

Summarised inspection findings

Longstone Primary School and Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

9 June 2020

Key contextual information

Longstone Primary School serves the area of Longstone and Slateford in Edinburgh. At the time of inspection, there were 246 children on the school roll across 11 classes. The school serves a diverse community with 9% of the roll being made up of children whose parents serve in the armed forces. This creates at times a transient roll as children join and leave the school. The senior leadership team comprises the headteacher and one deputy headteacher. Since taking up post in 2016, the headteacher, together with the deputy headteacher, has led the school through many changes of staff. This includes the development of a newly formed nursery team and their move to a purpose-built setting.

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

- In almost all classes, relationships between staff and children are positive. The majority of children report that they are treated in a fair and respectful way by their peers. The school is developing a range of interventions designed to support emotional wellbeing, in conjunction with local partner agencies, and staff have engaged in associated professional learning. These approaches are beginning to have a positive impact on children's engagement.
- In the majority of classes, there is a need to establish clear expectations around what constitutes a settled and productive working environment. Teachers should ensure that learning time is maximised and that transitions within and between activities are well managed.
- The majority of learning environments are attractive and well organised. The school should now consider how best to display examples of children's work to motivate and stimulate interest in curricular areas. Teachers need to increase children's awareness of skills and knowledge being developed across the whole curriculum.
- Teachers offer children an element of choice in the majority of lessons and make the purpose of the activity clear. In a few classes, teachers need to be more explicit when sharing the criteria for success. Children should be given more opportunities to identify how they can measure success and help to co-construct the criteria.
- Children are motivated by the use of digital technologies and opportunities to learn outdoors. The introduction of active and investigative approaches to learning in the early level is having a positive impact on children's engagement and enthusiasm for learning. Across all stages, teachers should incorporate more real life contexts to help make learning meaningful for children.
- The majority of teachers give clear and succinct explanations and use effective questioning to check children's understanding, but this is not yet consistent across the school. Children are

challenged appropriately in a few classes. Across the school, learning activities should be differentiated more effectively. This will help to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to fulfil their learning potential.

- Most parents report that they understand how their child's learning is assessed and that they receive regular and helpful information related to their child's progress at the correct time. Most children feel that the staff at Longstone Primary School help them to understand how they are progressing with their learning.
- Teachers have engaged in a range of professional learning opportunities linked to assessment and feedback. This includes practitioner enquiry in collaboration with a local university. Staff are positive about their involvement in this work. They say it is raising their awareness and developing their understanding about a greater range of learning needs. This work is ongoing and staff are at an early stage of identifying impact.
- Children's learning targets for literacy and numeracy are recorded in jotters. In most classes, teachers offer individualised verbal feedback and this effectively supports children's understanding of their next steps in learning. Most children working at first and second levels receive regular and detailed written feedback from teachers on their progress in literacy and numeracy. A suitable approach should be developed for children working at early level.
- Children are at the early stages of planning some aspects of their learning. The headteacher has correctly identified this as an area for development and has plans to extend children's participation opportunities in the school.
- Teachers use a range of formative, summative and diagnostic assessments to gain information about children's progress in literacy. The information gathered is used to plan interventions and support for individuals and groups. As a next step, all teachers should be more actively involved in analysing this assessment data. Teachers also plan assessments for the majority of curricular areas, based on the National Benchmarks. Attainment data gathered from these activities now needs to be recorded and evaluated as part of the planning cycle.
- Teachers have benefitted from their involvement in a range of moderation activities within school and with stage partners in their learning community. These activities have focused on developing a shared understanding of achievement within and across a level. As a result, teachers' professional judgements are becoming more robust.
- Teachers have been involved in developing progression pathways in literacy and numeracy to track children's progress. These have recently been strengthened by local authority progression pathways. Teachers are at the early stages of developing the use of pathways for other curricular areas. The school recently reviewed and bundled experiences and outcomes as part of their interdisciplinary learning approach. A next step is to review the impact of this work, to build on and reflect more fully the unique context of Longstone Primary School.
- The headteacher has developed effective approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress in literacy, numeracy and aspects of health and wellbeing. Class teachers are becoming confident in using the 'support for learning tracker' to help them plan for individuals and groups of children. The school has piloted the local authority's online tracker and provided feedback. It will be helpful to review both these supports to ensure staff have maximum flexibility and ease of access to an important range of valuable data. Teachers need support and training to help them analyse and use relevant assessment information. Attainment meeting discussions draw on a range of evidence and support teachers well. Staff also engage in regular informal discussions about children's progress and attainment.

- The senior leadership team meet twice a year with teachers to review planning, identify next steps in learning and teaching and discuss individual pupil progress. The headteacher recognises that this needs to happen more regularly. It will be important to include clear, agreed action points that can be reviewed. Approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring need to be more focused and regular with staff undertaking a more active role, for example, planning across a level.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

Good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- Overall, attainment is satisfactory in literacy and good in numeracy. Over recent years, children's attainment in numeracy has tended to be stronger than in literacy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English is satisfactory. Attainment in reading is good. Attainment in writing and listening and talking is satisfactory.

