

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Ninian's Primary School**

Stirling Council

18 December 2018

## Key contextual information

At the time of the inspection there were 388 children attending St Ninian's Primary, split over 15 classes. A further 59 children attend the nursery class. In October 2016, the school moved into its new building. The new nursery building opened in August 2017. Children attending the school predominantly come from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles (SIMD) 1 – 3 and 8 – 10. The headteacher has been in post since August 2016. During the past two years, there have been significant changes within the staff, including at senior leadership level. The headteacher and staff have undertaken a significant amount of school improvement in a relatively short time.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- The ethos and culture throughout the school is nurturing and inclusive. Very positive relationships are evident across all stages. The standard of behaviour in almost all classes is high. Children interact well with each other when working in pairs and groups. The school's values of respect, determination, ambition, kindness and integrity are reinforced within class lessons and through assemblies. Across the school, children's skills in self-regulation and resilience are being developed through the introduction of the 'five scale' programme. Teachers plan well-differentiated lessons, providing appropriate targeted support where required. As a result, learning activities are appropriately challenging and enjoyable. Levels of engagement are high.
- Almost all children are highly motivated, eager and active participants in their learning. Teachers ensure that the purpose of learning is very clear and children can talk confidently about their learning. Almost all children contribute to planning learning using 'big questions'. An increasing number of leadership opportunities are being provided to children. For example, 'digital leaders' are supporting the effective use of a range of digital technology in all classes. The use of this technology is extending and enriching children's learning in addition to enabling parents to engage more frequently with their child's learning at home. Children's views are sought in a variety of ways and they have opportunities to contribute effectively to the life of the school through planned activities.
- The school's 'identity graphic' encapsulates well the school values, vision and aims and stands as an effective statement of the school's overall purpose. As such, it clearly supports approaches to teaching. Teachers demonstrate creative approaches in providing a wide range of learning contexts for children's learning. These support the development of resilience and skills of independent learning in children across all stages. As a result, children are motivated to learn and almost all engage enthusiastically in their learning.

- Teachers almost always provide clear explanations and instructions. They make effective use of questions to ask children to justify their answers and explain their thinking. There is scope to develop further the use of questioning to give children opportunities to provide their own explanations and hypotheses to support their understanding.
- Effective use is made of learning intentions and success criteria in almost every lesson. These are regularly referred to by teachers to ensure that children understand, and remain focused on, key learning points. Children have regular opportunities to co-construct success criteria and are increasingly able to articulate and discuss what successful learning will look like. Teachers should continue to ensure that success criteria always clearly identify how well the learning intentions are realised.
- Assessment is an integral part of planning for effective learning. There is a well-considered and thorough approach to planning assessment across the school, which is supporting staff and children to understand the purpose of learning very clearly. Teachers interact very well with children and make effective use of assessment in the course of teaching. Assessments are used well to inform well-timed interventions and agree next steps in learning. Teachers provide high-quality feedback to children through written comments, dialogue and effective classroom displays. Written feedback in jotters provides an appropriate level of praise and support to improve learning.
- Moderation is planned very thoughtfully to include colleagues at similar and different stages and levels, from within and out with the school. As a result, teachers have a well-developed and shared understanding, not only of standards, but of progression in learning across levels. Arrangements and procedures for moderation are robust and support teachers well in making confident judgements about children's progress in learning. Teachers are increasingly developing holistic assessments to support children's progress in learning. This is supporting moderation that is more detailed and informing accurate professional judgements about achievement of a level.
- The headteacher has developed a very effective approach to planning which teachers find manageable, supportive and effective. Commendably, assessment is well linked to planned learning. Teachers use assessment information effectively to agree appropriate targets and next steps in learning with children. Learning activities are designed around the needs of children to provide effective differentiation and ensure coherence and progression in learning.
- A robust approach to monitoring and tracking is supporting teachers to have a more detailed understanding of the needs of children. As a result, factors that might present barriers to learning are being monitored, analysed and addressed effectively. Assessment information and data is being used very well to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions to improve outcomes for targeted children.

