Summarised inspection findings

Tullos Primary School

Aberdeen City Council

24 September 2024

Key contextual information

Tullos Primary School and nursery class is a non-denominational school serving communities in the Torry and Balnagask areas of Aberdeen. The school is part of the Lochside Academy cluster of schools. At the time of inspection, 295 children attended the school over 13 classes. The nursery class is registered to provide Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for 48 children at any one time.

The headteacher started in her post in January 2024. She is currently the registered manager of the nursery class. The headteacher is supported by two depute headteachers.
Attendance in the primary school is generally below the national average and exclusions are generally above the national average. 94% of children reside in SIMD deciles 1, 2 or 3. 53% of children in the primary school have an additional support need.

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	

■ Interactions between most children and most staff and children are positive and respectful. Most children agree that teachers seek their views about what they want to learn. All classes have developed class charters. In a few classes, these charters are linked to children's rights. As planned, staff should support the school community to review and refresh the school values and link these to their work on children's rights. This should ensure values are inclusive, meaningful and relevant to the whole school community and are embedded in the work of the school.

■ A minority of children can become dysregulated within the school and playground. This can be as a result of learning not being effectively matched to meet children's needs. Often, children remove themselves from classrooms without permission. This strategy disrupts their own learning and the learning of others within the class or across the school. In more significant cases, this behaviour can present as violence and verbal abuse towards peers and adults. In addition, a minority of children have been excluded from school this session. Senior leaders should ensure detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans are developed with parents, staff, and partners. This should ensure strategies to promote positive relationships are applied consistently and minimise incidents of disruption. Staff should work further with identified children on self-regulation strategies to support the establishment of more positive learning environments.

■ Across the school, teachers provide clear instructions in whole class lessons. Most children enjoy opportunities to work together in groups and pairs. Too many lessons are resource-based, teacher-led and taught to the whole class rather than different levels of ability. In a few lessons, teachers provide activities at different levels of difficulty. These are not yet of a high enough quality to meet the needs of all children. Tasks and activities do not meet the

1 | Summarised inspection findings
     Tullos Primary School and Nursery Class (5242428)
     Aberdeen City Council

learning needs of all children in most lessons. This is a key area which teachers need to address in their planning and practice. Across the school, children do not benefit from lessons which are appropriately stimulating, interactive and with appropriate levels of support and challenge. Senior leaders should work with staff to ensure that this is a focus for improvement. This will help to improve the engagement of children and accelerate their progress in learning.

- Teachers need to provide children with increased opportunities to take greater ownership and lead their own learning. Senior leaders should identify successful examples of where this happening and support the consistent introduction of these approaches across the school.

- In a few classes, too much time is allocated to activities which lack meaningful purpose. There is a need to ensure a more effective use of learning time. Senior leaders should monitor more closely class timetables and practice to ensure time is used more effectively, focusing on purposeful learning.

- In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning activities and how children will know if they have been successful. This information is not always clear enough for children to fully understand what is expected of them. As a result, children cannot always identify if they have been successful in their learning. A minority of teachers provide a range of written and verbal feedback to children about their work. This feedback is not yet of a consistent standard to help children know what they have done well or how to improve. Teachers should develop their use of high-quality feedback which helps children to make progress in their learning.

- In almost all lessons, questioning is used to check for understanding of the task. In a few lessons, teachers ask open-ended questions to extend children's thinking. Teachers should ensure that open questioning is used more frequently and consistently. This will help to support and challenge children to develop higher order thinking skills in their learning.

- Children welcome a few opportunities to learn outdoors. For example, they enjoy creating art and photography to support their learning about nature. There is significant potential to develop children's outdoor learning skills further. Currently, outdoor learning activities do not happen regularly enough and progression in this learning is not planned sufficiently. Teachers should make and undertake plans to address this.

- Teachers use interactive whiteboards to support teaching in all classes. In a minority of lessons, children make use of digital technology to support their learning. For example, children use digital technologies to play games in numeracy. These games do not always appropriately challenge children in their learning. Senior leaders and staff should now develop a framework for the delivery of digital learning. This should provide clear guidance on using digital technology to enhance children's experiences.