Reading

- At early level, most children blend sounds made by a combination of letters. They recognise patterns in words and explore rhymes.
- Most children working at first level read regularly for enjoyment and identify favourite authors and genres. They read familiar texts with fluency and evidence answers to inferential and evaluative questions. They make connections between texts and their own experiences. Children are less confident when distinguishing between fact and opinion. They need support to summarise texts and to offer opinions on characterisation and setting.
- At second level, most children read unfamiliar texts with accuracy and expression. They make appropriate predictions and identify effective use of vocabulary and punctuation. They answer a range of questions about texts, using contextual clues and prior knowledge. They should now develop their ability to create inferential and evaluative questions. Children working at second level also need support to improve their notetaking skills.

Writing

- The majority of children at early level produce detailed drawings which communicate a range of ideas and experiences. A minority of children are able to write sentences. However, overall, children need to develop their ability to write independently and use basic punctuation.
- At first level, the majority of children use a variety of planning formats. They make good attempts to include interesting vocabulary and organise their ideas. They need to improve spelling and punctuation and begin to use paragraphs.
- The majority of children at second level write in a fluent and legible way. They need to write more extended pieces and increase the range of punctuation and connectives used.
- Children at all levels need more opportunities to observe writing being modelled and to write regularly for a range of purposes. The presentation of written work is variable and requires improvement.

Listening and talking

- Children across the school need support to regulate and maintain appropriate volume and tone. They are developing an understanding of the skills which underpin effective talking and listening. However, this work is at an early stage and the impact is not yet evident.
- At early level, the majority of children listen attentively to adults and converse well with peers. They are keen to contribute to discussion.
- The majority of children at first level ask and respond to different types of questions. They need support to take turns and contribute at the appropriate time.
- At second level, the majority of children communicate clearly and audibly. They contribute ideas and opinions, but need to develop the ability to build on the contributions of others.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Children's achievements in aspects of number are strong. However, their progress in some other key aspects is less secure.

Number money and measurement

- Children working at the early level are making good progress in important aspects of number, learning to count forwards and backwards. Working towards first level, most children can double numbers, and are developing skills in rounding numbers. Children working at first level can use appropriate units of measurement for different contexts, estimating dimensions of a room with fair accuracy. Whilst they show some important mental skills, a few children find difficulty in calculations involving money and change. At second level, children show enthusiasm for numeracy tasks involving problem solving. They are skilled at adjusting estimates of distances as they are provided with more information. A few children show advanced skills in working with number sequences.

Shape position and movement

- Children working at the early level can describe some of the shapes in puppets and cars they are making, using appropriate terms for the different parts of their toys. At first level, most children show an appropriate knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects, using correct terms to describe these shapes. They demonstrate good understanding of position, for example, when giving directions for moving around a room. Working at second level, children show good mental skills in working on tasks relating to the idea of volume, including exploring new concepts. Children demonstrate sound understanding of three-dimensional objects, for example, when describing compound shapes made up of cylinders and hemispheres.

Information handling

- Children working at the early level can sort items into sets by different shapes and colours. At the first level, children show only limited recall of key aspects of information handling. With prompts, they can discuss methods of recording information. However, they show little recall of ways of presenting data, for example, through graphs. Children working at second level can explain how to use tally marks to simplify data gathering. They can suggest appropriate examples of graphs to use for different purposes, including line graphs and pie charts.

Attainment over time

- School data for the most recent four years show that, by P1, P4 and P7, most children achieved Curriculum for Excellence levels in reading and in mathematics, appropriate to their stage. The majority achieved appropriate levels in writing. At all stages, a minority of children

achieved beyond these Curriculum for Excellence levels. Based on increasingly robust and accurate assessment data, the school predicts these patterns to continue. Most children currently in P7 are predicted to achieve the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence level in reading and mathematics, and the majority are predicted to do so in writing.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Many children enhance their skills and self-confidence in the range of wider experiences which the school makes available. Almost all children enjoy and benefit from the school's programme of outdoor learning, which offers a number of activities from which the children can choose. Children develop craft skills and enhance their creativity in, for example, inventing games to play in the school woodland. Older children staff the outdoor learning café, offering scope to learn skills in hospitality. Children develop skills as responsible citizens by taking on duties in the pupil council, as buddies for younger children, and as Junior Road Safety Officers. Children enhance their confidence and skills through taking part in one of the many clubs run by the school and in the neighbourhood. Older children lead lunchtime clubs including skate station, dino club, art and musical theatre. This is extending their leadership capacities whilst providing their peers with opportunities for skills development. Children from P7 had performed Shakespeare's Hamlet with distinction, in a commercial theatre, earlier in the school year. Children's achievements, in school and beyond, are encouraged and celebrated through displays in the school, at assemblies, and through newsletters and social media. Importantly, the school tracks children's engagement with clubs to promote the idea that all children should take part in some enhancing experiences. It will be useful for the school to track the skills children are developing through these opportunities.

Equity for all learners

- The school's policies and practices on inclusion and support for learning provide a strong foundation to ensure equality and equity. Partner agencies make a number of valuable contributions. An explicit focus on health and wellbeing, including children's emotional wellbeing, provides staff with important insights relevant to equity. Staff have collaborated well to ensure that families face no barriers in respect of the costs of their children's school day. The introduction of the nurture room, whilst recent, provides an example of the ways in which the school takes prompt action and adopts important initiatives. These help meet children's and families' specific needs. Led strongly by the headteacher, the school closely monitors data on the achievements of children experiencing social or financial disadvantage. These examples confirm the school's specific strengths in promoting equity for all its children.

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.