Summarised inspection findings

Dunbeg Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

22 August 2023

Key contextual information

Dunbeg Primary School is in a rural setting in the village of Dunbeg in Argyll and Bute. There is a considerable level of new housing in construction. The roll stands currently at 98 children.

The headteacher has been in post since August 2017. She is supported by two principal teachers, one of whom is in an acting role until the permanent postholder takes up their post. Long and short term staff absences are an ongoing feature of the past three years. As a result, the leadership team has been involved in providing cover for classes.

Attendance has been above, or in line with, national levels of attendance over the past five years. There have been no exclusions in that time.

Dunbeg Nursery Class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

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	

■ There is a warm, welcoming and highly inclusive ethos at Dunbeg Primary School. Children listen and respond very well to their teachers and support staff and are respectful to one another. The school values of Achievement, Community and Enterprise (ACE) underpin the positive and supportive learning culture. The strong nurturing staff team promote children's rights and model positive relationships consistently. This is evident in the supportive interactions and very high levels of trust between all members of the school community.

■ Most children are highly motivated and engaged in their learning. Almost all children organise themselves well and stay on task during lessons. The pace of learning is brisk and children experience an appropriate level of challenge in their learning. They exercise choice, for example in what they would like to learn in interdisciplinary topics, or how they wish to demonstrate their learning.

■ All staff know the children very well and identify any gaps in their learning quickly. Support staff provide a range of appropriate well-timed 'booster' interventions which support children highly effectively to make progress in their learning. Learning experiences for children with additional support needs are well designed and tailored carefully to meet the needs of each individual learner. A team of highly-skilled support staff provide very well-judged support which adds considerable value to these experiences.

- Children are very proud of their school and are keen to share their learning. All children in the school are involved in 'Clan Groups', which meet regularly and are focused on sustainability. Children learn through targeted work on global goals, local community projects and environmental issues. Staff carry out regular reviews of the learning children have experienced through their clans. These groups provide children with meaningful opportunities to reflect on their learning and achievements. They enable children to understand themselves as learners and as active participants in their community and the wider world.

- Staff make very good use of the highly motivating local context, including the local beach and woodland, to provide enjoyable and effective learning experiences for children. The school grounds have been developed over time into a rich environment for learning. This includes a poly-tunnel, school woodland, trim trail and outdoor classroom. Children have regular opportunities for learning outdoors and enjoy their daily opportunities to play in their well-resourced playground. This includes free access to loose parts and a range of equipment. The local community is a valued resource for the school and children take considerable pride in serving members of the community who come in for 'Warm Welcome Wednesday'.

- Teachers have made a very positive start to the use of Play pedagogy. Although this work is at an early stage, there is emerging evidence that children are responding positively. Teachers have clear and appropriate plans to develop this area further. They should continue to monitor this promising start to learning through play to evaluate its effectiveness in improving outcomes for children.

- The headteacher has prioritised investment in resources and professional learning in recent years. This has led to a shared understanding of, and much greater consistency in, approaches to high-quality teaching among staff. All teachers share the purpose of learning and what children need to do to be successful as part of the shared expectation about the structure of lessons. They should continue to build on this highly effective consistency of quality and approach which supports pace and challenge. This includes developing further the use of plenaries to encourage children to reflect about what they have learned.

- Teachers are highly skilled in using questioning to enable children to recall prior learning and to challenge their thinking. Explanations and instructions are clear and effective. Children find staff approachable and are able to seek help when they need it in their learning. This supports children to be confident in their own learning. Professional learning for teachers has led to whole school approaches to the teaching of thinking skills, promoting children's curiosity. Children have frequent opportunities to develop and apply higher-order thinking skills across different curriculum areas and contexts for learning

- Digital technology is used very well to enrich and support learning. Teachers use visualisers effectively to explain learning and share good examples, such as pieces of writing, with children. Children can choose to access devices to complete learning tasks, and learners with additional support needs engage with digital programmes to support their literacy learning. The school's social media platform provides parents with a weekly update about the activities of each class. This is supporting parents to engage with their children about their learning.

- Staff use summative and formative assessment very effectively in a variety of ways. Children demonstrate an understanding of their own and their group's next steps in learning based on specific assessment evidence. Staff have identified the need to focus on the type of feedback children receive, so that children are less focused on their levels and grades after weekly assessments. As a result, children are more focused on what they need to do to improve their learning. This is supporting children to develop further their understanding of the progress they are making in their learning.

■ Assessment evidence is very reliable and valid and is used extensively to inform teachers' planning of learning. There is a shared understanding of standards at each level, and staff have developed very clear and consistent approaches to planning across all curriculum areas. Teachers use a variety of progression pathways, such as those devised within the local authority and the Northern Alliance to plan and track learning across the curriculum. They engage in helpful moderation activities that support very well their professional judgements and understanding of children's progress.

■ The headteacher and teachers regularly discuss progress that has been tracked in literacy and numeracy. They identify whether children are on track, off track or exceeding expectations and plan further support and challenge for each learner. As planned, staff should continue to develop tracking of children's progress across all areas of the curriculum.

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.

<table>
<tr><td>**3.2 Raising attainment and achievement**</td><td>**very good**</td></tr>
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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, almost all children across P1, P4 and P7 have achieved expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and in numeracy in session 2022/23.

■ Children who require additional support make strong and appropriate progress in learning through individualised programmes in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English
■ Overall, children's progress and attainment in literacy and English is very good. Most children are making very good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Listening and talking
■ Across the school almost all children listen well during lessons and follow instructions. They show their understanding by answering questions and share their views willingly. Children talk confidently to adults and each other. They enjoy opportunities to talk about their learning.

