

Summarised inspection findings

St Andrew's RC Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

18 February 2020

Key contextual information

St Andrew's RC Primary School is located on the town of Rothesay, Isle of Bute and provides education for children from the surrounding area. The current school roll is 52 and children are taught in three multi-stage classes. The school has undergone significant changes to leadership and staff over time. The acting head teacher has been in post for three terms prior to the current unforeseen absence. Since August, the school has been managed by a temporary senior management team. This is comprised of a principal teacher (acting) supported by a deputy head from another school.

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

- The school has undergone many changes of staff over a period of several years. Parents have expressed concerns at the turnover of staff prior to the appointment of the new acting headteacher. In the short period of time she has been in post, she has raised the confidence of all staff to support her clear vision for the school. This has created successfully a climate for change that is supported by the whole school community. Staff are clear about the need for improvement and are very willing to work together for the benefit of children and their families. All staff recognise the need for a bespoke vision, values and aims that better reflect the higher aspirations and expectations that have been set in motion. During this recent time of change, senior leaders have been successful in increasing and strengthening the range of community links to help support the planned refresh of the school's vision, values and aims. It will be important that this work fully reflects the social, economic and cultural context associated with the rural island context. It is vital that these changes are sustained over time.
- The relationship between the school and the Parent Council is positive and parents are eager to support the school with fundraising. The Parent Council appreciate the honesty and clarity of vision for the school that was presented to them by the acting headteacher. Parents are positive about the increase in communication with school and the more regular information available to them regarding their children's learning experiences and aspects of progress. Through revising the uniform policy, the school has worked well to establish a sense of pride and identity that is inclusive of all members. This work has been successful in promoting a sense of interconnectedness with the local community.
- All staff have welcomed the opportunity to lead on specific areas of improvement to enhance the curriculum on offer for children. Support staff have been empowered to deliver enjoyable and varied experiences for children. These approaches have been successful in reigniting an interest and learning in aspects of healthy lifestyles and the local environment. Support staff have been instrumental in providing continuity during a period of staffing instability.
- Support has been provided by the local authority to help maintain the operational aspects of the school during a current period of unforeseen change. The school needs further support to

continue to increase the pace of change and to develop a clear strategic plan to secure continuous improvement. The acting headteacher needs to continue to review the roles and remits of all staff to ensure these result in stronger learning outcomes for all children.

- Older children experience a growing number of opportunities that help them become more confident and begin to develop their leadership skills. They relish these opportunities and are willing and ready to have more of a say in school improvement. The pupil council has recently been reformed and children are looking forward to undertaking this responsibility. It is important that all children have opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Children demonstrate resilience in a changing environment. However, they are capable of more and require greater opportunities to develop their critical and creative thinking. They need to increase further their capacity to influence, respond and adapt to change.
- The acting headteacher recognises the need to create an evidence base to enable children's progress in literacy and numeracy to be better understood. She has begun to support senior leaders and teachers to better use data to identify strengths and gaps in each child's learning. This remains at a very early stage of impacting on children's learning.
- There is not a clear strategic plan for improvement. Staff need support to be able to engage effectively with self-evaluation approaches to secure continuous improvement. There is considerable scope to increase the contribution of children and partners in helping to identify and review areas of change. It will be important to ensure there are effective strategies in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of identified improvement priorities.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- There is a happy and positive ethos in the school. Relationships across the staff team and between staff and children are positive. Children are proud of the school and keen to talk about aspects of their learning. They are articulate and confident in their interactions with adults. Older children support younger children and they interact well with each other.
- Children are motivated and engaged when tasks and activities are well matched to their needs but this is not yet a regular enough experience for all children. As a result of differentiation not being well enough planned, children's individual learning needs are not always being met. In most lessons, tasks are too teacher directed and not sufficiently challenging for children. At times, the pace of learning could be brisker. There is a need to develop effective learning and teaching approaches within a multi-stage setting. Teachers should ensure that all lessons are age and stage appropriate and meet the needs of all learners.
- Most teachers share the purpose of the lesson. They are less confident in helping children to understand what successful learning will look like. As a result, children are not sufficiently clear on the purpose of what they are learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers use too limited a range of questioning to determine children's understanding. Children's higher order thinking skills are not well developed. Teachers need to embed effective questioning across all areas of learning. This will improve the level of challenge for the highest attaining children. Agreed approaches to providing high quality feedback needs to be developed to help children understand what they need to do to improve.
- Children engage enthusiastically when presented with opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. Staff work effectively with a range of partners in the local community to support children's learning experiences. Examples of teachers making effective use of the resource-rich local environment to enhance the curriculum are the recently introduced Forest School and Beach School. Children speak very positively about these initiatives. Staff should ensure that these opportunities are planned for using the appropriate experiences and outcomes and linked to the wider curriculum. Enabling children to apply their learning in new and unfamiliar situations will support deeper learning and raise attainment for all.
- There needs to be a stronger focus on children's participation in all aspects of school life. Children need clear learning targets and should be supported to review and track their progress. This should include their involvement in what and how they learn.
- There is a willingness by staff to engage in digital technologies to provide motivating and relevant learning experiences. However, children's learning is not yet being extended and enhanced through the provision of additional laptops. Teachers should develop the use of digital technologies to ensure children access these independently to support their learning

across all areas of the curriculum. This could include how best to use digital technology to support greater personalisation and choice.

