Summarised inspection findings

Lawfield Primary School and Nursery Class

Midlothian Council

23 June 2020

Key contextual information

Lawfield Primary school has a roll of 307, with children organised across thirteen classes. Almost all children attending the school, live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones one to four. The head teacher has been in post for four years. During this time, there has been instability in staffing with many changes at the beginning of, and during each session. Since the head teacher took up post, 2019/20 is the first session when there have been no staffing changes, to date.

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 successes and achievements. The themes are: ■ learning and engagement ■ quality of teaching ■ effective use of assessment ■ planning, tracking and monitoring	

■ Staff at Lawfield Primary create a positive ethos for learning underpinned by the school's vision of 'safe, supported and successful'. The school community's key focus is wellbeing. As a result, almost all adults and children enjoy positive, respectful relationships. Most staff use praise and encouragement effectively to build children's confidence. Increasingly, the headteacher seeks children's views, and most children have opportunities to share their opinions about aspects of school life. A few children provide examples of how staff act on their suggestions, such as the planned refurbishment of the basketball court. Staff provide children with an increasing number of responsibilities, such as P7 buddies, to support children's independence and self-esteem.

■ In the majority of lessons, most children are motivated to learn. They support and work with each other well in pairs and groups. In these lessons, teachers match tasks and experiences to children's learning needs and interests well. Children are highly motivated in science challenges. A few teachers use a variety of teaching approaches well within lessons to engage most children in learning activities. However, too often children are passive during learning experiences and a few become disinterested. Teachers should continue to focus on developing activities to meet all children's learning needs to improve levels of engagement. They should support better children's active participation by allowing them to lead their learning more often.

■ The headteacher has led professional learning focused on improving the quality of learning and teaching. This is beginning to improve consistency in practice. The high turnover of staff has had an impact on the pace of change. As a result of professional learning, in almost all lessons, teachers share effectively the purpose of the learning activity. A few teachers make links to skills for learning, life and work. In a few lessons, children help to identify how they will be successful in their learning. Most teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. In a few lessons, they use effective questioning to develop children's higher order thinking skills. Teachers are working with senior leaders to agree and develop further understanding of the features of an effective lesson. The school must ensure improving the consistency and quality of learning and teaching remains a key improvement priority.

■ Most teachers' use of digital technology to support learning, is in the early stages of development. Most children are developing skills effectively using computers and tablets, online games and when creating texts. Teachers should develop further the use of a wider range of digital technologies to enhance learning and teaching experiences.

■ Teachers are beginning to develop approaches to learning through play at the early stages of the school. Senior leaders and teachers should now evaluate this development to ensure it offers sufficient challenge and progression for all children. Teachers would benefit from working together with nursery colleagues to enhance further their understanding and planning of high-quality play experiences.

■ In the majority of lessons children self or peer-assess learning. Most teachers provide verbal and written feedback to children. Where this is most effective, it helps children understand their next steps in learning. Most children are developing an understanding of how target-setting supports their progress. Children share helpfully their targets and achievements with families through their 'Learning to Learn' profiles. Staff should continue to develop the use of learning profiles and children's reflection on learning consistently across the school. This will support all children to understand their next steps in learning.

■ The majority of teachers use appropriately formative and summative assessment approaches to assess children's progress in literacy and numeracy. This includes a range of standardised assessments. Guided by the headteacher, they are developing approaches to planning and moderating assessment in stage groups. This is helping to improve the validity and reliability of teacher's professional judgements. Increasingly, teachers use diagnostic assessments to support the planning for children facing additional barriers to their learning. The headteacher shares appropriately the analysis of whole-school attainment data with teachers, and supports teachers to continue to develop their skills in data analysis. Teachers should use this data, and evidence and information gathered from classwork and assessment, more effectively to better plan and differentiate learning experiences for children.

■ The school continues to develop its arrangements for moderation across a range of curriculum areas and at almost all primary stages. They should continue to develop further moderation opportunities at the early level. At all levels, teachers should begin to use information gathered from moderation activities to inform planning for high quality learning and teaching and to develop their understanding of achievement at a level. Senior leaders should continue to monitor carefully the impact of moderation activity on improving children's attainment across the school. Teachers benefit from time working with colleagues across the learning community. As a result, they are beginning to develop a shared understanding of standards and expectations.

■ Teachers plan learning, teaching and assessment collaboratively across stages. They make appropriate use of national guidance, including Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and National Benchmarks, and are beginning to develop approaches to involve children more regularly in planning learning. Senior leaders and teachers monitor effectively children's progress across literacy and numeracy at tracking meetings three times a year. This is beginning to help inform planning interventions for targeted groups. Teachers are aware of the needs of children facing additional challenges to learning. They need to ensure they take better account of prior learning when planning, to meet their needs better.

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	weak

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

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The overall quality of attainment in literacy and English is satisfactory and weak in numeracy and mathematics.

- The school's data on attainment levels for 2018/19 shows that by the end of P1 the majority of children achieved early level in reading, writing and numeracy. Most children achieved early level in listening and talking. By the end of P4 the majority of children achieved first level in listening and talking and in reading. Less than half achieved first level in writing and numeracy. By the end of P7, less than half the children achieved second level in literacy and numeracy. Teachers' professional judgement is not yet sufficiently robust.

Literacy and English

- Overall, children's progress in literacy and English is satisfactory. Teachers are developing a variety of structured approaches to improve core skills in reading and writing. They now need to give children more experience of applying literacy skills in new and unfamiliar contexts to make better progress.

