

Summarised inspection findings

St Madoes Primary School and Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

24 March 2020

Key contextual information

St Madoes Primary School and Nursery class is situated in the village of St Madoes, in the Carse of Gowrie, Perthshire. The school's rural setting and grounds provide a stimulating outdoor play environment for the children. At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 127 children. There are six classes in the school, along with the nursery class.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- St Madoes Primary School has a welcoming, caring and inclusive ethos. The headteacher is well respected by staff, parents, children and partners, who find her to be approachable and supportive. The principal teacher ably supports her. They work well together and have established positive relationships across the whole school community. They promote the school values of 'Teamwork, Respect, Excellence and Equity' amongst all staff, children and parents.
- The school's vision was refreshed last session in consultation with staff, children and parents. The school's values are embedded in its life and ethos. The vision and values are reinforced regularly at school assemblies and in the termly planning process, which is displayed in all classes. These should be shared with the wider school community.
- Senior leaders and staff are developing self-evaluation procedures to enable them to make informed judgements about the standards and quality of provision and outcomes for children. They gather regularly the views of parents through questionnaires and ask for written comments at school events. Partners should also be involved in this process. Senior leaders need to ensure that rigorous self-evaluation systems are in place to ensure a sustained impact on improving learning and teaching. The senior leadership team needs to provide staff with clearer strategic leadership and direction to ensure improved outcomes for all learners.
- The school improvement plan's priority areas reflect the National Improvement Framework. These priorities were identified following consultation with staff, children and the Parent Council. The school improvement plan should be more ambitious and the pace of change needs to increase to improve outcomes for children. The senior leadership team and staff should focus on gathering evidence of how the school improvement activities impact on classroom practice and improved outcomes for children.
- The school's approaches to professional learning promotes staff collaboration and development of school priorities. All teachers plan and lead a school improvement priority and all staff are responsible for implementing change. The local authority 'Inspiring Schools' programme has been introduced recently to measure the impact of improvement planning. Teachers engage in professional learning networks involving teachers from partner schools to improve pedagogy. Teachers should measure regularly the impact of their professional

learning on outcomes for children to ensure that the changes they are making to their teaching are leading to improvement.

- Staff value the opportunity to participate in an annual professional review and development meeting with the headteacher. She encourages staff to engage in professional learning, which includes leadership development. Staff are encouraged to initiate change and to develop their leadership skills through leading workshops and in-house training sessions.
- The headteacher has devised a helpful quality assurance calendar to monitor the quality of children's experiences. This includes classroom observations and sampling of children's work. The senior leadership team should ensure that teachers receive constructive feedback with focussed next steps for improvement. These quality assurance activities need to be more rigorous as these are not yet having sufficient impact on school improvement. Senior leaders and staff should ensure that information from direct observations develops a shared understanding of high quality learning and teaching across the school.
- A few children are involved in the school improvement committee. They have created a child-friendly version of the school improvement plan, which is displayed effectively in the hall. This ensures that almost all children are aware of the school improvement priorities. The priorities are referred to regularly at school assemblies. Children involved in the committee discuss the progress of the priorities at their school improvement planning meetings. This is beginning to improve their understanding of how these priorities link to their learning in class. The committee should use *How Good is OUR School?* (2018), to increase children's knowledge and involvement in this process.
- The majority of children are given opportunities to be involved in leadership roles, for example, being members of the school improvement committee, the library committee and school grounds committee. The school grounds committee is involved in a biodiversity project working with the Greenspace Ranger and the St Madoes village biodiversity project. A few children also have the opportunity to be house captains. All children would benefit from developing their leadership skills by being members of a school committee. This would also help develop the children's understanding of skills for learning, life and work. Consideration should be given to developing these skills by gaining accredited awards, for example, Rights Respecting School's award
- The headteacher and staff understand the needs of children and their families. The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) provides a range of after-school clubs for children who previously did not participate in such activities. These clubs are run at the local Madoch Centre, and commendably, staff escort children there every day after school so that they can participate in a range of clubs. The senior leadership team monitor participation levels in these clubs to identify children who do not attend on a regular basis. They should monitor the impact of these activities on developing the children's skills.
- Parents are involved in the school through the Parent Council. The headteacher informs the Parent Council about the school improvement plan. The wider parental group would like to be consulted further at an earlier stage in identifying school priorities. Parents value the open afternoons provided by the school and their involvement in children's learning journeys and assemblies. At present, they are being consulted appropriately about reporting on children's progress.

