

Summarised inspection findings

Glaitness School

Orkney Islands Council

29 August 2023

Key contextual information

Glaitness School is situated in the west area of Kirkwall. In September 2021, no children lived in deciles one and two of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The school roll was 201 children in May 2023. Children are organised over eight classes in the mainstream provision and five classes in the support provision. The headteacher has been in post for four years. She is supported by a deputy headteacher, two principal teachers and a business manager. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on both staff and children's attendance during session 2021/22. There were also major building works in the school during this period which impacted on the learning environment.

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

- Across the school community, all staff interactions with children are warm, caring and nurturing. As a result, children feel welcome and cared for within a positive, inclusive environment. Staff's focus on children being ready to learn, being safe and respectful to each other is having a positive impact on the climate for learning within the school. Children's interactions with each other are mostly positive. As a result, most children enjoy learning at school.
- Most children play an active role in the school and wider community, with children in the upper stages of the school taking on leadership roles. For example, children are playground buddies, junior road safety officers and are keen promoters of learning for sustainability through their Net Zero Heroes project. Across other year groups, children are also enthusiastic buddies with children within the supported learning classes.
- The majority of children's experiences are enjoyable and matched to their needs, interests and local contexts. Staff make effective use of the local community and outdoor spaces to enhance learners' experiences. Children work well individually, in pairs and in groups. The majority of children are able to take responsibility for their learning. However, there are too few opportunities for children to lead their own learning in meaningful ways. Teachers now need to ensure children are involved more in deciding what they want to learn in school.
- Teachers meet the needs of the majority of children in the classroom well. Most teachers provide appropriate activities that meet the needs of the majority of children, including those who have a barrier to learning. Teachers are not yet providing learning activities that meet the needs of all children in the classroom, including the most able. Senior leaders should work with staff to ensure there is appropriate challenge for all learners.

- Staff have established play pedagogy in the early level following a few years of professional learning, training, research. This includes the use of the national guidance *Realising the Ambition* (2020). Children are confident and demonstrate independence skills as they learn through spontaneous and planned, purposeful play opportunities. They are enthusiastic and motivated to learn through the environment which is helping them to develop skills such as creativity, problem solving and independence. The youngest children benefit from appropriate pace and challenge which supports them to fully engage in their learning.
- The quality of teaching across the school is too variable. A minority of teachers provide high-quality learning experiences. Senior leaders and teachers now need to work together, as planned, to decide what effective approaches to learning and teaching look like at Glaitness School. They should build on strong areas of practice found within the school, particularly at early level.
- All teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. Almost all children understand what they are expected to do, though they are not always sure about the purpose of their learning or how they can be successful. Teachers also need to consider the pace of learning. Too often, children lose valuable learning time at points of transition in the school day. Teachers should ensure more effective starter and plenary activities are incorporated into learning time.
- The majority of teachers provide verbal and written feedback to support children during lessons. However, the quality of teacher's feedback is not yet of a consistently high standard to support children's next steps in learning. Across the school, teachers should ensure that all children are involved in setting their own targets and know what they need to do to improve. This will help children be clear about what skills they are developing and what they need to do in order to be successful. Teachers should also continue to develop children's skills in both self- and peer-assessment.
- Teachers use different methods to check children's understanding during learning. A minority of teachers use questioning well to help children explore their learning and explain their understanding. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to questioning across the school to help children develop higher order thinking skills.
- Most teachers use a range of approaches to assess children's learning. A minority of teachers assess learners' progress well across the term to ensure that targets are being met and key skills developed. Teachers use formative assessment strategies, summative assessments, and standardised assessments effectively to better understand children's attainment and progress. Teachers now need to ensure they use assessment more effectively to plan the next steps in learning for all children. Approaches to assessing, monitoring and tracking children who have barriers to learning are effective.
- In the early years, teachers ensure there are effective processes when planning for assessment. This is providing robust information about children's progress. Teachers need to build upon this to provide a more consistent approach across first and second levels.
- Teachers have developed progression frameworks for literacy and numeracy to plan learning. These take into account the experiences and outcomes and National Benchmarks. Teachers now need to develop further these progression frameworks to ensure a more consistent approach to planning for learning, teaching and assessment. This will support teachers to ensure that progression can be clearly identified within a level. Teachers should also work together to ensure there is effective planning of learning across all curricular areas.