## 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school is very good. Most children make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Children with significant barriers to their learning make very good progress towards achieving their learning targets. Attainment data provided by the school indicates that most children by June 2018 in P1 and P7 achieve national standards of attainment in literacy and numeracy. At P4, the majority of children achieve national standards in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher has established clear systems to track and monitor attainment which is resulting in more accurate identification of whether children have achieved a level. There are very good, clear arrangements for assessment and moderation of standards across the school. Staff use assessment information well to target children for interventions to raise attainment.

#### Literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy is very good.

#### Reading

- Overall, attainment in reading is very good. Staff have recently improved their approach to the teaching of reading across the school by improving resources and approaches to the teaching of reading skills. This is having a positive impact on children's attainment across the school. Almost all children enjoy reading and making personal choices about what they like to read. At the early level, most children are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. At the first level, children talk confidently about character and setting within text. At the second level, children talk confidently about the strategies of skimming and scanning to find information from novels. At the first and second levels, children read familiar texts fluently with expression. Most children across the first and second level are developing well their higher order reading skills. Older children are able to identify features of the different genres of books they are reading.

#### Writing

- Overall attainment in writing is very good at the early and second level and good at the first level. Staff have developed a consistent approach to the teaching of writing across the school, which is having a positive impact on children's attainment. Across the school, children write for a variety of purposes and write in a range of genres. At the early level, most children are developing well their understanding of common words and letters and a few children are attempting to write independently. At the first level, the majority of children make simple plans for writing and can write well independently. They punctuate most sentences accurately. Most children at the first and second level benefit from opportunities to

review and assess their writing and that of their peers to ensure writing is technically accurate and meets its purpose. At the second level, most children engage the reader with their use of vocabulary. Older children have frequent opportunities to write extended pieces of writing.

### **Listening and talking**

- Attainment in listening and talking is very good. At early level, almost all children listen well and respond to questions from others. They recount key information from experiences and follow instructions. Children at the first level are confident to talk about opinions and share their thoughts with others. They are developing well their skills in turn taking and responding appropriately in group situations. Children at second level listen to, and build on, the contributions of others by clarifying or supporting their views. They are able to link their work on writing persuasive texts to debating issues and the skills they need for both.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, most children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics as they move through the school. Data shared by the school shows that by the end of P1, P4 and P7 most children will achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. The recent introduction of numeracy and mathematics 'spiral progressions' ensures that children are taught at their level of ability. These ensure that concepts are revisited to ensure progression and deeper understanding of learning. Active approaches are being developed at all stages to engage and motivate children in maths activities. This will ensure that children make consistent and steady progress in developing sound numeracy and mathematics knowledge and skills through all CfE levels.

### **Number, money and measurement**

- At the early level, most children can count up to 10 objects and recite numbers. They can count in ones and some can estimate the number of objects in a group without counting. Some children can combine two groups of numbers to find the total and make good use of practical materials to support them to achieve this. Most can write numerals to 10 correctly. Children are motivated by the active approach to developing their mathematics skills and this should continue to be developed. At the first level children can round whole numbers to the nearest 100 and estimate by rounding to find the answer to addition and subtraction examples. They can identify and use coins and notes to £20 and solve problems involving the total spent in a shopping situation and calculating change. They demonstrate an understanding of the commutative law and have a good knowledge of times tables. Most can use the correct notation for common fractions and understand that fractions are equal pieces of a whole. They should continue to develop their confidence and ability when tackling mental maths examples. At the second level, most children can round to the nearest pound and solve money problems. They can multiply and divide numbers to two decimal places by 10 and 100. They make use of a number of strategies to undertake mental maths problems. This is undertaken quickly and with confidence. They can calculate simple percentages of a quantity and use this knowledge to solve problems in everyday contexts, for example, the sale price of clothes. Their knowledge of multiplication tables is sound. They can read and record time in both 12 hour and 24 hour notation and convert between the two confidently. They have a good understanding of the common units of measure and can calculate the perimeter of 2D shapes. Children understand the importance of numbers in their everyday life and for their future life.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- Children at early level are developing the language of shape, position and movement and can recognise common two-dimensional shapes. At first level, children have a good understanding

