

# Summarised inspection findings

**Harestanes Primary School**

East Dunbartonshire Council

27 August 2019

## Key contextual information

Harestanes Primary School is situated in the town of Kirkintilloch. At the time of inspection, there were 197 children on the roll. The headteacher has been in post for a number of years.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

good

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

- Staff and school leaders have a good understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school. Most staff have been in the school for a significant time and demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of children and families. Together with stakeholders, staff have worked recently to review the vision, values and aims of the school. Almost all staff regularly model and exemplify the school values of respect, kindness, honesty and perseverance. Children can discuss in detail how school values relate to them in everyday conversation and in relation to wellbeing, for example, at times of restorative discussion. It would now be helpful for senior school leaders to reflect on how they can engage children, parents and partners with staff in using the vision, values and aims to evaluate the work of the school.
- The school improvement plan (SIP) reflects priorities for improvement which are mostly agreed at cluster level. Senior school leaders are using assessment information, data and teachers' professional judgement well to identify improvement priorities which are more specific to the school. Priorities in the SIP are expressed in broad terms and associated with a number of intended outcomes. It would be helpful for senior leaders to clarify in greater detail what specific actions need to be taken, what improved outcomes are expected as a result and what evidence will be needed to demonstrate success. There is scope to engage parents, partners and children in identifying priorities for improvement and evaluating their effectiveness in delivering intended outcomes.
- The SIP includes a focus on equity and addressing the poverty-related attainment gap through the allocation of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). The main focus for PEF spending is enhancing the learning environment. A family learning worker is employed effectively for a day a week using PEF to support targeted interventions. She also signposts parents to other support services available and provides helpful homework support for children. This targeted work is aimed correctly at building relationships with parents who find it difficult to engage with the school. Through developing stronger relationships the headteacher is engaging parents more effectively in family learning and supporting children's learning. Senior leaders are aware of the need to evaluate the impact of interventions which are funded through PEF in order to ensure that they are resulting in improved learning outcomes for targeted children.
- Teachers have opportunities to lead aspects of school improvement through the three development groups which relate to the agreed priorities for improvement. They also are supported effectively by the headteacher to engage in practitioner enquiry or take responsibility

for curriculum leadership, and school committees and councils e.g. Fairtrade, global and health committees. These activities all link to some extent with the SIP. Overall, staff need to develop a more shared understanding of how all these activities combine in a coherent way to deliver improvement outcomes. Senior leaders should develop a more rigorous approach to ensure that the improvement planning process is in fact resulting in improvement. With the support from the local authority, teachers have been supported in delivering more engaging and active numeracy and mathematics. In addition, there is evidence of some improvements in learning, teaching and assessment across the school.

- Senior school leaders have worked with staff to develop a calendar of collegiate activities and quality assurance activities. Evidence gathered is being used appropriately to identify impact of change and improvement, for example in 'Play 2 Learn' and also to inform professional learning. Teachers are encouraged and supported to engage in professional learning, including professional enquiry projects, in relation to the SIP or other priorities identified by individual teachers. The headteacher encourages a culture within the school for staff to initiate change and look outwards. This is an important strength of the school. She is receptive to new ideas and changes in practice and encourages staff to reflect on their practice. Individual and cluster work in professional learning has been recognised in awards through the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and the Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL). We have asked school leaders and staff to reflect on how they can ensure that professional learning activities are coordinated and well-focused on securing improved outcomes for children through ensuring that barriers to learning are addressed effectively.
- Staff have undertaken relevant professional learning in relation to equality and equity to develop further their understanding of the barriers children may face in their learning. As a result, they have reviewed their approach to inclusion and equity. This includes a renewed focus on the cost of school day. The headteacher ensures that all children can participate in school trips and activities and items of school clothing and sports kit are available to children as needed.
- Children across the school have a variety of leadership opportunities, for example through pupil council, groups or committees and as peer mediators, playground buddies, play leaders. Through these they are developing confidence, leadership skills and an understanding of how to work effectively with others towards shared aims. However, children need greater opportunities and support to identify clearly and articulate ways in which they influence change and improvement in the school. A few children have had opportunities to lead master classes, for example, in cartoon drawing. This is enabling them to further develop specific skills, including in presentation, and lead learning for others.
- There are a few opportunities for children to learn about the world of work. The production of food from the school garden and its use in the 'cooking kitchen' is supported well by community groups and partners. This has the potential to support wider learning about the variety of roles involved in the production, manufacture, transport and supply of food, as well as sustainability, health and other global issues. While staff demonstrate a good awareness of the skills children are developing, the implementation of the national agenda around Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) is at an early stage. Staff need to address this urgently to ensure that children receive their full entitlements in relation the career education standard.

