make robust, well-informed judgements about children's progress and their next steps in learning.
- The acting headteacher is at the early stages of developing a more comprehensive digital system to check on and monitor children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. This system has the potential to capture more fully the learning profiles of all children. Staff use the analysis of data to identify children that are not on track and plan interventions for children who require support for learning. Senior leaders and teachers should now use this information more rigorously to focus on improving attainment and achievement. They should ensure they record clear and measurable action points that they review regularly. This will help them to identify the interventions that make the biggest difference for children.

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

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

- At the time of the inspection, the school roll comprised of a small number of children at each stage. Overall statements have been made about attainment and progress to ensure individual children are not identified.
- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. In June 2023, the school's CfE data shows that almost all children achieved appropriate levels in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Inspection activities identified that the school's data is not yet wholly accurate, and a few children's attainment is lower than reported. Moderation work with schools across the cluster is supporting teachers' confidence in making professional judgements about children's attainment and progress, particularly in reading and writing.
- Most children who face barriers to learning are making satisfactory progress towards meeting their individual targets. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to ensure that targets for children with additional support needs are specific and measurable. This will enable them to evidence more clearly the progress children make.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English. A few children are making good progress. As a result of actions taken to improve reading this session, there are early indications that children's attainment is improving.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children are keen to talk about their learning and share their ideas. A majority of younger children listen well to each other and respond enthusiastically to spoken texts modelled by their teacher. At first level, a majority of children communicate clearly and audibly, taking turns appropriately during class discussions and when working with a partner. At early and first level, a minority of children require adult support to listen respectfully to the ideas of others. At second level, most children listen well to instructions and respond to the ideas of others appropriately. A majority of children offer their views confidently and are beginning to justify their opinions. Across the school, children now need to demonstrate their listening and talking skills across the curriculum.

Reading

- All children have access to a class library. Children speak enthusiastically about the range of books they can read. Staff should continue to develop children's love of books and provide all children with books to take home. This would encourage children to share their enjoyment of reading with their families.

- At early level, most children use their knowledge of sounds and blends to read simple words. They engage well with stories and are able to retell a familiar story. A majority are developing sight vocabulary of a few common words. At first level, most children read fluently, and a majority are developing their use of expression. Most children explain their choice of favourite books. A majority identify key features of fiction and non-fiction texts with support. At second level, most children read aloud with fluency and appropriate expression to demonstrate understanding. Most children identify the main idea of a text and respond to literal questions to show their understanding. Across the school, children need to develop their skills in answering inferential questions about the text they are reading.

Writing

- Across the school, children require support to apply punctuation and spelling rules to their writing. At early level, a majority of children form letters legibly and use a capital letter and full stop appropriately. A few children need to build confidence in writing independently, including through play. At first level, the majority of children identify and use verbs, nouns and connectives accurately in their writing. The majority of children at second level use appropriate vocabulary in their writing to suit their purpose and audience. Across the school, children need to write more regularly and for a range of purposes and audiences.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. Across all levels, children need to apply their learning in numeracy and mathematics in a wider range of meaningful contexts across the curriculum.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children use one-to-one correspondence to count accurately within 20. They should continue to develop their skills in mental calculations. At first level, the majority of children confidently round to the nearest 10 and 100. They count forward and back in twos and fives and convert pounds into pence and hours into minutes. At second level, children estimate well and are confident with place value. They read and record time in both 12 hour and 24 hour notation and convert between the two. At first and second level, children need to develop further their understanding of the correct order of operations in number calculations when solving multi-step problems.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children sort, describe and create patterns with two-dimensional shapes. At first level, most children identify common three-dimensional (3D) objects. They do not yet use mathematical language confidently to describe the properties of 3D objects. At second level, most children use mathematical language well to describe and classify different angles. They should develop their knowledge of complementary and supplementary angles and use this to calculate missing angles.