- Staff are beginning to develop approaches to play-based learning. This includes the early development and extension of spaces to support learning through play. At present, play experiences are not planned or structured. Teachers are not yet developing their interactions to extend children's learning during play. At present, play-based learning is not progressive and does not give children enough opportunities to lead their learning. It does not give sufficient opportunity to allow children to develop creativity or independence. Teachers should ensure this is addressed as they further develop play-based learning. Teachers need to continue to engage with national practice guidance to develop these aspects of play pedagogy. School staff and practitioners in the nursery need to work together more regularly to share practice. This will help to develop further play-based pedagogy across the early level primary classes. Teachers should continue to evaluate the impact of their approach regularly to ensure it is improving outcomes for children.

■ Staff developed the 'Tullos Learning and Teaching Standard' several years ago. This is not focused and lacks specific elements to support a shared and consistent understanding among members of the school community of what high-quality learning experiences should look like. The headteacher recognises the need to review this standard.

■ Teachers have worked with colleagues across the Associated Schools Group (ASG) to moderate children's writing. This is helping teachers to ensure professional judgements in writing are becoming more accurate. They should now work across stages within school and with ASG colleagues to develop effective moderation practices across all curriculum areas. This will support more robust judgement of levels of attainment and increase outcomes for children.

■ Teachers plan learning across different timescales based on Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and national Benchmarks. They should now develop how they plan learning to ensure that it builds progressively on what children can already do and how they apply this learning. Teachers need to ensure that children experience learning in all areas of the curriculum. This will ensure children receive their full entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum and address any identified gaps in learning. The headteacher rightly plans to develop systems to track and monitor children's learning experiences across all areas of the curriculum to ensure effective breadth and progression of learning.

■ Senior leaders meet with teachers termly to discuss how well children are progressing. They focus on the attainment and achievement of individual children. Currently, the extent and quality of tracking and monitoring procedures are not sufficient for teachers to be able to plan for and evaluate effective interventions. They do not successfully identify and support cohorts of children who may need extra support to progress in their learning. The headteacher rightly plans to develop further approaches to improve this. As part of this, senior leaders should support staff to monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions on closing gaps in children's learning.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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

■ Attendance is below the national average, and staff have reported additional challenges in improving attendance in recent years due to the impact of the pandemic on the local area. Persistent absence of 10% or more by individual children remains a challenge for school staff. Currently, over a quarter of children have less than 90% attendance at school. Staff track attendance and engage with families in an attempt to improve attendance. Staff have worked with partners to develop approaches to successfully re-engage a few children and families with attendance at school.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy
■ There is a need to increase the pace of progress for each child and improve the consistent use of data to track cohorts. Across the school the approach to using data provided is variable. Senior leaders should continue to build teachers' confidence in using a range of assessments, data and moderation to make robust professional judgements. This will improve the reliability of data for all children and contribute more effectively to plans to raise attainment.

■ Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is weak. Across the school, children do not make sufficient progress from their prior levels of attainment. At early level, most children have achieved appropriate Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in literacy and numeracy. As children progress through the school, the proportion of children achieving appropriate CfE levels in literacy and numeracy levels at first and second levels declines. There is a significant number of children who could be achieving more.

Attainment in literacy and English
■ Overall, attainment in literacy and English is weak.

Listening and talking
■ At early level, most children follow instructions and take turns when listening and talking in different contexts. Most children can hear and say patterns in words. At second level, the majority of children respond appropriately and communicate clearly and audibly. Most children are not yet able to share their learning with an audience. Children in P7 are involved in paired presentations, however they show limited awareness of the skills needed when presenting to an audience. Most children cannot apply their learning in meaningful and relevant contexts.

Reading
■ Most children at early level reading identify rhyming words and use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read. The majority of children at early level enjoy stories and re-tell familiar fairytale stories. At first level, children share what they liked and disliked about their chosen books and give examples of different authors. At second level, the majority of children show an understanding of both fiction and non-fiction texts. Children do not read often enough for

pleasure or have enough opportunities to access and borrow books regularly from the school library.

Writing
- At early level, there are a few examples of children using their knowledge of sounds to write simple words and sentences. Staff should provide further opportunities for children to develop their independent writing skills and through play contexts. The majority of children at first level punctuate most sentences accurately using capital letters and full stops and a few children use question marks and exclamation marks. Most children cannot apply their writing skills in different contexts or across the curriculum. The quality of writing is not yet of a high enough standard.

