

Summarised inspection findings

Dunblane Primary School and Nursery Class

Stirling Council

12 September 2023

Key contextual information

Dunblane Primary School is in the town of Dunblane within Stirling Council. The school has 375 children, organised into 14 classes. The headteacher has been in post for five years. She is supported by two deputy headteachers and three principal teachers.

Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles seven to ten. A few children are entitled to free school meals.

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

- All staff create and maintain a very positive, nurturing ethos across the school. This is underpinned by the school's values and an emphasis on children's rights. Most children report that they enjoy learning at school. They are enthusiastic and articulate in their interactions with peers, adults and visitors to the school.
- Children experience a blend of whole class lessons, group teaching and opportunities to work in groups and with partners. They learn actively, outdoors and in different spaces including the bloom room and learning lab. Children practise and explore new skills in these spaces, including skills in food preparation and nutrition. Teachers plan rich interdisciplinary learning activities, working well in partnership with parents and extended partners. These activities link clearly to the school's established skills framework. The activities allow children to apply literacy and numeracy skills very effectively in a range of new and unfamiliar situations. Children maintain high levels of engagement in these learning activities.
- Children use digital technology effectively to record, research and present their learning. From P4 to P7 children use an online platform to share, collaborate, celebrate success and support transition to Dunblane High School. Local authority plans to improve wi-fi connectivity across the school will allow a greater variety of digital learning tasks to be embedded in learning in all classes. Children who are accessibility champions, are supported well by staff to help reduce barriers to learning. They model and find solutions to support the needs of individual children.
- Children at the early stages engage successfully in free play. There is a good balance of child and adult-initiated learning in well-planned learning spaces. Staff have used national practice guidance well to develop and implement purposeful play-based approaches to develop children's curiosity and creativity. The wider staff team incorporates play-based learning in daily and weekly planning, initiated by feedback and input from children's Junior Leadership Team (JLT). Play-based learning is increasing opportunities for personalisation and choice in learning. As planned, staff should continue to evaluate and moderate their approaches to play, ensuring that opportunities remain progressive and purposeful. This will ensure continued depth and challenge for learners as they progress through school.

- In almost all lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Almost all teachers are clear about the purpose of learning and share with children how to be successful. Children would benefit from more opportunities to create their measures of success, allowing them to further lead and contribute to their learning. Teachers should encourage children to refer to measures of success regularly to reflect on how well they are doing. They should provide a minority of children with more challenge. Teachers use questioning well to check children's recall and understanding. Teachers should now enrich their questioning to include higher order questions to scaffold and extend learning, particularly for those requiring further challenge.
- Teachers provide children with helpful feedback about their work. Feedback across the school is not yet of consistently high quality to help children understand their next steps in learning. All staff should continue to develop high quality feedback across all stages. Senior leaders and teachers should build on established assessment approaches to agree the key features of highly effective feedback. This will help to further strengthen children's understanding of themselves as learners.
- Senior leaders have developed a detailed assessment rationale which supports teachers to plan assessments across the curriculum. This includes rich assessments where children transfer literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum successfully. Teachers use assessments regularly to check children's understanding and to help plan effectively for gaps in learning. Teachers use their knowledge of children and assessment data effectively to meet the needs of children with barriers to learning. Teachers and senior leaders should now review approaches to planning and assessment to ensure that they use assessment effectively to inform children's next steps in learning. Teachers have moderated writing across the school this session. This is helping to rebuild confidence in their judgements about children's attainment of a level. Senior leaders should continue with plans to provide staff with more regular opportunities for moderation in all curricular areas across the school and local authority.
- Across the school, teachers value regular opportunities to plan together. This collegiate working is leading to teachers' shared understanding of how to plan for high-quality learning. These approaches to planning encourage teachers to link learning successfully across the curriculum. They plan over different timescales to meet children's needs. Most teachers are beginning to develop ways for children to take part meaningfully in planning their own learning. Children value these opportunities. Senior leaders have identified the need to extend children's involvement in leading learning as part of their review of planning approaches. They should support teachers to make stronger links between assessment, moderation and planning appropriately challenging next steps in learning.
- Senior leaders and teachers meet three times a session to check children's progress. During these meetings they look closely at the progress children have made from the previous year and continue to make. Teachers share evidence of children's progress in learning and interventions are agreed and planned where children are not meeting expected outcomes. Staff can evidence the positive impact of interventions to support children in making progress towards their individual targets. Senior leaders should now develop further their strategic approaches to checking children's progress over time. They track children's progress within each level. They should now take a closer look at the progress children make from one level to another and throughout primary school. This will allow them to see where the pace of progress has slowed and where overall attainment dips.

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.

