

Summarised inspection findings

Canonbie Primary School and Nursery Class

Dumfries and Galloway Council

25 September 2018

Key contextual information

The headteacher manages and leads Canonbie and Langholm cluster. This includes the nursery class, Canonbie and Langholm primary school respectively, and Langholm secondary.

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 vision, values and aims have been reviewed recently with stakeholder involvement. The vision, 'to be a cluster of schools where everyone is listened to, supported and encouraged to aim high and do their best; where everyone takes responsibility for learning and every experience is a learning opportunity' reflects the context of Canonbie as being part of a cluster. Senior leaders recognise that the vision could be further refined to take greater account of the social, economic and cultural context of Canonbie. The values of 'respect, responsibility, and endeavour', are fully evident in the quality of the interactions between staff and learners and in the relationships amongst learners. These values are demonstrated in the care that learners show for one another and in their conduct towards the staff with whom they come in contact.
- Improvement plan priorities are clearly linked to National Improvement Framework drivers and How good is our school? (4th edition) quality indicators (QIs). They are currently too broad spanning across the Langholm and Canonbie cluster and do not take sufficient account of the needs of Canonbie Primary. Senior leaders need to ensure improvement planning targets are focused on aspects that result in measurable improvements in the quality of learning provision and increase learner's success and achievements. A clearer more explicit focus on learning, teaching and assessment as part of the overall drive to improving attainment would be beneficial. The local authority's 'collaborative review' has been very supportive in helping to inform future improvement plan priorities.
- The headteacher demonstrates strong core values rooted in social justice, integrity, honesty, and respect. As a result, she is able to secure the commitment of her staff when driving forward change. Her open and honest approach results in trusting relationships. Given that the headteacher has strategic responsibility for the cluster and is a shared head, the depute headteacher has a significant leadership role across Canonbie Primary School, including the nursery class. She is well respected by the local community, and has played an important role along with the headteacher in establishing much needed systems and processes for school improvement. Collectively, they have created a collegiate and consultative climate in the school where staff feel well supported. In moving forward, they would benefit from professional development on understanding the curriculum within both primary and early years setting, and how to more effectively lead improvement and change.

- Strong teamwork across the school is evident with staff providing good support for each other. There is a culture of collaboration within the school where staff share their ideas, practices and strategies. Time, space, support and resources are made available to allow teachers to meet to help drive forward priorities for improvement. Teachers value the opportunities to develop their professional learning and learn from each other within and beyond the school. This includes working with colleagues within their cluster, however it is important that practice being shared is leading to improvements. There have been a number of small tests of change being implemented by each classroom teacher. There is emerging evidence that these are having a positive impact on children's learning. Empowering teachers to take on a greater range of leadership roles and undertaking professional learning has the potential to impact more considerably on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school. This also includes developing children's engagement in the process of change. Children are more than capable in taking an increased role in leading change. Staff should consider using *How good is OUR school?* (2018) to support improvement in learner participation in self-evaluation.

- Senior leaders have an annual calendar of activities to monitor the impact of changes across the school. These include class observations, seeking the views of stakeholders, sampling forward plans and dialogue with teachers and children. The school have rightly identified in their improvement plan the need to develop a culture of self-evaluation for improvement. A more focused approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school is required to demonstrate clearer impact on outcomes for children. This includes up-skilling senior leaders and teachers in analysing and evaluating data so that they can demonstrate the impact of improvement arising from self-evaluation.