- There are a range of planned interventions to support children who face additional barriers to their learning. Support is often provided outwith their classroom and this is interrupting learning for some children. The number of extractions and interventions need to continue to be carefully and regularly reviewed. This should ensure children do not miss key aspects of their learning.
- A new format has been introduced recently to support teachers when they plan but more work is needed to develop an approach that supports high quality learning. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to implement a coherent curriculum to ensure progression in learning within and across levels. This will ensure that children build on their prior learning as they move through the school.
- Approaches to assessment are not well developed and there are important weaknesses. An assessment calendar has been introduced this session to provide a more structured and systematic approach. Teachers are beginning to use a variety of assessments to monitor aspects of children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders have increased the use of standardised assessments with the specific purpose of establishing a robust baseline against which to measure future progress.
- Teachers have identified the need to work together to share good practice, and develop a shared understanding of national standards through moderation activities, within the school and with colleagues in other schools. Teachers need to make increasing use of National Benchmarks to help them make more reliable judgements about children's progress. Teachers would welcome increased opportunities to work in partnership with other schools to improve their confidence and understanding of children's achievement at a level.
- The school does not yet have a coherent and progressive approach to planning, tracking and monitoring. Staff need support to develop a clearer understanding of all of the assessment data collected to help identify any trends and patterns in children's attainment. Staff need to have robust sources of information in order to make accurate judgements about planning and interventions to support children learn. A robust system needs to be developed which will provide senior leaders and staff with an overview of how well all children are progressing as they move through the school.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff provide an interesting range of learning experiences and have successfully introduced Beach and Forest schools. They now need to develop a clear rationale for the curriculum. This rationale should take account of the design principles, reflect the current profile of the school and identify key curricular priorities. As planned, all stakeholders should contribute to this process to ensure it is shaped by the shared values of the school and drives forward improvement.
- Staff have recently introduced new planners to help focus on progress and introduce National Benchmarks. These are at an early stage of development. Staff need support to develop flexible learning pathways for all curricular areas. These pathways should include the development of skills for learning, life and work. As a start, it will be important to address the immediate need for clear progression pathways for literacy and numeracy to support children to progressively develop their skills and knowledge. Children need to have opportunities to regularly revisit concepts and apply their learning in a range of contexts. Pace through Curriculum for Excellence levels needs to increase to ensure more children attain the appropriate levels.
- Children's literacy and numeracy skills are not developed well enough across all curricular areas. Children are not yet making sufficient progress due to the heavy reliance on text books.
- As a result of each child having their own device, digital literacy skills are beginning to be developed. This is motivating most children to practise aspects of literacy and numeracy. In moving forward, staff should expand the development and application of digital literacy skills beyond the games currently being used and to target those children who need this approach to support their learning.
- Children benefit from working with a range of partners who provide music tuition and sports experiences. Careful tracking of children attending after school activities is needed to enable the school to identify those at risk of missing out. Staff and children are proud of their ability to use sign language and are eager to share this via social media and with the wider community. This is boosting children's confidence in promoting this form of communication and helping to promote diversity.
- The school's introduction of the Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS) programme is providing children with greater challenge and enjoyment across the curriculum. Moving forward, children need to be clear about the skills they are developing as a result of their engagement in these experiences.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- See choice QI.