## 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

- Harestanes Primary School vision underpins a nurturing ethos across the school and is supporting a positive climate for learning. This important strength of the school is enhanced by the way in which staff are capitalising on the design and facilities of the school building. Staff work hard to create learning environments which are enhancing children's experiences, for example the imaginarium, cooking kitchen and the garden area.
- Most children are motivated and eager to learn. They participate well in their learning but are not necessarily actively engaged. There are too many tasks and activities that lack challenge and are not well-matched to the needs of children. Teachers should ensure that the pace of learning is brisk and that time in class is maximised for learning. They also need to review the impact of initiatives which detract from learning and teaching. More use could be made of the differentiation planner, under 'content, process, product and environment', that provides very clear advice and strategies for differentiating learning. Staff need to ensure that this is a more consistent feature of practice across the school to ensure that children are engaged more effectively in learning.
- At early stages of the school, there is not always an appropriate blend between adult and child-led learning across each session, and week as a whole, to ensure a more appropriate blend. There is a need for teachers to engage more frequently in conversation with children during play and use questioning to support children's thinking.
- When given opportunities to lead and direct aspects of their learning, children respond well and often demonstrate high levels of capability. They are very well-equipped to have a much greater input into shaping what and how they learn. Staff now need to provide greater levels of autonomy to children has the potential to improve their engagement so that they become more eager and active participants in their learning.
- In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. They share learning intentions and success criteria although these are of variable quality. In a few instances, children co-construct the success criteria that they then use to support self-assessment. In a minority of lessons, plenaries are well used to refer back to the learning intentions and success criteria.
- Children can talk about what they are learning but now need better understanding of their next steps and how to achieve these. Target setting now needs to be more regularly embedded within taught lessons. For example, children's personal targets should be used alongside whole class success criteria when reviewing progress. Teachers provide informative reports to parents outlining their children's strengths and next steps in learning. These are highly personalised to each individual learner. Senior leaders recognise that learning conversations between children and their teachers requires development.