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 interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Across the school, relationships between all staff and children are positive. The children are proud of their school and are eager to learn. Most talk confidently about the school values and demonstrate these in their classrooms and learning.
- Almost all children are engaged in their learning. However, the majority of lessons are too teacher led and children are unable to develop fully their skills as independent learners. In a few classrooms, children are actively engaged and motivated. They are given opportunities to lead learning and to work co-operatively with children from other classes to share their learning. They work with partners and collaboratively in groups. Almost all teachers should develop further their pedagogy to include active learning and play based approaches to enable children to lead their learning and become independent learners. Children should be encouraged to develop their investigation and enquiry skills to enable them to be more independent learners.
- Teachers use a variety of assessment approaches, including Scottish National Standardised Assessments, to support their judgements of children's progress and attainment. Staff at all stages, should use the National Benchmarks to support them in planning assessment activities. They need to develop a shared understanding of assessment and how it links directly to planning. Teachers provide children with written and verbal feedback on their progress. They need to develop a more consistent approach to providing written feedback to children. Across the school, children use self and peer assessment to identify their strengths and next steps in some aspects of their learning. Teachers use a variety of formative assessment strategies well to check children's understanding of their learning tasks.
- Teachers participate in moderation activities within the school and with their cluster schools. They need to plan regular opportunities to develop further their moderation skills to help them make more accurate and reliable judgements on children's attainment and also to inform their planning.
- The majority of teachers use questioning effectively to clarify children's understanding of learning. This is not yet of a consistently high quality across the school. Staff need to develop further their use of higher order questioning during lessons to improve the level of challenge and differentiation for children. In all classes, teachers share the purpose of learning and ensure that children know what they have to do to be successful. Most children talk confidently about the purposes of their learning. In a few classes, teachers co-create with the children the steps they should take to be successful learners.
- The school is developing its approaches to digital learning. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and screens and teachers use these well to support children's learning and

engagement. Children at all stages use laptop and tablet devices to motivate and engage them in learning activities. Children and teachers use e-portfolios well to reflect on their learning and to set targets for their next steps in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Sharing these profiles online with parents engages them further in their children's learning and enriches the learning process.