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

satisfactory

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 school recognises that positive relationships are central to developing a whole school approach to wellbeing. This approach is being developed through an understanding of the social and economic context of the school community. Staff know children and their families well. As a result, children benefit from caring and nurturing approaches from all staff. Most children play well together and support each other in their learning. There is a strong sense of community across the school and this results in an appropriately calm learning environment.
- Children, staff, parents and partners are continuing to develop a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators. Children are developing a deeper understanding of what it means to show respect, be active and healthy as a result of focused work in these areas. Children need to develop understanding of all wellbeing indicators to enable them to self-reflect. They need to take steps to improve their own wellbeing to better inform their discussions with teachers. Over time, this is needed to help staff and children to track and monitor wellbeing.
- There has been a recent focus on building positive relationships within the school. Most children say they have someone to talk to if they have a concern. Older children have started recently to use a 'worry box' to alert staff to any concerns they have. Whilst most children feel safe in school, a minority do not feel that the school deals well with bullying. Senior leaders are planning to review the school's existing anti-bullying policy and update it to a relationships policy in line with local authority guidance. As part of this review, staff should ensure that children understand fully, both positively and negatively, the impact that their behaviour has on others. This would be helped by developing further a restorative approach to any disagreement. As part of this developing process, behaviour logs should include information about protected characteristics, and records of any actions taken. Senior leaders should review the log regularly to monitor any patterns and take appropriate action as a result.
- As part of the development of the health and wellbeing curriculum, senior leaders have introduced the JASS award. This is at an early stage of implementation. Both staff and children speak enthusiastically about the opportunities it is providing for children to engage in regular physical activity. Children speak about the positive impact on their physical and mental health resulting from the developing outdoor learning activities, such as Forest School and Beach School. Children are also being enabled to learn about safety using their local context.
- Almost all children feel the school is teaching them how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Staff, and a wide range of partners, are supporting children to have a better understanding of the choices they make and how this can affect their wellbeing. These include growing their own vegetables and preparing healthy foods. As a result of partnership working with the Active Schools coordinator, P7 children have been trained as young leaders. They work effectively with younger children across a range of sporting activities. Children are developing their social skills well through their shared interest in a variety of activities on offer.

- Staff identify children with barriers to their learning and information is shared to understand the needs and circumstances of individual learners. Additional support needs assistants and pupil support assistants work closely with children to help them overcome their barriers to learning. Children and parents need to be involved more fully in target setting to ensure children participate appropriately. Review meetings should include a focus on progress children make with their targets so that next steps in their learning can be clearly identified.
- Senior leaders are aware of their roles and responsibilities relating to statutory duties. They should ensure that care experienced children are considered for a coordinated support plan. Senior leaders are working to reduce exclusions and improve attendance. Staff should review procedures on the administration and storage of medication to ensure it is in line with guidance and good practice.
- A breakfast club, supported by a local business, is offered daily to all children and provides a welcoming start to the school day. A few children attend regularly and enjoy breakfast as well as the opportunity to socialise with their peers. The main duties under the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 to ensure access to free drinking water throughout the day, promote the school meal service and protect the identity of those entitled to free school meals are being met.
- Children need to develop an understanding of their rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and what this means for them in their daily lives. The school is at an early stage of working in conjunction with other schools in the cluster to help achieve this understanding.
- Children explore issues related to faith through learning activities in religious education. Religious events are celebrated throughout the school year, for example, at assemblies. The school needs to develop children's understanding of themselves as global citizens through more well-planned and progressive learning experiences.
- Inclusion is embedded within the ethos of the school and is celebrated through whole school activities such as British Sign Language Day, Down's Syndrome Day and Diabetes Day. Almost all children demonstrate an inclusive attitude. Children are not yet able to talk with confidence about their understanding of diversity. Teachers should embed discussions of all relevant protected characteristics into their teaching practices. Children need to develop their understanding and use of language to discuss issues such as prejudice.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

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

- There is significant scope across the school to raise attainment and achievement for all learners. Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is weak. A minority of children are making appropriate progress. Significant gaps in children's learning are evident across the school.
- Attainment over time does not show improving trends and staff recognise that the available data is not reliable. In order not to identify any of the small number of children working at Curriculum for Excellence levels, HM Inspectors have not used the usual qualitative terms.

Literacy and English

- Children are making satisfactory progress in reading. Overall their progress in literacy and English has important weaknesses.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children's skills in listening and talking skills are weak and not well developed. Children are articulate and very willing to share their views but too often they do not listen well to one another. They need to better develop skills of working in pairs and groups to help them listen, question and build on other points of view. They need to develop the skills associated with good listening and talking and use these to support and enhance their learning.

Reading

- Across the school, children's progress in reading is satisfactory. Children at the early level enjoy listening to stories, predicting words and identifying a growing number of sounds. Children are developing an understanding of phonics to help them decode unfamiliar words and they are confident at identifying rhyme. Children working at first level are beginning to apply their understanding of phonics and word recognition to read set texts. On occasions, children find their school reader of less interest than some of the other texts available. Children are becoming confident at making inferences through pictorial prompts. Those working at second level can describe an appropriate range of strategies to help them recognise unfamiliar words in texts. They read fluently and demonstrate appropriate understanding of reading with expression. They can identify the purpose of punctuation and grammar well. Children need to better discuss key features of texts, the role of authors and illustrators. At times, children find it challenging to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction and to talk about the features of different genres. Overall, children have appropriate comprehension skills and understand what they had read. Reading for enjoyment is promoted well across the school and supported by links with the class and local library and Book bugs in the early stages.