- Teachers adopt a range of formative. They need to use periodically assessments to sample and pull together children's learning in a coherent way. Teachers are making some use of the national benchmarks to support them in assessing children's progress and achievement. This is supporting them in their overall professional judgement of when children have achieved expected curriculum for excellence levels. Teachers have commented positively on the moderation undertaken on mathematics and numeracy and writing at cluster level. We have asked the school to review their 'assessment week' to ensure that teachers use a range of evidence based on breadth, challenge and application of learning to determine if a children have achieved expected levels. In addition, teachers require to have a greater understanding of the moderation cycle so that they are aware of the cycle of planning learning, teaching and assessment.
- There are effective arrangements in place to monitor and track progress. We have asked senior leaders to build on the existing attainment tracking discussions to chart carefully the progress of children and implement interventions, where necessary. They should also support staff in developing their confidence in data analysis.
- Staff use a range of assessment data to inform their planning, ensuring that next steps are appropriate and children make ongoing progress. There is a need to ensure that children are provided with increased opportunities to apply their learning in different contexts as part of planned assessment. Senior leaders have developed a tracking system to provide an overview of attainment. They use this information to discuss attainment with teachers and identify where support or challenge may be required for learners. However the data populating the tracking system is too reliant on the results of standardised assessments. There is a need to take a more holistic view of assessment and generate data from a wider range of evidence in discussing children's progress and achievement.
- To ensure that children experience high quality learning and teaching, staff should use approaches to self-evaluation that are focused directly on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment itself. Developing a shared understanding of what constitutes effective learning, teaching and assessment has the potential to bring about greater consistency of practice. The local authority has supported the school in bringing about improvements to learning, teaching and assessment through support visits and validated self-evaluation activities.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Harestanes Primary School has a clear and shared vision and values which aspires to 'creating a community of lifelong learners'. Senior leaders and staff are aspirational for their school community. There is a nurturing and inclusive ethos which permeates the work of the school. We have discussed with the headteacher the need to develop a curriculum rationale to ensure that learning experiences are shaped by the vision and values. This will provide clarity about the drive to develop children's skills as learners, improve their ability to persevere and become responsible citizens who care for others and their local community.
- Progression pathways for numeracy have been refreshed and staff comment positively on the impact this is having on their understanding of progress and in turn, children's attainment. As planned, literacy pathways should now be reviewed to support progressive learning experiences for children within and across levels. These should be flexible and provide pathways for children where evidence clearly indicates that they have achieved second level before the end of P7. There is scope to increase pace and challenge for a few learners across the school.
- Progression pathways exist for all other curricular areas. Staff are aware of the need to review these and ensure they are being used effectively, to support quality assessment opportunities which take account of the national benchmarks.
- The school has a social studies framework which bundles experiences and outcomes and ensures breadth in the curriculum. Flexibility exists within this framework to allow children to suggest areas of study or to adapt contexts to take account of significant events such as the Olympic Games. There is considerable scope for learners across the school to have more influence on, and take increasing responsibility for, their own learning.
- The school have introduced a Play 2 Learn approach in P1 to support transition into school and offer learning opportunities which are developmentally appropriate. This is in its second year of implementation and staff speak positively about the impact on children's engagement, vocabulary development and readiness to learn. The school should continue to work with officers from the local authority to review, evaluate and adapt their planning as required to ensure this play approach supports progression and achievement. There is scope to introduce the principles of Play 2 Learn beyond P1 providing increased opportunities for children's play and creativity across the school.
- There are well judged plans to develop the school's garden area alongside 'the cooking kitchen' as part of an approach to family learning, the health and wellbeing programme and developing skills for employability. The 'Imaginarium', which provides interesting opportunities for loose parts play, is used as part of the P1 curriculum however older classes have lunchtime access to this on a weekly basis. There is scope for this to be built into planned opportunities for creativity and outdoor learning, developing a range of skills for learning, life and work. Children cannot always articulate skills they are developing or how they relate to the world of work.
- The school still has a computing suite which is timetabled to deepen and enhance children's learning in technology. There is scope for this facility to be used more effectively to ensure that children are developing a wider range of digital literacy skills. A set of digital devices are available and in a few classes staff use these well to support children's learning.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Almost all parents who responded to inspection questionnaires felt that the school works in partnership with them to care and educate their child. Parents commented on the school's welcoming ethos. Relationships between staff and families are positive which supports effective partnership working. Building on the already positive partnerships, there is scope to increase family engagement in learning so that they can better support their children's learning.
- Most parents said that they receive information about their child's progress at the right time. The school reports offer comment on how well children are progressing through Curriculum for Excellence levels. These reports are individualised to each child outlining their strengths and next steps in learning. Parents' evenings provide an opportunity for parents to meet with staff to discuss their child's progress and next steps in learning.
- The school benefits from a supportive parent council. The parent council is well-informed on school matters. The chair of the parent council recognises the need to broaden the representation of the parent council and engage more fully with the wider parent body.

## 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.



### 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 school's strategic approach to wellbeing is underpinned by the strong commitment of children, staff, and parents to the shared values of the school community. Children's wellbeing and inclusion lies at the heart of the work of the school. Children benefit from positive relationships with staff and their peers. It would be helpful for the school to review their new promoting positive behaviour policy to ensure it reflects the latest Scottish Government guidance. There is a positive climate in Harestanes reflected in very few behavioural referrals and exclusions.
- Children have a good understanding of the wellbeing indicators. They have self-reflected on the wellbeing indicators using the wellbeing wheel. The findings have been used to inform the discussions children have with senior leaders. In time, as this develops, senior leaders have the potential to be better placed to demonstrate improved outcomes for children more easily.
- The school has a range of activities aimed at promoting the ethos of the school and children's personal development. Arrangements for promoting children's sense of responsibility through 'official' roles as peer mediators, buddies, and committee members. Children in these roles speak with pride about their experiences in helping others and exercise a sense of personal responsibility. A strong emphasis is placed on children cooperating and working with others in all aspects of school life, and taking active responsibility for supporting others whenever help is needed.
- Children have a well-developed understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They appreciate the importance of a balanced diet, understand the role of exercise in maintaining physical and mental health and recognise the dangers to health of substance misuse. The school reinforce the importance of the need to be healthy by offering a wide range of sports activities delivered by support staff.
- Effective staged intervention model is in place for children requiring additional support in their learning. There are effective support plans in place with meaningful targets that are monitored and evaluated with partners when required. Senior leaders recognise that there is scope for teachers to better meet the learning needs of children requiring additional support. 'Team around the child' meetings with representation from external agencies provide coherent and integrated support to identified children.
- Support staff have positive relationships with children. They have a good understanding of the needs of the children whom they support. They are able to respond to the individual needs of children and when given the opportunity share these support strategies with classroom teachers.

