

Summarised inspection findings

Elie Primary School

Fife Council

3 September 2019

Key contextual information

Elie Primary School is situated in a small harbour village on the Fife coast. At the time of the inspection, there were 38 children on the school roll who are taught in two multi-stage classes. A P1-P3 and a P4-P7 class. All of the children reside in SIMD deciles 5-7 with the majority being in SIMD 7. The school is part of a partnership with Colinsburgh Primary School. The headteacher of Elie Primary School is also headteacher of the partner school.

Session 2018-19 was a significant period of change for Elie Primary School. A new teaching and leadership team was appointed to the school.

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

- Relationships across the whole school community are positive, respectful and reflect the vision and values which are at the core of the school's work. The whole school community contributed well to the development of the values of Respect, Enthusiasm, Kindness and Honesty. Children are proud of their school and talk confidently about how these values impact on their lives. They believe that having these values makes the school a better place.
- Staff know the children well and support them appropriately in their learning journey. Children feel valued and supported to work well. They are encouraged to aim high and have big dreams. Children's voice is strong in the school and learners contribute fully to the wider life of the school through a range of well-planned leadership roles. Most children are engaged in their learning and work well on their own or together in groups. They have helpful opportunities which allow them to have choice in their learning. The majority of children make good use of available opportunities and lead their learning. This is still at the early stages of development and not yet a consistent feature of the school's work.
- Children experience quality learning and teaching across different aspects of the curriculum. Teachers plan for their learning beyond the classroom, including outdoors and in the local community. One positive example of this is the children in the community group who visit a local care home, engaging in activities with elderly residents. This group organised a community coffee morning which was well-attended by local community members. The group's stated aims and actions reflect their development as responsible citizens. Teachers provide clear explanations and are using questioning techniques well to check children's understanding and further their learning.
- Teachers plan work which ensures differentiated learning experiences for children across the multi-composite classes. They should now ensure that they provide further and appropriate challenge at each stage to support and enhance the learning of those children who are capable of more demanding work. A few children feel that lessons are sometimes too easy.

- Teachers deliver lessons which are well-structured, including ensuring that the purpose of learning and the outcomes of the lesson are clearly displayed. Children are developing skills in identifying how they will be successful in their learning.
- The headteacher regularly monitors learning and teaching across the school. In the shared learning discussions, staff discuss information on individual learners whose progress is monitored and tracked. The school has made a good start in using this data to plan next steps and should now take forward its plans to embed this more effectively as children set their own learning targets.
- Digital technology is used effectively by both staff and children to support and enhance learning across the school. Children's digital literacy skills are being developed in a progressive way.
- Teachers use a range of useful assessment approaches to evidence attainment in learning. This includes summative, formative and also standardised assessments. They are developing their understanding and use of holistic assessments. These are providing rich, challenging tasks for children. Staff are aware of the national benchmarks and use them appropriately to inform their planning. They use standardised assessments well to inform their planned learning. For example, their analysis of data arising from the Scottish National Standardised Assessments highlighted gaps in learning in literacy and numeracy, enabling staff to address this.
- A range of extended writing are displayed throughout the school. There are good examples of reflective formative assessment. Children have the opportunity to self-assess their work and to peer assess work of other children. Recent professional development undertaken by staff ensures that this good practice is consistent across the school. The school has identified gaps in children's learning through their own self-evaluation and have taken steps to improve the quality of written work. This will include target setting pages in jotters where children will record and assess their own learning targets.
- Teachers plan learning effectively using experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence. They make good use of progression pathways in literacy and numeracy and are developing the use of pathways for other curricular areas. The school is aware of the need to ensure that existing pathways are developed to reflect more fully the local context. Joint planning and moderation is a feature of the teaching in the school. This is beginning to have a positive impact on children's learning in a few areas of the curriculum. Teachers work collaboratively with colleagues from their partner school to plan learning. Whilst this is at the early stages of development, staff are positive about the benefits of this partnership approach. This is helping them to share ideas and resources and, develop a better understanding of the curriculum. They value particularly, the opportunity to engage in peer observations as part of their moderation activities. Staff should continue to extend this collaborative approach across the curriculum.
- Children are involved in planning aspects of their learning. For example, they are consulted on what they would like to learn as part of class topics. The school has correctly identified that this is an area to develop further.
- This session, staff have worked well to develop approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress in literacy and numeracy. This data, as well as other appropriate data, is used well as a basis for discussions at termly attainment meetings. Staff also engage in regular discussions about children's progress and attainment. As a result of approaches to assessment, tracking and monitoring staff have developed a clear picture of children's

attainment. We have asked staff to continue to develop their approaches to ensure children's progress across all areas of the curriculum is captured and information used to inform further actions.

- The school has effective planning arrangements in place to support children facing additional barriers to learning. These plans are subject to regular review, the outcomes of which are used to inform the effectiveness of interventions. This is helping to ensure that children's learning is being supported well. There is scope to involve parents and children more fully in this planning process.