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

- The quality of climate and relationships is an important strength at Canonbie. There is a positive environment for learning and children behave exceptionally well. Children are motivated and keen to learn. They discuss their learning openly and enthusiastically with inspectors and talk confidently about their positive experiences in learning. The outdoor learning environment offers motivating and different opportunities for learning. Children respond positively to these experiences.
- There is a shared understanding of and commitment to learner participation amongst all staff. The culture within the school supports the view that children have the right to express their opinions on what is working well and what could be better. There is a genuine respect for children that lies at the heart of the culture at Canonbie. Children are very well equipped to have a much greater input into shaping what and how they learn.
- In most classes, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. However, lessons tend to have the same pace of learning for all children. In a few lessons, teachers demonstrate skilled use of questioning to support children to develop higher order thinking. More effective use could be made of questioning to develop children's higher-level thinking and enable them to contribute more to their learning.
- In most lessons, teachers discuss with learners what they are expected to learn. They share learning intentions and success criteria and appropriate experiences for achieving these. Cluster collegiate work has focused on improving learning intentions and success criteria. In a minority of lessons, plenaries are well used to refer back to the learning intentions and success criteria. Cluster work on target setting, in the form of new approaches to marking has the potential to support children's understanding of themselves as learners. Children are developing their confidence in discussing their targets, and are working during 'target time' to review these. Staff should continue with these developments so that children are fully aware of their strengths and next steps in learning.
- Overall, there is limited understanding of the use of assessment to support learning and teaching. In particular, assessment information gathered on an ongoing basis should be used to better differentiate tasks and activities to support children's progress. Staff are at the start of their journey in creating holistic assessments that provide evidence of children applying their learning in unfamiliar contexts. Working as a cluster provides staff with opportunities for moderation. Dumfries and Galloway's approach to moderation and its associated documentation provides a very helpful tool for teachers. Teachers should make use of these documents to review their understanding of the use and purpose of National Benchmarks in

order to clarify how these can inform professional judgements about children's achievement of a level. Approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring are at early stages.

- Overall, stronger leadership of learning is required so that teachers have a clear and shared understanding of what high quality learning, teaching and assessment looks like. This will help to support effective self-evaluation of their practice. It may be helpful for the school to use the local authority's teaching and learning policy, updated in 2018, as the basis for taking this work forward.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff have worked collegiately with cluster colleagues to create a progressive curriculum which takes account of the experiences and outcomes. They should now work together to develop an understanding of skills development across the curriculum particularly in numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing, ensuring depth, breadth and challenge at every level. Staff need to develop their understanding of where individual or cohorts children are on the pathway, taking prior learning and experiences into account. This will support children to make greater progress.
- Curriculum planning takes account of the four capacities and staff plan across the four contexts of learning. Children are encouraged to demonstrate the attributes of confident individuals, responsible citizens, successful learners and effective contributors to society and these are celebrated at assemblies. While the consistency of planning is improving staff, children would benefit from applying their learning in a variety of meaningful contexts.
- Staff have raised awareness of employability skills throughout the school with a focus on widening the aspirations for children. Staff ensure that the children are given a wide range of opportunities within and outwith the local area. The recent successful enterprise project enabled children from across the school to work together to develop skills and attitudes important for success in the work of work. Plans are in place to work with partners to formalise the recognition of the acquisition of these skills. Staff should continue to build links with community partners to further enhance the curriculum.
- All classes engage in a variety of learning experiences outdoors and use the outdoor space effectively. The inspection team noted children involved in numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing activities with staff confidently taking learning outdoors. Staff should now work with their range of partners to enlist their help to develop a skills progression pathway for outdoor learning.
- The use of digital technologies is evident within the school and children are being given the opportunity to develop coding skills. Children are using computers to consolidate and enrich learning in a variety of curricular areas. This should now be extended to include tablets, etc to enhance children's independence in learning.

2.7 Partnerships : Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents are overwhelming positive about provision and practice at Canonbie Primary. They are appreciative of the open door policy to communicate with both senior leaders and staff. As well as regular communications through newsletters, parents are welcomed to stay and play in the nursery, attend school events and are invited to school assemblies. They particularly appreciated the 'Harry Potter Open Evening' which provided children the opportunity to showcase their learning. All of this, is leading to the very strong partnership approach which is evident in the school. Workshops aimed at building parents knowledge and skills have been positively received by parents. They believe that they are in a better position to support their children's learning at home. Extending and strengthening this practice would be welcomed.