- The school has a clearly understood attendance policy. The attendance in recent years has been in line with the national average. Senior leaders scrutinise attendance on a regular basis and intervene when necessary to support children and families. School based approaches such as 'soft start' are used to good effect and have enabled children to improve their attendance at school.
- The ethos of anti-bullying is embedded in day-to-day practices at Harestanes. There is a respectful and inclusive culture and ethos where respect, and promoting positive relationships and behaviour are highly evident. As a result, incidents of bullying behaviour are rare. Children have respectful, responsible and confident relationships with their peers. There are highly effective systems in place to support children who have experienced bullying.
- Senior leaders are heavily committed to social inclusion and addressing any barriers to learning children may experience. There is a strong conviction that all children have talents and have the capacity to benefit from their educational experience. This results in children who feel they can achieve success both within school and outwith. The school has close and effective working relationships with other agencies, that maximise its effectiveness in promoting inclusion. Commendably, the depute head teacher has effectively led work on additional support needs with children. There is a belief that all can achieve resulting in a positive attitude to learning and an optimism that all can achieve. Children are able to cite positive role models through their work on famous people who have dyslexia.
- Children's understanding of equality and diversity is not well-developed. There is a need to challenge negative assumptions and stereotypes. The curriculum should be reviewed to ensure that there is a greater positive appreciation of diversity.

### 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

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is good.
- From data provided by the school, almost all children are predicted to achieve early level in listening and talking and most will achieve early level in reading, writing and numeracy by the end of P1. Most learners across the rest of the school are on track to achieve in line with national expectations in all areas of literacy and in numeracy. A few children across the school have the potential to achieve more. There is a need to ensure that these judgements are reliable as Inspectors were unable to fully agree with teachers professional judgements.

#### Attainment in literacy

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy.

#### Listening and talking

- At early level, most children talk to share ideas, feelings and information. They retell stories and recreate scenarios as part of their play, for example using puppets. Across first level, most children are developing an understanding of features of effective listening and talking. They are confident sharing their learning with peers when undertaking presentations and improvisations during drama. By the end of second level, most children can express their opinions and preferences articulately. They understand the importance of pace, tone, emphasis and body language when speaking. Across the school children do not demonstrate the ability to apply their learning in listening and talking across the curriculum. Children do not always take turns when contributing to discussion and talk over each other. A few children could make stronger progress.

#### Reading

- At early level, most children demonstrate strong sound recognition and phoneme identification. Most children attempt phonetic blending and use context clues to support their understanding of texts. Those children on track to achieve early level demonstrate good word recognition. Across first level, children develop an understanding of the difference between fact and fiction. Those on track to achieve first level read familiar texts with fluency and expression and talk confidently about character and setting. They can explain their preferences for particular authors and styles of text. By the end of second level, most children can apply a range of skills to read texts and find information from different sources. They need to develop a greater awareness of how to identify the reliability of these sources. Children who have already achieved second level demonstrate a clear understanding of inference and the use of techniques such as rhetorical questions. Whilst children in the focus groups express a love of reading, they feel that books available in the school library could be refreshed with more up-to-date titles and authors introduced. Children in P7 express a need for a wider range of books with a greater levels of challenge to further their progress.

## Writing

- At early level, most children can write their own name and use sounds to write simple words. They write for a range of purposes as part of their play as well as in real contexts, for example in creating a simple questionnaire for their parents on childhood toys. By the end of first level, most children use appropriate punctuation and can use common conjunctions to link sentences together. They have a good understanding of the use of adjectives to provide detail and description to their learning. Children across second level write regularly for a range of purposes and have a clear understanding of the features of different types of text. They can use a range of different techniques to create atmosphere or introduce excitement in their writing. Children on track to achieve or exceed second level produce extended pieces of writing of a high standard.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. The school's recent focus on moderation of numeracy is supporting improvements in teachers' knowledge of pedagogy. As a result teachers are planning learning activities which are helping develop children's reasoning skills and understanding of mathematical processes. Children feel that the move towards more active learning has increased their motivation for learning in numeracy and mathematics.
- The school's attainment data identifies that most children are on track towards achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels by the end of the school year. Currently, the data is not robust. A greater emphasis on the application of mathematical concepts in real life contexts would ensure that the range of evidence used to inform judgements is more robust.