Numeracy and mathematics
- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is weak. In general, children do not apply their learning to real-life situations.

Number, money and measure
- Children at early level count forwards and backwards, recognise numbers to 20, partition two-digit numbers and add and subtract to 20. At first level, children round whole numbers to the nearest 10 and 100 and demonstrate understanding of zero as a placeholder. Children have not made appropriate progress in making multiplication calculations. Children use coins and notes to £20 and record amounts accurately using the correct notation. Children have not made appropriate progress in being able to solve word problems. Children working at second level use multiplication and division facts, read and record time in both 12-hour and 24-hour notation and carry out money calculations involving the four operations. A minority of children working at second level are not yet confident in using fractions, decimals and percentages. Children across the school are not confident in applying knowledge in real-life contexts.

Shape, position and movement
- At early level, children recognise common two-dimensional shapes. At first level, they describe the properties of common two-dimensional shapes and identify lines of symmetry. They name common three-dimensional objects. At second level, children describe angles using appropriate language. They understand perimeter, area and make calculations relating to these, appropriately. They identify diameter and radius within circles.

Information handling
- At early level, children gather basic information and organise and display their findings in different ways. At first level, children have experienced information handling tasks and read simple graphs and charts. At second level, the majority of children collect, organise and display data in a variety of ways. Children at second level do not yet have technological skills or knowledge to organise information in a database.

Attainment over time
- Children's attainment over time is inconsistent but generally declining. A few children are making good progress. The attainment of children with an additional support need is generally declining. Senior leaders have developed approaches to track children's attainment over time. Currently, these are limited in the data they cover. They are not maintained or used in a consistent way by staff so do not currently support improvement in children's attainment. The headteacher plans to ensure a more rigorous approach is adopted to track and monitor children's progress across literacy and numeracy. This should lead to improved outcomes for learners at all stages.

- Staff should ensure greater rigour in analysing data for groups and cohorts, such as children with additional support needs or children who experience other barriers to learning. This will support staff to identify trends in attainment over time. Staff need to have a clearer focus on evidencing how they are accelerating children's progress. This will help them to identify what approaches are most effective in improving outcomes for children.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children share personal achievements within and outwith school with their teachers. Children appreciate it when staff celebrate these achievements in assemblies and on displays in the school.

- A few children from every year group are members of the Pupil Council. As planned, staff should continue to explore and develop ways that all children can gain and develop important leadership experience and skills. This can include through the Pupil Council and other opportunities such as House team duties.

- A few children benefit from music and sports activities run by school staff and partner organisations at lunchtimes and at the end of the day. This is building confidence and skills for these children. As planned, school staff need to introduce further opportunities for children to get involved in clubs and committees. They should ensure that the involvement of children in these activities is tracked. This should help ensure that as many children as possible can be encouraged to get involved in wider achievement activities.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know children well and are mindful of challenges and barriers to their learning. Senior leaders, as a team, need to develop further effective systems to promote equity of success and achievement for all children. A free breakfast club is providing children with a healthy start to the day. Staff are keen to ensure that children do not miss out on experiences. They try to support children and families by tackling the cost of the school day. As planned, staff should prioritise refreshing and sharing more widely approaches to reducing the cost of the school day.

- School leaders have previously chosen to focus Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) on supporting the wellbeing of all children. These approaches have led to improved attendance for a few children. This has helped to contribute towards improving outcomes for them. School leaders have now correctly identified that there needs to be a clearer focus on effective interventions supported by PEF to raise attainment for children. As part of this, teachers should ensure that they are tracking rigorously the attainment and progress of identified groups of children. This is important to ensure that staff more confidently evaluate the impact of interventions to support children's attainment and achievement.

Other relevant evidence

■ The recently appointed headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school and a clear vision to take the school forward. To support this, there is a need for all senior leaders to review roles, responsibilities and remits to ensure there is positive progression and ambition for children in the quality of learning and teaching and raised attainment.

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.

9 | Summarised inspection findings
     Tullos Primary School and Nursery Class (5242428)
     Aberdeen City Council