- Children have outdoor learning opportunities in an outdoor garden space. All classes need increased and regular access to planned learning outdoors to develop children's investigation and enquiry skills. Staff should make the best use of this valuable learning space. Children at the primary stages, enjoy supporting nursery children outdoors when using open-ended materials. The headteacher, together with staff, should make materials more readily available for children within their own playground to develop further their creativity and problem solving skills.
- Children are involved in planning their learning by using the class-learning wall. This tool helps children to review their targets, identify their progress, and allows them to reflect on the quality of learning and teaching. In a few classes, teachers use this well to encourage children to lead their learning. This approach should be developed consistently across the school to ensure high-quality learning experiences are delivered for all children. Teachers need to ensure that they differentiate and challenge effectively, taking account of prior learning and the needs of all children.
- The headteacher has termly tracking and monitoring meetings with teachers to help identify children who need greater challenge and those who face barriers to their learning. Staff identify and use helpful interventions to support these children. Systems are in place to track and monitor children's progress across literacy and numeracy. The headteacher, together with staff, should continue with plans to develop tracking and monitoring systems across all curricular areas to help ensure children progress at an appropriate pace.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders have identified the need to review and update the school's curriculum rationale to reflect its recently refreshed vision, values and aims. The school needs to take appropriate account of the uniqueness of the school, its semi-rural setting, and the local community within the rationale.
- Learning pathways for literacy are being used effectively to plan learning in literacy and English. These link well to the National Benchmarks. Teachers are using these learning pathways to plan, track and monitor children's progress in learning and ensure appropriate progression for all. Recently completed progression pathways for numeracy are being implemented to support teachers to raise attainment in numeracy across the school. Teachers need to ensure that these include pathways for learning outdoors.
- Senior leaders acknowledge the need for staff to work together to develop progression pathways across all curriculum areas. These should include opportunities for children to explore diversity and involve the school's partners to support and enhance the curriculum. These pathways should meet children's needs, build on their prior learning and abilities, and link to assessment and the National Benchmarks. Teachers need to improve their understanding of standards and provide more appropriate challenge for individual learners. They need to raise their expectations for what children can achieve and ensure attainment is of a consistently high standard.
- In developing curriculum pathways, staff should plan relevant and meaningful learning contexts for children. These should relate to their own experiences, needs and interests and enable children to apply their learning. The range of learning opportunities available to children should be extended beyond the school environment. Recently, P7 children have become involved in an intergenerational project working with elderly people with dementia at the Madoch Centre. They have found this experience to be very rewarding in developing their leadership and communication skills.
- The school has started to review digital learning, and the Parent Council has purchased tablets and laptops which enhance the digital resources available to support children's learning. School leaders recognise the need to develop the digital learning strategy and integrate this into all aspects of the curriculum.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Almost all of parents report that their children like school, feel safe and that staff treat children fairly and with respect. Almost all of parents consider that they are kept up-to-date about the work of the Parent Council and are encouraged to be involved in school life.
- Parents are kept up-to-date with the school's work through social media, text messages and school newsletters. They report that they receive helpful information about how their children are progressing with their learning. This is an area currently under review by the senior leadership team, in appropriate consultation with parents.
- The majority of parents are positive about opportunities provided by the school where they can learn together with their child. The children's e - portfolios encourage parents to share and respond regularly to their children's achievements. Teachers value parents' contributions to their children's learning through these portfolios. The majority of parents consider that their views are taken into account when the staff are making changes.

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- The headteacher and staff promote positive relationships across the school and support children and families. Almost all children are polite, kind and considerate. They demonstrate care and respect for each other, staff and for visitors to the school. Almost all children feel safe at school and have confidence to talk with a trusted adult about any concerns. They describe how to keep themselves safe within and beyond school as well as online.
- Staff have a shared understanding of Getting it Right for Every Child and the wellbeing indicators. A whole school approach to wellbeing should be developed further based on this knowledge to support children understand more fully how to use the wellbeing indicators to reflect on and improve their own wellbeing. Currently, teachers meet with children termly, on a one to one basis, to discuss their well-being using the wellbeing web. Staff contact parents where appropriate if any concerns are raised. The headteacher, with staff, should keep this approach under review in order to develop a focussed and regular profile of children's progress.
- Children's participation in roles such as the school improvement and school grounds committees helps them to apply their learning within and beyond school. Staff should incorporate children's rights into the health and wellbeing programme to support children make better connections between their learning in health and wellbeing and other aspects of their lives.
- Children are offered a range of interesting lunchtime and after school clubs. Staff, parents, past pupils and the active schools co-ordinator provide these. Children understand the importance of participating in sporting activities to improve their health and wellbeing. Teaching staff also provide non-sporting activities which engage more children purposefully in after school activities, for example, a sewing club. Almost all of children describe how the school is helping them to become confident and lead healthy lifestyles.
- Further work is required to deliver practical food activities for all stages. The school's approach to providing food across the day should be reviewed to ensure practice is consistent with learning around food, delivering messages in line with national dietary recommendations. Children need support to make meaningful connections between their detailed knowledge of food and health and provision in school.
- Staff's whole school approach to developing a positive mind-set is beginning to promote children's resilience across the school. The majority of children are using this approach to reflect on themselves as learners. Staff should continue to develop this further to deepen children's understanding of themselves as learners. Dyslexia Ambassadors have been introduced recently in the school. Commendably, this development was initiated by children and is supported by the principal teacher. These ambassadors are developing their leadership

and communication skills by highlighting the strategies available to support children who are dyslexic. This approach is developing further children's resilience and promoting diversity and equity.