Information handling

- At early level, most children use knowledge of colour, shape and size well to match and sort different items. They use early counting skills to answer questions about information they have gathered or from a simple display. At first and second levels, most children collect information and use it to create tables and bar graphs. Children are becoming increasingly confident in collating and displaying data using technologies.

Attainment over time

- The acting headteacher is developing a more robust tracking system to monitor and track the progress of individuals, cohorts and groups of children. Working together, senior leaders and staff have been pro-active in addressing gaps in reading. They provide and manage interventions and strategies to raise attainment in reading. This has helped build and sustain children's progress in reading and increased the number of children attaining across first and second level. Given the small school roll and changing cohorts of children each year, attainment over time is a varied picture. Senior leaders and teachers need to continue to develop approaches to gathering data that will accurately illustrate attainment over time for all children. They should use this information to inform and evaluate planned school improvements.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff celebrate and value children's achievements through school displays, certificates and online platforms. Children speak positively about their achievements. Senior leaders correctly identify the need to track children's achievements more carefully. This will ensure that children who are at risk of missing out are supported and encouraged to participate.
- Children benefit from local partnerships in the community. They discuss the positive impact these partnerships have on their wellbeing and self-esteem. The local community invites children regularly to perform, such as at the Arran Music Festival and Day of Dance. Children's participation in the Arran Music Festival develops their musical skills and confidence.
- At all stages, children are developing their leadership skills through initiatives such as playground buddies and pupil council. For example, they lead learning during paired reading and plan playground games. These opportunities help children to be confident and contribute to the life of their school. These activities are supporting children to develop their skills for learning, life and work well. Staff should now support children to identify and understand these skills. This will support children further as they link the relevance of their learning to real-life contexts.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders monitor attendance regularly. Currently, the school's overall attendance is slightly above the national average. There are clear procedures to address non-attendance. The targeted support provided by the area inclusion worker is leading to improved attendance for a few children. Senior leaders should now ensure that procedures to address non-attendance are followed consistently for all children whose non-attendance is causing concern. They should keep detailed records of actions taken and the impact of interventions on improving attendance.
- Staff know their children and families very well. They understand the socio-economic context of the rural community and ensure equity for all. Senior leaders are committed to ensuring there is no cost to the school day. This includes supporting children to participate in a block of swimming lessons and providing school uniform and snacks as required. The Parent Council works effectively in partnership with school staff and fundraises regularly for the school. All children benefit from the resources and valuable social experiences offered. Staff link well with partners to provide children with a range of experiences such as after school clubs at Arran High School. This is helping to ensure equity of opportunity.
- The school is in receipt of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and staff have used this financial support to provide targeted and universal interventions in health and wellbeing and literacy. This is beginning to have a positive impact on attainment in literacy, particularly in reading. Senior leaders now need to demonstrate how staff are measuring the impact of these interventions.

This would allow staff to evidence how well they are closing the attainment gap caused by children's socio-economic circumstances. Moving forward, senior leaders should ensure that parents and children are actively involved in determining the focus of the PEF spend for their school.

Other relevant evidence

- The school's draft Promoting Positive Relationships policy is in the early stages of being shared across the whole school community. North Ayrshire Council have a Promoting Positive Relationships (PPR) overview summarising their expectations for whole school nurture and mental health and wellbeing approaches. This outlines key priorities for session 2023/24 and links to professional learning, training, staff wellbeing and curriculum support. In addition, the local authority has been undertaking a Supporting Needs review since 2020 and this implements the recommendations of the Morgan Review through a range of workstreams. The refreshed corporate policy on Violence and Aggression has been devised in collaboration with teaching unions, corporate health and safety and the Joint Consultative Committee. A new reporting system introduced in October 2023 identify any areas where incidents are high and link with establishments to ensure appropriate action is being taken. The local authority report and expansion of parent groups and school approaches to Building on Positive Relationships (BPR) based on the principles of Non Violent Resistance (NVR).
- All children receive two hours of quality physical education (PE) each week.

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.