■ At early level, most children hear and say patterns in words, including rhyme. They can retell a story they know and answer simple questions on texts. At first level, most children understand the features of factual texts and take notes under headings. They share their ideas in class and group discussions and listen to the views of others. Most children at second level benefit from opportunities to develop their skills at presenting information in class and through leadership groups. They are aware of different communication techniques such as eye contact, clear enunciation, and use of tone to engage the listener. They enjoy and benefit from opportunities to present and share their learning.

Reading
■ Teachers have developed a positive reading culture across the school. They work effectively with the Parent Council, who have funded new reading books and visits by authors. Children are proud of the fact they can choose books for the school library. Almost all children are enthusiastic readers and talk confidently about books and authors they enjoy.

■ At early level, most children use known sounds to blend and read simple words and sentences. They are developing their fluency. At first and second levels, most children read fluently. They use a range of reading skills to answer questions to show their understanding. At second level, most children answer inferential and evaluative questions and explain reasons for their views. Children with additional support needs benefit from opportunities to use digital programmes to extend their reading choices.

Writing

- Teachers' new approach to writing is improving children's writing skills across the school. Children have regular opportunities to write in a range of genres such as imaginative, instructional and factual writing. In all classes, there is evidence of the positive impact of this well-considered and shared approach on children's writing skills.

- At early level, most children can write simple words. They are beginning to form simple sentences and construct stories. At first level, most children use tools for writing to check over their work and include punctuation. At second level, most children write extended texts and include increasingly complex sentences and vocabulary. Their writing includes imaginative stories. Children at first and second level have opportunities to self-assess their writing against helpful checklists. As a result, children are becoming skilled at identifying what is required to make their writing better. Staff should continue to build on these approaches to self-assessment.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Children display confidence and enthusiasm in numeracy and mathematics as a result of the positive mindset supported well by staff. Most children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics across the school.

Number, money and measure

- Children working at early level can add and subtract within ten. They can count objects and use language such as 'more than, less than, the same' to discuss the number of objects they have. They can identify the coins used to make amounts within £1. Children at first level solve addition and subtraction problems with three-digit whole numbers. They can identify correctly the value of three-digit numbers and apply a range of multiplication strategies. At second level, most children can round numbers to the nearest 1,000, 10,000 and 100,000 and can round decimals to one decimal place. Overall, they demonstrate a good knowledge of place value. Children speak positively about their learning in negative numbers and in decimals. They are confident when recording time using 12 hour and 24 hour notation and converting between these two types of time.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, children can continue and create patterns with shapes and objects. They can use positional language to discuss their patterns. At first level, most children can identify and describe three-dimensional objects. Most can identify lines of symmetry in two-dimensional shapes. Within second level, they can use mathematical language including acute and obtuse to describe and classify a range of angles. At second level, children can describe a range of three-dimensional objects and their properties.

Information handling

- At early level, children can collect and sort objects for a purpose. They can use their counting skills to check how many objects they have and then show this number using tally marks. At first level, children can work together to use Venn diagrams to organise sets of numbers. At second level children are confident when describing using Venn diagrams, tally marks and bar charts to display information from their own surveys.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher and staff track attainment and progress in literacy and numeracy over time for individuals and groups of children. Attainment was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Together with teachers, the headteacher has made very effective strategic and resourcing decisions to support identified needs. This has included introducing new approaches to writing and numeracy and mathematics. These

are having a very positive impact on progress and attainment. Reading, writing and numeracy all show improvement from session 2021/22 as a result of these effective approaches.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

■ Staff monitor participation and identify children who would benefit from attending the extensive activities on offer. They are proactive in addressing all barriers to participation, including by extending the range of clubs. Staff match gaps in children's experiences with relevant opportunities. This is supporting a few children to engage more fully in school life. Partnerships, such as those with UHI, Scottish Opera and Active Schools, enhance the range of achievement opportunities available for children and broaden their sporting and cultural aspirations. Children at P7 describe how their recent residential experience has made them feel more prepared for the transition to secondary school.

■ Children enjoy a range of leadership roles, particularly through their clans. This is developing their understanding of children's rights and their learning for sustainability. For example, children in the gardening club are making a positive impact on the school grounds. This is enhancing their confidence and understanding of the important role they play in improving their school and local environment. Older children lead clubs for younger children. This is developing their confidence, leadership and communication skills. A minority of children also participate in local and national Gaelic mods and thus contribute to an important aspect of local culture and heritage, in addition to extending their performance skills. This is supported further by Gaelic as the L3. A next step is to develop a progression of skills framework which will help children to articulate the many skills they are currently developing.

Equity for all learners

■ The headteacher and staff team have a very clear knowledge of the social and economic contexts of their children and families. They use this knowledge very effectively to ensure that all children have equity of opportunity and achievement. The headteacher identifies poverty-related and other attainment gaps and monitor progress towards closing these gaps. They do this effectively by checking attendance, free school meal entitlement, additional support for learning and data which identifies where children are not making all the progress they could. Staff monitor the progress of individuals and groups of children. This includes those who require additional support or face poverty-related and other barriers to their learning. As a result, staff are able to identify children who are not making suitable progress. The headteacher has used Pupil Equity Funding to provide effective interventions for children, such as the time-limited 'booster' sessions. The headteacher and staff review and monitor regularly the impact of additional support and interventions on raising attainment and closing identified gaps. Children benefit from this carefully designed support and are making accelerated progress towards closing these gaps.

■ The headteacher prioritises the importance of attendance as part of children's learning and tracks children's attendance carefully. She has developed effective approaches to support improved attendance for a few children and explore reasons for any absences. As a result, data shows that attendance is improving from the immediate post-Covid period. Children are benefitting by maximising their time in school.

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.