- Staff have established productive working relationships with the Madoch Centre staff and Greenspace Ranger which improve children's learning experiences. They should extend further partnerships to involve children in a wider range of learning experiences. Staff should develop a progressive programme for outdoor learning to support and enhance children's skills through the delivery of health and wellbeing across the school.
- The headteacher works well with the principal teacher, teaching staff and support staff to ensure that they are proactive in fulfilling their legislative duties. They demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of current legislation, guidance, and codes of practice relating to wellbeing, equality, and inclusion. Staff engage in professional training, which helps them improve their capacity to support and care for children who have barriers to their learning. The headteacher monitors attendance and punctuality on a regular basis. Children's attendance is above the national average and there are no recorded exclusions. Key duties of the Health Promotion and Nutrition Act, and nutritional regulations are being met.
- Teachers use a variety of strategies and interventions to support children to overcome potential barriers to learning, participation and achievement. These children are well supported. Childs' Plans and individual educational plans outline clear, measurable targets which are reviewed regularly to ensure children make appropriate progress. Staff, parents and children are involved appropriately in this process and contribute effectively to the plans. Partner agencies are also involved appropriately in creating Childs' Plans and in evaluating their impact when considered appropriate.
- The support for learning teacher provides valuable input, by consulting regularly with teachers and support staff, to enable them to provide children with appropriate universal and targeted support. This is beginning to lead to improved outcomes for children and is closing the attainment gap. Pupil support assistants provide focussed support to children across the school. They have established positive relationships with children who have barriers to their learning. They provide well-planned, targeted support when required in groups and on an individual basis.
- Children's understanding of diversity, discrimination and protected characteristics is being developed through religious and moral education and health and wellbeing activities. They are at the early stages in learning about children's rights. Teachers should continue to embed learning about children's rights, diversity and equality into the curriculum. Teachers need to ensure that their work in developing progressive pathways for religious and moral education and health and wellbeing support further children's knowledge and understanding.

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 overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. There are children across the school who could be achieving more. Most children with additional support needs are making good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Literacy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- Overall, attainment in listening and talking is good. Across the school, children are polite, respectful, and articulate. Most listen and respond well to instructions from their teachers. At early level, almost all children engage well with others in class. They use volume and pace appropriately during conversations. At first level, almost all children contribute well during discussions, offering opinions clearly and audibly. They listen well to others and offer appropriate responses to build on the opinions and views of others. At second level, almost all children are confident to offer their own viewpoint whilst building on the ideas of others. They demonstrate good listening and talking skills, such as appropriate body language, making eye contact, and using appropriate pace and tone. Most children at second level contribute to discussions by asking appropriate questions, and offering an opposing point of view, whilst demonstrating respect for the views of others. They need to develop these skills further by debating and presenting to an audience. Overall, a few children across the school at each level need to develop their listening and talking skills.

Reading

- Overall, attainment in reading is good. Almost all children engage well when reading and at all stages, they enjoy reading books for pleasure. At early level, most children apply their knowledge of sounds confidently to read familiar and unfamiliar words. At first level, most children read with fluency, expression, and understanding, and use contextual clues to find information in a text. They talk about the main ideas in a text, demonstrate very sound knowledge of setting and characterisation, and make evidence-based predictions. At second level, most children demonstrate a very sound understanding of a range of reading strategies and talk confidently about genre, texts, authors, and writer's craft. Across the school, not all children are making the progress of which they are capable in reading.