## Number, money, measure

- Across the school, children are developing effectively there in mental agility and mathematical thinking skills. At the early level, most children are confident in using appropriate mathematical symbols to add and subtract up to ten, and use related mathematical language. The majority of children are beginning to subtract from double digit numbers up to 20. Children can identify the number of items there are in regular patterns, for example in arrays, on frames and using dominoes. They can correctly identify coins up to £2. Children can read analogue and digital clock faces to tell the time on the hours. At the first level children can demonstrate their understanding of the commutative law. They can identify coins and notes up to £20, and use the correct amounts to buy items within learning activities. At first and second level, children can use different strategies to solve addition and subtraction problems involving two and three digit whole numbers. They can explain to others their reasoning for using their chosen strategy. Children working at second level can solve simple algebraic problems and equations. Children have a good understanding of place value in numbers up to and beyond 1,000,000. They confidently round large numbers to a given place value. There is scope for children to develop strategies to estimate answers to calculations or problems and apply these within real life contexts. Children can read and record time in several formats including twenty-four hour time. They need to develop and apply their skills more across a range of contexts.

## Shape, position, movement

- At early level, children are using programmable toys well to explore the language of position and direction. At first level, children can design their own symmetrical shapes using one or two lines of symmetry. A few, respond well to more challenging symmetry problems. At second level, children can use mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles. A few children are less secure in recognising and describing the properties of 3D objects.

## Information handling

- Children at the early level can interpret simple graphs and pictograms to analyse information. Children at the end of first level and who are starting second level can construct bar graphs with appropriate labelling and using a simple scale. Children working towards second level have completed simple pie charts within their interdisciplinary projects. Children need to develop their skills in handling and analysing data, including using digital tools to access, analyse and create data in real life contexts.

### **Attainment over time**

- Data available over the last three years indicates that attainment in literacy has largely remained steady with most children attaining in line with national expectation. Last year's P7 listening and talking figures were noticeably inflated. We have discussed with senior leaders the need to review how listening and talking is assessed across the school to improve the reliability of professional judgement in this area.
- Attainment in numeracy has increased over the last three years with most children achieving expected levels. This year's predicted attainment continues this upward trend. Children's grasp of mental maths processes and their confidence with calculations is improving since the introduction of improved pedagogy and the new numeracy programme.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Children are achieving through taking on additional responsibility and achievement. These include a range of leadership roles such as pupil council representatives, and members of various committees.
- Numeracy champs are identified in each class and the school regularly celebrates success in learning at their monthly achievement assemblies. Examples of successful learning and wider achievement are prominently displayed around the school and in the foyer.
- Children participate in and represent Harestanes through a range of clubs and sporting events. Most classes have achievement walls where successes outwith school are celebrated and shared. The school is beginning to track children's achievements. Staff now need to there is scope to develop this further in order to help ensure that all children can achieve and that the school can build on reflect on their skills and attributes.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff have a clear understanding of factors which might impact on pupil attainment. Senior leaders target Pupil Equity Funding to reducing barriers to learning for individuals. This includes employing a family learning worker to support parents and build relationships with those who do not engage readily with the school. This is having a positive impact.
- Staff have a raised awareness of the cost of the school day and aim to reduce unnecessary spend for families. Senior leaders support families sensitively to overcome financial barriers to trips, outings and the P7 residential experience.

## Choice of QI: 2.5 Family learning

- engaging families in learning
- early intervention and prevention
- quality of family learning programmes

- Senior leaders and staff are committed to developing their approaches to engaging families in the life of the school and in their children's learning. Various events take place throughout the session that include families in celebrating learning, such as the summer fayre, 'Meet the Teacher' and open days. Parents learn about the life of the school through an informative newsletter and the use of on-line media, such as twitter and 'Class Do Jo'. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive about the school's procedures for informing them of their child's progress in learning.
- Targeted support is offered to families who have been identified as having needs that are having a positive impact on their children's engagement with learning and the life of the school. The majority of families targeted engage in the planned learning activities. These include early engagement through P1 'Shared Start' and 'Stay and Play' sessions. Pupil Equity Funding contributed to the creation of the 'Cooking Kitchen', which is central to the school's approach to family learning. This well-resourced facility provides an opportunity for parents and their children to work together learning to cook nutritious meals. Together they are developing a better understanding of the importance of a balanced diet. The depute headteacher and family learning worker intervene appropriately during this activity to support parents and children in meeting their learning and wellbeing needs. The school plan to extend this model to include use of the school garden.
- Early indications are that parents feel that their family's engagement with children's learning has improved as a result of the school's approaches to developing family learning. The school should now strengthen their approaches to self-evaluation to focus on specific planned outcomes. This will give a measure of success in relation to the impact initiatives are having on family engagement in the life of the school and with children's learning.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.