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

- Almost all children at early level are on track to attain as expected in Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. At first and second levels most children are on track to attain as expected. A few children at each level have attained earlier than expected. Most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment. A few children at each stage could make better progress.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall attainment in literacy and English at early, first and second level is very good. Across the school, almost all children make good progress in listening and talking, most children make good progress in reading and writing.

Listening and talking

- Almost all children at early level talk animatedly about their learning experiences, particularly through their play. They enjoy listening to stories and share their favourite books and characters. Almost all children at first level share confidently their understanding of texts they have heard. They answer questions, explaining their views clearly. Almost all children at second level share their opinions in a discussion confidently, explaining their views, with supporting evidence. A few children across the school need support to understand when to share their views and when to allow others to contribute.

Reading

- Almost all children at early level use their knowledge of sounds and blends well to read simple words and sentences. They retell a known story and sequence events successfully. Most children at first level read fluently with expression. They use a range of strategies to decode unknown words and talk confidently about why they like or dislike a book. Most children at first level need to develop their understanding of the features of non-fiction texts further. At second level, most children answer literal, inferential and evaluative questions ably to show their understanding of texts read. They access a range of reading materials, including e-readers. At second level children should consider aspects of the writer's style more in discussion with their teachers.

Writing

- At early level, almost all children use their writing skills enthusiastically, attempting to spell familiar words to create short sentences. Most children are beginning to use capital letters and full stops. A minority of children extend their writing. At first level and second level all children write in a wide range of genres. They link their writing very effectively to health and wellbeing, sustainability and class contexts for learning to make it relevant and interesting. At first and second level children would benefit from having a clearer understanding of how to improve their writing.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children make good progress. Senior leaders and teachers need to ensure that all children make more consistent progress in their learning in numeracy and mathematics as they move through the school.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children add and subtract numbers to ten accurately. Most children use relevant vocabulary accurately, for example, more than, less than, longer and shorter. At first level, most children solve addition and subtraction problems correctly with three-digit whole numbers using different strategies. They are less confident recognising equivalent fractions of a whole number. At second level, most children round numbers correctly to the nearest 1000, 10,000 and 100,000. Their understanding of place value to two decimal places is secure. At first and second levels, children need to develop greater confidence calculating time and using their knowledge of fractions, decimals, and percentages to solve problems.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children at early level name familiar two-dimensional shapes confidently. They recognise and sort regular and irregular shapes well and develop their understanding of symmetry and simple reflecting patterns. At first level, most children describe accurately the properties of basic two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At second level, most children describe acute, right, obtuse, and reflex angles correctly. They are less confident describing the properties of circles and spheres.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children interpret simple graphs, charts and signs successfully. Most children at first level organise and carry out a simple survey successfully. At second level, most children construct a graph to represent information and read and interpret information correctly from tables. Children across the school need greater opportunities to develop skills in manipulating data to solve problems.

Attainment over time

- Over time, attainment at early stages is consistently high, at first level it shows a degree of variability and at second level shows an improvement. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to increase their focus on raising attainment over time and be able to demonstrate this with robust evidence.
- Senior leaders work closely with teachers to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy from the previous year and throughout the current year. They use assessment information and teachers' knowledge of children effectively to identify children on track to attain as expected. They also use this information well to identify children who are not on track to attain as expected. They monitor closely the progress of younger children supported by Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Most children who require additional support are making good progress towards individual targets. Senior leaders should consider what value interventions add to children's overall attainment, as they further develop processes for checking children's progress. They should measure progress children make, over a longer period of time.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are keen to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. Across the school, children are encouraged and supported to take part in a wide range of leadership and wider achievement opportunities. Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements through awards and certificates, at assemblies and using social media platforms and school noticeboards.

- Many sports clubs are developed successfully with parents and the Active Schools Co-ordinator. Children contribute effectively to school improvement through the JLT, learning for sustainability leadership groups, newspaper club, as social justice ambassadors and health and wellbeing leaders. Children talk confidently about skills they develop and apply as a result of having these roles. They learn new sporting and social skills. They develop talents and interests they were not aware of, and value the chance to learn and collaborate with others. Children are developing skills for learning, life and work well through these experiences. Senior leaders should continue with plans to develop the skills framework further. This will support them to plan, monitor and track the development of skills for each individual learner in greater detail.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have clear systems in place to track and monitor all children's progress, including those experiencing barriers to learning. Senior leaders should now focus on developing an overview of attainment overtime for all children affected by disadvantage. Local authority COVID-19 recovery support and additional support hours, funded through PEF, are used to provide targeted interventions in reading for children at early and first level effectively. All children being supported, continue to make progress against their individual targets. As part of the review of progress, senior leaders and teachers should consider the impact interventions have on overall attainment to ensure that they are closing the poverty related attainment gap. Staff track children's involvement in wider achievement opportunities and support children at risk of missing out to take part.

Other relevant evidence

- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

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.