

# Summarised inspection findings

**Cochrane Castle Primary School**

Renfrewshire Council

22 November 2022

## Key contextual information

Cochrane Castle Primary School is a non-denominational school in the town of Johnstone, in Renfrewshire. The school has 136 children, organised into seven classes. The school shares a campus with the local denominational school, an early learning and childcare setting and an adult learning provision. The headteacher and acting depute headteacher have been in post since August 2022.

Over half of the school roll live in decile 1 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and 90% live in deciles 1-3.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

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

- Senior leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the context of the school, and the needs of their children. Senior leaders support all staff very effectively to implement a range of strategies to keep children safe and included in school. They used data well to identify the significant impact COVID-19 and periods of remote learning had on children's relationships, and consequently, their learning. The whole staff commitment to this nurturing and inclusive ethos is helping children to build and sustain positive relationships with peers. As a result, children's engagement in their learning is increasing, including those who face barriers to their learning.
- The majority of children feel staff value their views about how they learn. Senior leaders are re-introducing a range of children's leadership opportunities, to support school improvement, which had ceased over the last two years. They consider carefully and prioritise key leadership roles that maximise the opportunity for children's involvement. The recently introduced 'have your say' ensures all children have the opportunity to share their views about how they learn. As a result of this approach, children's views are having a direct impact on improving their daily school experiences. Senior leaders have already planned to introduce physical reading books rather than digital books as a result of children's feedback. They should continue with their plans to involve younger children meaningfully in the work of the Pupil Council and increase leadership opportunities across the school.
- Senior leaders use assemblies well to improve children's understanding of the school values and how they are relevant to their day-to-day experiences. They have rightly identified the need to refresh the school's vision and values to reflect their current circumstances.
- Senior leaders have quickly and successfully established links with a range of community partners. Staff use wellbeing data very well to identify children who require support to engage positively in school. They work well with partners to plan bespoke approaches to support individuals and groups of children who require it.

- Teachers identified that children did not have opportunities to work together and share spaces due to safety restrictions during COVID-19. As a result, they plan regular opportunities for children to work in pairs and groups. Teachers set clear expectations about the behaviours required during group work. Most children engage well during learning experiences. They interact positively with peers and respond appropriately to adults.
- Teachers use direct teaching effectively and provide clear explanations which supports children to understand new concepts. They explain the purpose of the learning clearly and plan teaching points that build upon prior learning. Teachers support children well to contribute to class discussion by providing prompts to help them structure their responses. They do this skilfully and respectfully to ensure children are fully included in all aspects of the lesson. They provide resources to help children visualise and understand new concepts. A few children are able to take more responsibility for their learning and begin tasks at a quicker pace. Teachers should now review the balance of whole class, independent and group learning, ensuring that learning activities are matched appropriately to the needs of all children.
- Children are not always clear about what they need to do to be successful. Teachers provide written feedback in jotters and verbal feedback during lessons. Staff should review their approaches to improve the consistency and quality of feedback across the school. This will support children to understand how successful they have been and explain what they have learned as a result of learning experiences.
- Staff and partners have adapted the school environment to provide calm spaces which is providing effective support to identified children. They jointly plan a range of targeted interventions and universal supports to ensure strategies are applied consistently. This full team approach has made a significant impact on improving children's engagement and behaviours in school in a short space of time.
- Staff recognise the value of digital learning, outdoor learning and play pedagogy. Staff at the early level adapt the environment to support effective learning and teaching. They use children's age and stage of development to plan appropriate activities using a balance of teacher directed and child-initiated experiences. Interactions between staff and children at the early level are strong.
- Teachers, supported by senior leaders, use a range of assessment tools effectively to help inform their judgements about children's progress. They identify relevant assessment opportunities at the point of planning. Assessment evidence is reliable and valid. Teachers work closely as a team to moderate children's work. Senior leaders are re-establishing effective approaches to moderation as a school. They have longer term plans of cross-campus moderation with the early learning and childcare setting and local denominational school. This approach is supporting teachers to have a shared understanding and consistent expectations about progress within and beyond a level.
- Senior leaders use data well to plan strategies to support children who face barriers to their learning. They work closely with staff to gather baseline data which will help them evaluate the impact of interventions. Senior leaders are beginning to evidence the interventions that are having the most impact on children's engagement and progress.

## 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

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

- Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Attainment in writing is weak. At all stages across the school, there are children with gaps in their learning. In most cases, these can be attributed to the impact of the pandemic.
- Since their appointments in August 2022, the headteacher and acting depute headteacher have worked well with staff to understand the current attainment across the school. They have focused on analysing children's progress data to identify gaps in learning, and which children are not on track to achieve at the level of national expectations. As a result of these discussions, staff have a greater collective understanding of where to target support to help children make better progress in their learning. Overall, HM Inspectors are confident that the professional judgement of teachers about children's attainment and progress is accurate.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in reading and writing and good progress in listening and talking.