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

- Relationships are consistently friendly and trusting, within a strong sense of equality and fairness at Canonbie Primary. Children understand their rights and responsibilities and respond to situations accordingly. Staff's commitment to creating a positive and purposeful climate characterised by mutual respect, trust and confidence is strong. This is a consistent feature across the school. As a result, children have positive working relationships with one another and staff. Senior leaders have put in place positive steps to communicate to parents on how they deal with situations involving inappropriate behaviour, which are rare across the school. Children feel that they are treated fairly and with respect. They show genuine concern and empathy towards their peers. The wellbeing of children is enhanced through the individual support and pastoral care they receive from classroom teachers who know and understand them well. Children feel that they can share their anxieties with their teachers and feel well supported.
- Staff have sound knowledge and understanding of the needs of their children and are aware of the social, economic and cultural context of the local community. They could make greater use of intelligence gained through partners to inform their strategic approach to wellbeing. The depute head teacher is making good use of the wellbeing indicators to observe children and to record their progress. They are using the Wellbeing Wheel well to build up information on children's progress and to plan effectively. They are highly responsive to individual responses from children that highlight particular concerns related to wellbeing outcomes.
- The wide range of activities on offer at the school are promoting a healthy lifestyle. Children represent their class, school and wider community in a range of sporting activities. This encourages their self-worth and confidence and allows them to contribute to and participate in their local community. Children are developing positive attitudes both individually and as part of a group. Their participation in outdoor learning and the range of clubs on offer provides an important foundation for participation in experiences in physical activities and sport and in preparing them well for a healthy lifestyle.
- Staff are quick and adept at recognising children who may require additional support in their learning. The school have an overview of children who have additional support needs. Children benefit from having clear plans in place with targets that are monitored and evaluated over time. They also need to capture more fully the views of parents and children. For those without support plans, there is lack of evidence of the impact of strategies on improving outcomes for children with additional support needs. School leaders need to establish systematic and rigorous self-evaluation procedures to ensure positive outcomes for learners.

This includes evaluating the deployment and impact of support staff in ways that demonstrate the added value to children.

- The school has a strong inclusive ethos where there is a strong feeling amongst children, parents, staff and visitors that they are valued. There is a clear sense that children are known and treated as individuals by staff. Participation in whole school activities, house competitions and the focus on equity all result in children feeling a sense of belonging within a school community. The school have taken into account the local cultural context of Canonbie, and have developed approaches to promoting equality and diversity. This has resulted in the school working towards having a LGBT Charter.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

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

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

- The school's most recent collection of predicted data on Curriculum for Excellence levels show that that by the end of P1, and P4 all children are expected to achieve the appropriate level in literacy and numeracy. For P7, most children are expected to achieve the appropriate level in literacy and the majority of children for numeracy. Towards the end of second level a few are exceeding expectations, particularly in Numeracy and Mathematics. Through a range of discussions with children within class lessons and focus groups, the inspection team are not confident that all children are secure enough in their learning to achieve early and first level. The leadership team should work to ensure that professional judgement is being validated by regular, on-going high quality, robust tracking and monitoring process.
- The school has correctly identified sustaining improvements in attainment as a key priority for their school improvement plan. Regular planned attainment tracking meetings now have a more focused approach with staff able to identify barriers to learning and where supports are required. This should be further developed to ensure staff are able to provide robust evidence of the impact strategies are having on children's attainment. Senior leaders recognise that there is significant scope for raising children's attainment across the school. The school now needs to track more robustly the progress and attainment of different groups of learners and individuals to ensure all children make the best possible progress. Inspection evidence indicates that children could perform better if pace and challenge were improved.

Attainment over time

- Overall there is no consistency in improvement over time. Staff are beginning to engage with attainment data. However they now need to track individual progress throughout a year as well as year on year. As yet there is little evidence to demonstrate the impact of interventions put into place to raise attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English, with the exception of second level where children are making good progress.
- Within the early level most children are developing their blending skills and are able to identify some tricky words with increasing confidence. Staff need to ensure that all children are able to differentiate between letter sounds and names and can read with increasing fluency. At the first level children are able to describe some features of non-fiction and fiction texts and are able to discuss their preference. They were able to talk about developing the comprehension skill of prediction. Staff should continue to use Bloom's questions, ensuring that the skills and

strategies being developed are explicitly stated to the children. Children at the second level are able to read with confidence and fluency, using expression effectively and appropriately. They can identify a variety of authors that they enjoy reading and are able to justify their choices. They are able to identify features of a writer's style and showed appreciation for their favourite feature: the ellipsis. They are able to identify and evaluate the features of a persuasive text. Almost all the children spoke with enthusiasm at being involved in the million word challenge and could state how many words they had read to date. Senior leaders should ensure that all staff are confident in the development of reading strategies so that skills development is brisk and supports can be put into place timeously.