of the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects, including side, face, edge vertex, base and angle. They can identify symmetry in pictures and find more than one line of symmetry in a shape. They know the compass points North, South, East and West and can draw these correctly. At the second level, children can identify 2D shapes and 3D within the environment. They have a good knowledge of a range of angles and can identify them. They know the eight compass points and can use these to give directions.

### **Information handling**

- Across all stages, children are able to collect, display and interpret data. At the early stages, children make graphs using real objects, counting, and comparing. At first level, children can collect data to create simple bar graphs. Older children make use of, and interpret, increasingly complex data. They use tally marks and have sound knowledge of a range of graphs including Carroll diagram, pie chart and line graphs.

### **Attainment over time**

- The headteacher has established a number of ways to ensure that staff become more confident and accurate in their assessment of children. There is an ongoing programme of professional learning, holistic assessments, standardised assessments, Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA), in class assessments and internal and external moderation. As a result, there are clear, accurate records showing children's progress over time. Professional learning is supporting staff becoming more confident in assessing achievement of CfE levels. As a result of clear progression pathways in all curricular areas, staff are able to report with increasing confidence on children's progress in areas of the curriculum out with literacy and numeracy. Staff make effective use of a range of data on children's progress to ensure they maximise their attainment over time. Interventions are well planned for children who are at risk of underachieving due to socio- economic circumstances, or their barriers to learning.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- A wide range of clubs are provided for the children by staff and partners, including Scottish Country dancing, cricket, badminton, singing, knitting, chess, yoga, coding, The Den and Founders for Schools. These are well attended and children and their parents speak very positively about the benefits of these clubs. Children regularly visit the local library and attend a local youth club. The school tracks and monitors wider achievement and participation in clubs and out-of-school activities very successfully. This is considered along with other information, such as those with barriers to participation as a result of additional support needs, or socio-economic background. Targeted support is provided to enable those unable to access clubs to benefit from these activities and their progress is closely monitored. School data demonstrates that this approach has been successful in increasing levels of participation. As a result, almost all children now attend a club, either within or out with school.
- Older children regularly learn, support and play with others through being buddies and digital mentors. The school has had many achievements in the wider community in 2018 including Scottish Schools Cross County Championships, Scottish Education Awards and P6 and P7 Track and Field Event. Success is celebrated using social media, electronic journals and school 'values' assemblies. Celebrating success displays are also placed around the school and open evenings are held to showcase learning. As a result of the opportunities provided, children are developing confidence, are exercising responsibility and are contributing to the wider life of the school and its community.

## **Equity for all learners**

- The school has a very strong commitment to equity and a very good understanding of any gaps in children's achievement or attainment. Strategic approaches to raising attainment are clearly leading to equity of success and improvements in achievement and attainment for all learners. There is evidence of any attainment gaps, including those related to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, being reduced significantly. Staff have used data well to identify and introduce a range of targeted interventions to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. These interventions include the deployment and development of staff to meet effectively individual children's needs.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

The approaches used to ensure the effective leadership and pace of change.

The very creative use of visual techniques to communicate the purpose of the school, its curriculum, and to summarise the outcomes of self-evaluation.

The very coherent, focused approach to planning, tracking and monitoring which is ensuring staff interventions for raising attainment are effective.

## 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.

Education Scotland  
Denholm House  
Almondvale Business Park  
Almondvale Way  
Livingston EH54 6GA

T +44 (0)131 244 4330  
E [enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk)

<https://education.gov.scot/>

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