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

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

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- As the number of children in year groups varies and is often very small, overall statements have been made about progression to ensure anonymity. Overall, most children are making appropriate progress towards Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy, with the majority doing this in numeracy.
- Inspection activities which included observing children's learning at all stages, sampling of children's work, engaging with children in class and in focus groups, agree with teachers' professional judgements for achievement of a level.

Literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy is good across the school. Most children attain or exceed appropriate levels. Most make good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Listening and talking

- Attainment in listening and talking is good. The majority of children listen to adults and to each other in a respectful way. They respond to questions appropriately. They are developing skills in distinguishing fact from fiction when listening to debate. In observed lessons children were exchanging information and summarising the main findings of their research. Most children communicate confidently with adults and other children in a clear expressive manner. Older children identify main ideas in unseen text, make notes and summarise main ideas.

Reading

- Overall, children's progress in reading is good. Most children enjoy reading and welcome the choice they have in choosing reading materials. At the early stages, children identify common words and read aloud simple texts. They predict events in simple stories and answer questions on characters. Across the school, most children read with fluency and understanding at an appropriate level. They identify readily different genres and author styles. They identify main characters and events. The majority of children predict outcomes of stories. A few children across the school are not yet skilled in answering literal or inferential questions on texts. Children working within first level, are gaining confidence in developing a range of strategies to decode such as reading to the end of the sentence and breaking words into syllables. Children undertake personal research in non-fiction texts to find information and explain meanings of texts in their own words. They are developing skills in discerning when text is written to influence their thinking such as in marketing and advertising.

Writing

- Overall, children's attainment in writing is good. Most children are developing skills in using notes to plan extended writing at an appropriate level. Records and predictions are written in

science with appropriate vocabulary being used. Pieces of extended writing by children working at first and second level demonstrate planning and redrafting skills, appropriate punctuation and sentence structure. The majority write at length.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. The majority of children are making appropriate progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children have gaps in their attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children can add within ten, find doubles, use coins and tell the o'clock time. They can order the days of the week and know the months of the year. Children working at first level need to improve their skills in patterns, fractions, adding three digit numbers and calculating change. There is a need to develop further mental agility skills for children in upper primary stages. Children are not yet able to apply their skills across their learning. Children working at second level round well but their skills in estimating are less well-developed. They can simplify fractions and find fractions of an amount. They are confident with time durations and can calculate answers to division calculations where the answer is a decimal fraction.

Shape, position and movement

- Across the Curriculum for Excellence levels, children display an appropriate understanding of 2D shapes and 3D objects. Older children knew the properties of these shapes and objects with some prompting. Children working at the end of first level and in second level are confident in their symmetry and angle and direction work. They are less confident with work on scale.

Information handling

- Children's skills in collecting, organising and displaying data accurately are not well-developed. Few children could recall learning in this area. Young children can organise objects and use tally marks. Those working at first level and second level have recently started to learn about uncertainty and chance.

Attainment over time

- The school can provide historical data showing the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels over a three year period. However, due to the variation in the size of cohorts and a changeable school population no valid patterns in data could be drawn from the school's overall attainment data. Robust systems are in place to track individual children's progress over time. The school is well-placed to ensure that information gathered is used for planning at whole school level and individual level. Overall, inspectors agree with the school that most children are making appropriate progress from their prior levels of attainment. The school does not currently gather progression data outwith literacy and numeracy. As planned, the school should track children's progress across a broader range of curricular areas. This will enable staff to have a clear understanding of the progress children are making in all aspects of their learning.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- The school, supported well by parents, provides a good range of clubs and after school activities. This includes football, multisports, hockey, visits to the care home, running and gardening. This is helping children achieve well. The headteacher has established an effective tracking system which includes capturing the development of skills for life and work, four capacities and wellbeing indicators.

- Children have represented the school at different sporting events and competitions successfully, gaining valuable skills in teamwork and resilience as a result. The sports committee within the school, is developing children's confidence by leading assemblies and promoting school clubs.
- The school is very well supported by members of the local community who give their time and expertise. Children talk animatedly about their achievements when learning outdoors and the importance of learning for sustainability. They are particularly enthusiastic about the work of the gardening club and are proud of their school grounds. As a result, children have a very good understanding of how to look after their local environment. The pupil communication committee is allowing children to develop leadership skills, including action planning for improvement. The result of which will be a newspaper distributed to all families.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a good understanding of children and their families. They have a good awareness of the socio-economic context of the local area. This enables them to provide a range of interventions which ensure individuals make progress and achieve. For children experiencing barriers to their learning there are appropriate interventions and clear targets which are helping them to make progress and achieve.
- The school has made good use of the limited amount of funds they receive through Pupil Equity Funding. They have used this on staffing, resources and literacy interventions. These are having a positive impact on children target through this work progress and achievement.

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.