- Senior leaders and teachers use a whole school tracking system to monitor children's attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They use this well to support discussions about the progress of learners and identifying who needs extra support. As a next step, staff should also consider how this approach can be used to challenge more able learners.
- Teachers have engaged in moderation activities to support their professional judgements about children's levels of attainment. They have worked with colleagues from other schools to develop a better understanding of national standards. This is supporting them to make increasingly reliable professional judgements.

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

- In 2021/22, the majority of children achieved the expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level in literacy and numeracy in P1. By P4, most achieved the expected CfE level in literacy and the majority achieved this in numeracy. By P7, the majority achieved the expected CfE level in literacy and numeracy. Attainment data for 2022/23 shows that most children are on track to achieve expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy at P1, P4 and P7.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children's progress in literacy and English is satisfactory. At early level, progress is good. At first and second level, children would benefit from more challenge in reading and writing. Teachers should ensure they promote consistently high expectations in all aspects of literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children answer questions about stories accurately and follow instructions. At first level, most children listen to a text and talk about key parts of the story and are confident at contributing to group discussion. At second level, the majority of children answer inferential and literal questions about texts accurately. They are able to build on the ideas of others and share their views. Across all stages, children are not confident creating their own texts for listening and talking where they exchange information and clarify points by asking questions.

Reading

- Children in all classes read regularly for enjoyment. At early level, all children use their knowledge of sounds and blends to read simple words. They are encouraged to transfer their reading into writing skills through play. At first level, the majority of children read with increasing fluency and with some expression. At second level, children read fluently and with expression. They are becoming more aware of how the writer uses their craft to create interest and excitement. Most children at first and second level would benefit from further practice in generating inferential and evaluative questions about texts read to consolidate their understanding of these types of questions.

Writing

- At early level, most children are exploring and using sounds, letters and words to help them with their writing. Most children form their letters correctly and use capital letters and full stops appropriately when writing sentences. At first level, most children are writing independently using appropriate punctuation and conjunctions. Teachers need to develop children's skills in writing across the curriculum and for different purposes. At second level, most children enjoy writing for a range of purposes, using notes well to help them to plan their writing. All children

should now develop their understanding of the measures of success in writing. This will support them to be more independent and aware of how they can improve their writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, progress in numeracy mathematics is satisfactory. Children's progress at early level is good.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children recognise, write and order numbers within 20. Most children are able to identify odd and even numbers. At first level, children are confident rounding to the nearest 10 or 100 and adding or subtracting three digits numbers. They would benefit from more practice on written calculations, equivalent fractions and change within £10. At second level, children are confident with place value, rounding and partitioning numbers. They simplify fractions, however, they would benefit from further work on fractions including with mixed numbers. They are less confident when converting between units of measure.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, children are developing their understanding of simple two-dimensional shapes and are able to identify them in their environment. A few learners are able to identify more complex two-dimensional shapes and their properties. At first level, children identify right angles, know compass directions and can identify the main features of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At second level, children calculate area and perimeter well. Teachers should help them develop their knowledge of the properties of a circle.

Information handling

- At early level, children collect data using tally marks for different purposes and display data using pictograms. At first level, children use tally marks correctly and understand ideas of uncertainty and chance. They are developing their understanding of bar graphs and pie charts. They are less confident with Venn diagrams. At second level, children understand when you would use graphs and what you might collect data for. They would benefit from using digital technology to help them with their information handling.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders have developed effective approaches to monitoring attainment in literacy and numeracy. They show an overall improving pattern of attainment over the last seven years. Senior leaders should now consider how to track attainment over time in curricular areas beyond literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders have a clear focus on monitoring the attainment of individual learners with additional support needs. They demonstrate that most learners with a barrier to learning are making positive progress from prior levels of attainment.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's successes are celebrated at assemblies, on digital platforms and in classrooms. Children, mainly those in P7, are gaining skills in leadership, teamwork and communication through activities such as ambassadors, Net Zero Heroes and the Rights Respecting group. Children in P6 are developing skills in communication and supporting the wider community as Junior Tour Guides for local historic attractions. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to track and monitor both the participation and skills development of children as they move through the school.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic needs of children and their families. They have taken steps to minimise the cost of the school day. Pupil Equity Funding is used to provide staffing and resources. These are targeted at improving literacy, numeracy, attendance

and wellbeing. Senior leaders need to develop robust approaches to monitor the impact of planned interventions on raising the attainment and achievement of children entitled to this funding.