- Listening and talking - Across the school children respond to each other and adults in a respectful, courteous way. Children at the early level are able to listen well and respond to instructions. They have been involved in a talking, listening and questioning programme which staff report has improved children's confidence and increased their vocabulary. At the first level children are able to communicate clearly and respond to the views of others. They speak with expression and aware how to engage the listener. Children who are secure at the second level demonstrated the ability to discuss features of a wide range of text. They are articulate and able to express their views clearly. They interact very well with each other and are able to build on the ideas of others confidently.
- Writing - At the early stages almost all children are writing independently. They are becoming more able to create a meaningful piece of writing which includes appropriate punctuation. Children should be encouraged to have a go with their writing to build their confidence and develop appropriate skills. At the first level children are involved in regular writing and are able to identify the progress that they have made. They are able to write for a variety of purposes including instructions and newspaper articles. Most children at the second level experience writing in a variety of genre and can use paragraphs appropriately.

Attainment in Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics with exceptions at certain stages where they are making good progress.
- At early level, children are developing confidence in counting on and back and writing numbers to ten. A few of the children require further challenge to ensure they make the best possible progress, plans for play based learning will help address this. Children at the first level demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of place value and they relished the challenge of identifying and working with large numbers. They are developing their skills with multiplication tables. Improving children's mental agility remains an important area for improvement. By the end of the second level the majority of the children are able to work confidently with decimal fractions and can read and write whole numbers up to one million.
- Children across the school were able to show a good understanding of the properties of 2D and 3D objects. At early level, most children could recognise and name a variety of shapes while the older children could readily identify their properties. At first and second level children are developing their knowledge of angles, they can confidently label the range of angles from acute to reflex in a variety of situations.
- Staff should be consistently planning and assessing numeracy across curricular areas with a variety of meaningful, relevant learning opportunities. This will allow the children to apply the skills they are learning in new contexts.

- Across the school children would benefit from more regular and varied problem-solving challenges which require them to apply their numeracy and mathematical knowledge.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Wider achievements are tracked and children who are not involved in activities are encouraged to participate more fully. The children have targets for wider achievement. Staff work with the Community Learning and Development team to formalise this work through the High 5 award. They are developing a range of skills through a wide range of activities both within and outwith the local area. The school should now focus on ensuring that children understand how the skills they are developing can be applied in other contexts.

Equity for all learners

- Staff are becoming more aware of children at risk of missing out and have a clear plan for using the Pupil Equity Fund. The school has accessed a support for learning teacher and classrooms assistants to provide targeted support for identified individuals. The senior leadership team should ensure that all staff are fully trained in and understand interventions used to ensure maximum impact on attainment.
- Staff know their children well and respond sensitively to their needs. This approach could be extended to include all families within the life and work of the school.

Choice of QI : Self Evaluation for Self Improvement

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
- Ensuring impact on learners' successes and achievements

- The school have rightly identified the need to develop a culture of self evaluation across the school. As a result, there is evidence of staff engaging with HGIOS 4 and using the challenge questions for a few quality indicators as a basis for identifying strengths and areas for improvement. In addition, they have also reviewed a sampled of Summarised Inspection Findings (SIFs) to explore the differences in evaluations. This is helping to develop staff confidence in understanding national expectations. Stronger strategic direction is needed to lead and support staff at all levels to understand how to frame improvement priorities as outcomes and how to evidence impact of interventions. This remains an important area for improvement. Teachers and senior leaders have been very receptive to advice and suggestions throughout the inspection process, and are keen to develop their practice. A range of approaches ensure that children, staff and parents are involved in self-evaluation activities. There could be widened to include partners.
- As part of Dumfries and Galloway CYPLL School Self Evaluation for Self Improvement Collaborative Reviews process, Canonbie and Langholm Primary Schools were visited by a team of colleagues to carry out a review. This has been very helpful for senior leaders in identifying key strengths and areas for improvement. As part of the collaborative action plan, there have been a series of peer observations using a standard pro-forma. There remains a high degree on inconsistency in how these are being used and indeed how development needs are being overtaken.
- It is important in moving forward that self-evaluation focuses on key aspects of learners' successes and achievements. Senior leaders require support in being able to clearly demonstrate evidence of improvement based on actions taken as a result of self-evaluation. Too many activities in the school are not based on robust and rigorous evidence gathering. Therefore the rationale is not always fully clear. As the school moves forward with a more focused quality assurance calendar, this will make it easier for senior leaders to concentrate on a more manageable set of outcomes to focus on. Evidence gathering and triangulating this to evidence the impact of improvement on learning and teaching and the attainment, achievement and wellbeing of all learners should be clearly identified.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.