### Listening and Talking

- At early level, most children explain their ideas clearly and are learning how to take turns and respond appropriately during discussions. Most children at first level ask and answer questions well to show understanding. They listen and respond respectfully to others. At second level, most children show respect for the views of others and the majority offer their viewpoint on relevant topics. As children move through the school, they should continue to develop skills such as eye contact and expression and use of vocabulary to engage an audience.

### Reading

- At early level, the majority of children use their knowledge of sounds and blends to read common words and simple texts. The majority of children at first level show their understanding of texts by asking and answering different kinds of questions. At second level, the majority of children read with fluency, using appropriate expression. Overall, children should select and read a wider range of texts more regularly to enable them to discuss the different features and their personal preferences.

### Writing

- At early level, a minority of children use initial sounds to write simple sentences. At first and second levels, a minority of children construct increasingly complex sentences using accurate punctuation and spelling. Across first and second levels, children are not able to write at length for a range of purposes. In order to improve attainment across the school in writing, children now need to write more regularly across a range of genres using vocabulary and structures appropriate to the context.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, the majority of children make satisfactory progress from prior levels of attainment. In order to raise attainment, children now need learning in shorter, more regular learning sessions and opportunities to apply this learning to real life contexts.

## **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, the majority of children recognise numbers up to ten. A few children are able to confidently count on and back within 50 and are developing their understanding of the position of numbers in a 100 square. At first level, the majority of children make reasonable estimates of a given amount of objects and confidently round to the nearest ten and 100. They are not yet confident representing or working with fractions. At second level, the majority of children can confidently read, order and round whole numbers to one million. They are not confident in using their knowledge of fractions, decimals and percentages to solve problems.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- Across the school, children recognise and name an increasing range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They now need to use vocabulary appropriate to their stage of development to describe the features and properties of these shapes and objects.

## **Information handling**

- At early and first levels, children are developing their skills in using tally marks and pictograms to gather and interpret information. Across the school, children need to develop their skills in gathering, sorting, presenting and analysing a range of data for different purposes. This will also provide them with helpful contexts to apply a range of numeracy skills.

## **Attainment over time**

- Overall, attainment has dipped from pre-pandemic levels. These dips can largely be attributed to levels of learner engagement during periods of remote learning and the impact of the pandemic on children's wellbeing. In addition, the school has experienced a number of changes in leadership in recent years which has been unsettling for both staff and children. The new leadership team have a very clear understanding of children's attainment, where barriers to learning exist for individual children and where focused support is required. Working together with the staff team, they have a shared collective understanding of the approaches they are taking to raise the attainment of all children.
- Most children who require additional support are not yet making sufficient progress in their learning. Staff now need to track more rigorously the progress of different cohorts and groups of learners over time. This will ensure they understand well the gaps in attainment and measure the progress towards closing these gaps.

## **Overall quality of learner's achievements**

- Staff recognise and celebrate children's school achievements regularly through assemblies, awards linked to the school values and through displays within the school. Senior leaders use data effectively to ensure no child misses out. Children would benefit from extending their knowledge and understanding of the range of skills they are developing as a result of achievements. This would support further children to apply skills for learning, life and work to real and meaningful contexts.

## **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders and staff have a strong focus on promoting equity to ensure children have the tools and resources they need to participate in their learning. No child misses out on learning and playing outside as a result of appropriate clothing provided by the school. Senior leaders make good use of the Tackling Poverty Fund to provide a free breakfast club and toast for all

children at break time. Families are supported well and identified children's attendance is improving through a strong partnership with the home link officer.

- Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding to employ additional teaching staff, support staff and counsellors to provide targeted interventions for identified children. As a result, children's ability to discuss and explain their emotions and the reasons for them is improving. They are able to engage appropriately with key adults and develop skills in social situations. Children across the school report that behaviour in class has improved as a result of these relationship-based interventions. Identified children are now more readily engaged in learning and are beginning to make progress in their learning.
- Children's understanding of number and independence in writing is improving as a result of small group interventions. These approaches are at the early stages of implementation. Staff should continue to monitor children's progress and the impact of these interventions to accelerate progress in closing gaps in learning and raise the attainment of all children.

## Other relevant evidence

- The school provides children with two hours of physical education (PE) per week. High quality partnership working with the Active Schools coach and coaches from the secondary school, supports children to participate and achieve well in sporting activities. Senior leaders should monitor this provision to ensure that all PE experiences are of a suitably high quality and build upon children's prior learning.
- The school has a library area. The library is used for classes to select and read books in a calm and relaxing space. Throughout the year, all children will have access to the local mobile library. All children use and borrow books from the service. The headteacher has plans to establish regular class visits to the local library to enhance the selection of reading materials children use for enjoyment. They have established links with the library and request reference materials to enhance learning across a range of contexts. Staff should consider how the use of the school library could better support children's personalised reading for enjoyment.



## 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.