Context

Twenty-one children attend the five support classes. The classrooms are arranged throughout the school building so that children are educated mostly in the same area as other children of a similar age. Children attend the support classes following a multi-agency scoping process. Parents are involved fully in all decisions made about the placement in Glaitness School.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Positive relationships between adults and children maintains the caring ethos evident in all classes. Children know they are valued and cared for. This supports them to engage effectively in their learning. All children enjoy learning. They share their learning enthusiastically with others. Children's learning experiences are appropriately challenging and motivate them appropriately in their learning. In most lessons, children have opportunities to make choices in their learning. For example, when choosing which story to listen to.
- The school's values underpin learning and teaching in every class well. Teachers plan lessons within the school campus and wider community effectively to enrich children's learning in real life contexts. They use a range of augmentative and alternative communication aids effectively to support children to access their learning. All staff use digital technologies, such as tablets and smartboards, to complement children's learning well. This promotes children's learning and helps maintain their interest. Teachers' instructions are clear and help almost all children know what they are learning. Teachers use praise effectively to help children understand how well they have completed a task. All staff are particularly adept at making clear when children are moving on from one task to another. Support assistants provide valuable support for children in a range of contexts. Teachers should continue to ensure that all learning activities have a clearly defined purpose and are focussed on improving children's outcomes.
- Multi-agency assessments provide teachers with valuable information of each child's skills, abilities and support needs. Teachers ongoing observations support their understanding of each child's needs very effectively. They have a very well developed knowledge of each child. This supports their abilities to make accurate judgements of each child's progress. Children's progress is evaluated mostly against targets identified in their individual education programmes (IEP). Regular discussions with senior leaders at review meetings support teachers to evaluate how well each child is progressing. This supports them to report accurately on each child's progress.
- Teachers plan learning across all curricular areas. Whilst focussed mostly on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, this supports children to experience learning across all curricular areas. Each child's curriculum is highly individualised. This supports them to experience learning, which is relevant and interesting. Processes for tracking and monitoring help teachers to gather a range of data on children's attainment. This supports them ensure learning is planned at an appropriate level for every child.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Children's attainment in numeracy and literacy is predominantly evaluated against targets identified in their IEPs. Observations of learning, reviewing children's work and targets within their IEPs confirm children are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment.
- Teachers plan learning at an appropriate level for every child. This ensures all children's learning is appropriately challenging. Teacher's understanding of each child's abilities supports them to make accurate judgements on each child's progress. Children's targets in their IEPs are reviewed regularly. Collectively these actions support teachers to ensure children are continuously making good progress throughout their time at the school. Moving forward, teachers should consider how to gather a wider range of data to evidence children's attainment across all curricular areas.
- Where appropriate, children are developing their social skills when learning alongside their peers in mainstream classes. Almost all are developing a range of skills through a variety of learning activities within the school campus and local community. For example, children are developing their road safety skills during walks to the local library. A few children are developing their early understanding of the world of work when visiting local factories or employers. School visits support children to apply their skills in unfamiliar settings. Teachers identify opportunities for children to develop their wider achievements at regular review meetings. They should now consider how they can track and monitor children's participation and the skills they are developing in these opportunities, including when learning outdoors.
- A minority of children experience learning alongside their peers in mainstream classes. This supports them to feel included and part of the wider school community. The school's curriculum supports children to develop their understanding of how they are similar or different to each other. A range of teaching specialists support a few children to access the curriculum in ways meaningful to them. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) supports additional resources and professional learning. Senior leaders should now consider how they can evaluate the impact of PEF in improving the attainment of those children most affected by poverty.

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.