Listening and talking

- At early level, almost all children enjoy listening to and joining in with well-known stories. Most children show the ability to take turns when speaking in a variety of contexts. At first and second levels, most children describe, and the majority demonstrate, skills that contribute to good listening. They are less confident describing and demonstrating effective skills in talking. Across the school, children's skills in talking to audiences and taking part in group discussions are not sufficiently well developed.

Reading

- At early level, most children identify and say an increasing number of single sounds. The majority use knowledge of sounds and letters to read simple words. There is emerging evidence that teachers' recently reviewed approaches to teaching phonics at early and first level are beginning to close gaps in attainment. At first level, most children identify favourite authors. They speak about how aspects of the author's style help them enjoy texts. By second level, the majority of children read increasingly complex texts with fluency and expression. Through reading, most children show increasing knowledge of punctuation. At first and second level, children need to develop further their skills in analysing and discussing texts.

Writing

- At early level, most children re-tell familiar stories in different ways, using actions and drawing. The majority of children blend familiar sounds to write simple words. By the end of first level, the majority of children punctuate most sentences correctly and use descriptive language and

connectives effectively. The majority of children within second level use an increasing range of punctuation accurately, and use paragraphs to separate ideas. They are not yet writing extended pieces regularly. They need more practice in creating texts for a greater range of purposes and audiences. Across first and second level, a minority of children need to develop their handwriting skills to write in a more fluent and legible way.

Numeracy and mathematics
■ Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is weak.

Number, money and measure
■ At early level, most children order numbers correctly forwards and backwards, within the range 0-20. A few children need support to count on and back in ones to add and subtract. Most children working at first level use mathematical vocabulary correctly to discuss the four operations. This includes subtract, add, total and multiply. Just over half of children solve addition problems with three digit whole numbers. They lack confidence in using division to solve problems. At second level, most children need support to develop a better understanding of equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages. Most children calculate 50% of a quantity but are not sufficiently confident to apply this knowledge in a multi-step problem. Most children select the most suitable unit of time for a given task and justify their choice. Children across the school need to develop greater agility and recall in mental mathematics. They do not yet apply numerical and mathematical skills regularly enough in real-life contexts.

Shape, position and movement
■ At early level, most children recognise and sort two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects according to the criteria straight, round, flat and curved. They are becoming familiar with the names of a range of simple two-dimensional shapes. At first level, the majority of children name and discuss successfully the properties of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. A few children working within second level are beginning to show an understanding of the relationship between three-dimensional objects and nets. Teachers should provide children with increased opportunities to apply their skills in real life contexts to improve attainment.

Information handling
■ Across all CfE levels, there are significant gaps in children's knowledge and understanding of information handling. There is insufficient evidence of children's learning in handling data and analysis, at this stage of the school session. Teachers need to revisit this work at all stages across the school to ensure children confidently use and interpret a range of graphs. At second level, children need to develop their digital skills to record, organise and present data.

Attainment over time
■ The school provided data on children's achievement of CfE levels over the last three years. It indicates that over time, levels of CfE achievement have fluctuated with an overall decline from 2018 to 2019. In each of the last three years, by the end of P7, less than half of children achieved second level in reading, writing and numeracy. The school's CfE attainment data is not yet reliable and robust. The headteacher recognises this and is making changes to the way in which CfE assessment evidence is understood and gathered by teachers, and used to inform and evidence attainment over time. The head teacher is supporting teachers to make better connections between a range of standardised assessments and children's class work. She has plans in place to involve teachers regularly in analysing data from various sources. This information, along with ongoing teacher professional judgement, should give a more accurate overview of children's progress and attainment over time.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

■ There is a range of opportunities for children to develop the four capacities of CfE. Junior Literacy Champions work well in partnership with one another. They develop their leadership skills as they raise the profile of reading for enjoyment across the school. With the support of a parent, the Junior Web Developers use their digital skills to create and develop the school website. Staff should now extend opportunities for more children of all age groups to take on areas of responsibility. This will provide more support for all children to make informed choices and decisions. In the last year, the school has introduced an accredited achievement programme. An increasing number of children across the school engage with this initiative to track skills development. Staff should encourage all children to take part in this initiative to improve their sense of achievement, and raise awareness of their development of skills.

■ The majority of children take part in sports activities supported by Active Schools. Through this involvement they are learning the importance of pursuing a healthy and active lifestyle. Junior Active Schools coordinators make promotional videos to encourage children to take part in sporting activities. They use their digital literacy skills well to communicate in different ways. They are proud of their SportsScotland Silver Award.

■ The school celebrates children's achievements at school assemblies, on wall displays and on social media. Through their sporting, musical and creative achievements, children are becoming more self-aware. They work in partnerships and in teams supporting one another well. Senior leaders should develop further approaches to record and track children's achievements. Staff need to support children at risk of missing out to access opportunities for achievement.

Equity for all learners

■ Equity for all children is increasingly central to the values and ethos of the school. Senior leaders have identified the need to improve access to opportunities for children experiencing barriers to learning. The school should continue to work with a range of partners to address this. These partners speak highly of the school's proactive approach to collaborative working. There are positive outcomes arising from these initiatives, particularly in relation to improved engagement of children and families.

■ Senior leaders use the Pupil Equity Fund to support a range of approaches aimed at closing the poverty related attainment gap. These include contributing to additional staffing, professional learning and learning community initiatives. As a result, there are emerging signs of improved attainment of children who face barriers to learning. It will be important to continue to monitor the impact of this funding on improving outcomes for targeted groups of children.

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.