Writing

- Children's progress in writing is weak. Their skills are not well developed progressively across the school. Children need more challenging and exciting contexts for writing beyond text books and computer games. They need to understand what they have to do to improve their writing and this needs to be followed up consistently to ensure progress. The over-reliance on commercially produced resources is too often restricting children's ability to write independently. Children need greater experience of writing for a variety of purposes, for example, they have no experience of note-taking to help them learn.

Numeracy and Mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is weak. Children have significant gaps in their learning in these areas.

Number, money and measure

- Children round numbers appropriately for their stage of learning. Across the school, children are developing an understanding of number processes. Children are able to solve addition problems as appropriate for their stage of learning. Children are not confident when explaining what a fraction is or how it is used in everyday contexts. They are not confident or accurate when carrying out money calculations. Children need to develop their mental agility number skills when performing calculations. Children are able to tell the time appropriately for their stage in learning. They are not yet applying and developing their numerical skills across the curriculum.

Shape, position and movement

- Children describe two dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects using specific vocabulary but lack a depth of understanding. Older children identify angles but are not confident to draw angles accurately.

Information handling

- Children use a range of ways to collect information and sort it in an organised and logical way. Children need to apply and extend their information handling skills in meaningful real-life contexts. They should develop their skills using digital technologies to display data.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children have begun to record reflections on their experiences and achievements through the recently introduced JASS programme. This work is at an early stage of development. The majority of children show resilience in their daily learning. They concentrate and do their best to complete their learning tasks. There are a few positive examples through the school where children have had to persevere to overcome challenges. Children respond well to opportunities to use their initiative and are eager to contribute when given the chance, for example, making changes to the reading areas in the school. A new pupil council has been appointed and are looking forward to their first meeting. Children's experiences are enriched through the range of partners working with the school. It will be important to use information about these experiences more effectively to identify trends and identify gaps in opportunities for some children.

Equity

- All staff have a good understanding of children and their families. They have a good awareness of the particular context of the island. The Pupil Equity Fund has been used to secure materials and staffing to support aspects of literacy and numeracy across the school. A few children are becoming more confident with reading. It will be important moving forward to ensure that clear targeted interventions are selected in line with national and local guidance to ensure clarity of focus. These interventions should be planned with robust,

measurable targets to enable staff to monitor the impact on raising attainment and achievement of all children.

Choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

- The development and promotion of partnerships
- Collaborative learning and improvement
- Impact on learners

- Effective partnerships with a wide range of services, organisations and local community groups are a strong feature of the work of the school. Staff ensure that enhancing learning experiences for children in the school's unique local context are central to partnership working.
- Partners speak positively about the school's commitment to working with them to enhance learning within the school and community. For example, the allotment group allows children to learn about growing their own vegetables, which they enter into a local horticultural show. The 'iCycle' scheme prepares P6 to be aware of the importance of staying safe on the road and aspects of bicycle maintenance. The partnership with the local library supports the school well to develop a reading culture. Partnership working with the Mount Stuart Trust allows learners from across the Bute associated schools to work cooperatively on a boat building activity to better understand the local community.
- Staff are committed to developing effective partnerships with parents. The introduction of monthly newsletters from the acting headteacher have been well received. Parents value the ongoing communication to hear about the work of the school. The acting headteacher has taken forward improvement priorities following consultation with parents. These include additional reporting so that parents receive regular communication about their child's progress. Digital technology is being used to allow parents to support children with their learning at home. Senior leaders plan to review approaches to homework following consultation with parents.
- In response to parents requesting more opportunities for parents and children to learn together, staff volunteer to lead family learning events in line dancing and yoga. These have been received positively and are helping to build positive relationships, as well as promoting health and wellbeing. The parent council would welcome greater representation from the parent body.
- There are detailed transition arrangements in place for children moving to secondary school which staff and parents report as comprehensive and effective. The arrangements include transitions days where children sample a morning at Rothesay Academy. Arrangements are also in place with the Bute Early Years Liaison Group to support the transition to P1. A P1 topic, 'Going on a bear hunt', helps support aspects of curricular transition.
- The school should continue to develop effective partnerships with employers to help children better understand the skills for learning, life and work they are developing through the curriculum. Staff need to use the Career Education Standards to provide them with a useful structure to develop further this work.
- Communication and engagement with partners is well planned and leads to effective joint working. There is headroom for partners to be more involved in collaborating with school staff to monitor and evaluate the impact of joint work. A more strategic overview of how partnerships are developing skills and knowledge within and across curricular areas would be beneficial as part of the development of the curriculum rationale and progression pathways.

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.