Writing

- Overall, attainment in writing is good. All children write for a variety of purposes. At early level, most children use their knowledge of letter sounds to form words and to write independently and in response to pictures they have drawn. At first level, most children write independently for a variety of purposes. They use correct spelling, punctuation, and a variety of sentence structures in their writing. They are confident in their use of grammar, and use appropriate

structures to support the purposes of their writing. At second level, most children write for a range of purposes using appropriate form and structure. They write using extended vocabulary and complex sentence structure. They need to develop their skills in writing further by applying writing skills across other curricular areas.

Numeracy

- Overall, children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Across the school, most children have a good understanding of strategies to support number processes.

Number, money, measure

- At early level, most children count forwards and backwards up to 20. They write numbers independently, and most children are working with numbers to 50. Most add single digit numbers to make other numbers, and investigate patterns. At first level, most children show understanding of fractions, and a few identify equivalent fractions. They are confident with place value and using a number line. They confidently explain the purpose of zero as a placeholder. They switch confidently between 12 and 24-hour clock, and calculate money problems with accuracy. At second level, most children demonstrate secure knowledge of place value, estimation, and rounding. They are confident linking decimals, percentages and fractions. They demonstrate sound mental agility, and articulate a range of strategies used to complete calculations. Across the school, children need to develop and apply their learning in new and real-life contexts.

Shape, position, movement

- Across the school, children's mathematical language is developing well. Most children at the early stages recognise simple two-dimensional shapes. As they move through the school, children describe the properties of three-dimensional objects with accuracy. At first level, most children identify features such as the number of edges and faces. They identify angle properties and find right angles in two-dimensional shapes. Most children understand perimeter, and a few show understanding of area. At second level, most children are confident in their understanding of angles. They calculate accurately the area of simple compound shapes. They name different types of angles, and use the correct mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles within shapes and the environment. Across the school, children need to use digital technology more to enhance their attainment in position and movement.

Information Handling

- At the early stages, most children contribute to class charts or pictograms. They sort items with accuracy according to colour, size and shape. Across first and second level, most children use an increasing range of methods such as tally marks, bar graphs and pictograms correctly to display data. They describe clearly how they would gather information for specific purposes, for example using class surveys. Across the school, children need to develop further their skills through using digital technologies to support data analysis and when displaying graphs, charts and diagrams.

Attainment over time

- In recent years, children have continued to make good progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Attainment in numeracy and mathematics is slightly lower than the other key areas of children's progress. The school does not have attainment information on children's progress in areas other than literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Children with barriers to their learning in recent years have made good progress against their individual targets

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- All children in the upper stages are developing a broad range of skills, for example in leadership, through their involvement in groups and committees. The children speak confidently and knowledgeably about school improvement, and value their roles as leaders of learning with younger children in a well-established programme of paired reading. They are developing their skills as responsible learners and effective contributors through their involvement in these activities work. Children's achievements, including sports awards, are celebrated at weekly assemblies and are displayed across the school in addition to being shared with parents via the school app. Children are developing their citizenship skills through their involvement in the local community, for example, the intergenerational project.

Equity for all learners

- Children attainment and achievements are improving as a result of the school's interventions. Specific groups of children benefit through participating in a range of clubs. For example, children develop their skills and achievement in sporting and a few are developing life skills, for example sewing. Senior leaders need to monitor and track the impact of these interventions to ensure that children continue to achieve and attain.

School Empowerment

■ Teacher autonomy and opportunities for leadership

- The headteacher is empowering teachers to develop their leadership skills. She encourages them to be creative and to use their initiative. Teachers feel empowered to suggest areas for development and strategies, which will lead to school improvement. All teachers are involved in self-evaluation. They lead on priority areas in the school improvement plan and evaluate the progress made. Staff are empowered to make decisions about their professional learning through effective professional review and development meetings with the headteacher. She supports their decisions and encourages them to develop their leadership skills by accessing courses leading to accreditation. Teachers are involved in professional learning networks with teachers from other schools. They are empowered to take forward any relevant developments, which may arise from this learning experience. They feel empowered to work collaboratively and collegiately to improve outcomes for children. Support staff also feel empowered to make decisions and develop initiatives to improve children's learning experiences.

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.