

# Summarised inspection findings

**New Cumnock Primary School**

**East Ayrshire Council**

**SEED No: 8242321**

**23 January 2018**

## Key contextual information

New Cumnock Primary School serves the village of New Cumnock in East Ayrshire. At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 210 with pupils arranged in eight classes. The school building was renovated in 2012 and provides very good accommodation for learning.

### 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

very good

This indicator defines rigorous self-evaluation as a responsibility of all stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasizes the need for strong leadership and robust analysis of a range of intelligence and data as essential features of effective continuous self-improvement. A key factor in this indicator is demonstrating the impact of self-evaluation in relation to outcomes for all learners. Their active participation in self-evaluation is therefore essential. The themes are:

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
- Ensuring impact on learners' successes and achievements

- The acting headteacher is committed to ensuring that the school takes account of the views of all stakeholders as it seeks to improve its work further. Staff, children, parents and partners are appropriately well involved in the school's self-evaluation processes. Questionnaires are used to help stakeholders give their views and identify areas for improvement. Stakeholders are listened to and their views used to inform school improvement planning.
- The newly revitalised Parent Council is enthusiastic in supporting school improvement. For example, parents and children have recently participated in the playground action group and the promoting positive behaviour group and have devised action plans. Stakeholders receive very good communication about the work of the school and its improvements. A clear, accessible version of the School Improvement Report and School Improvement Plan is shared with parents.
- There are many meaningful opportunities for children to share their views throughout the school year. These include questionnaires, focus groups and regular meetings of school groups and committees including the Pupil Council, Junior Road Safety Officers and Eco committees. These give children opportunities to make their views known and also identify how they can make improvements to enhance their school. The school's Rich Task groups involve all children and these provide a very helpful way of involving them in a range of school improvement work.
- The school's annual quality assurance calendar contains a wide range of appropriate approaches for the school's management team to gather information and data about the quality of learning and teaching, and children's progress. These approaches include classroom observations, regular assessments of children's progress and monitoring children's work. All staff have engaged in self-evaluation and have made use of the challenge questions from How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) across a range of quality indicators to evaluate performance and to identify areas for improvement. Peer observation has been well used to identify strengths and areas for development. For

example, this was very well used in PE lessons and has helped to develop school approaches to teaching PE.

- The school has a robust tracking and monitoring system to track children's attainment and their progress in learning. The regular pace and challenge meetings between teachers and the management team have a clear focus on individual children and how they can be supported to achieve their next steps in learning. The school's monitoring systems are regularly reviewed, refined and updated. The school is now intending to incorporate an overview of specific groups and their progress as they analyse their rich data.
- Children who are underachieving are identified and very well targeted intervention is put in place. For example, classroom assistant timetables are reviewed regularly to ensure that children's needs are being met. Staff have benefitted from receiving training from the local authority support team.
- Children increasingly set their own termly targets and regularly self-assess their progress in meeting these. In this way children are developing a clear understanding of their next steps in learning.
- Quality Career-long Professional Learning (CLPL) is very well planned and takes full account of Professional Review and Development arrangements linked to the GTCS Professional Standards and to the school improvement plan. Engagement in master's level learning has involved teachers in small scale action research which is directly pertinent to the school's own situation and is helping to improve the school further.
- As part of a Scottish Attainment Challenge authority, staff have had the opportunity to attend high quality CLPL delivered by national educational leaders. For example, a number of teachers have participated enthusiastically in developing mathematical pedagogy. This is having a direct impact of children's classroom experiences and their enjoyment of lessons in numeracy and mathematics.
- Staff actively seek out good practice locally and from schools in other local authorities. All teachers have worked effectively with colleagues within school and across the authority to moderate standards to gain a shared understanding of an achievement of a level.
- Teachers use a wide range of formative and summative assessments to inform their professional judgments. Teachers' use of national benchmarks in numeracy and mathematics, literacy and English and health and wellbeing is increasing their confidence in making professional judgments and holistic assessments of children's progress. Staff should now plan for the further use of benchmarks in other curriculum areas.
- The school can very clearly evidence improvements which have taken place as a result of self-evaluation and school improvement processes. For example, the achievement of the Dyslexia Friendly School award, the Rights Respecting School award and the Fair Trade awards has consolidated the work of the school in these areas.

## 2.1: Safeguarding

- 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

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.

#### Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Attainment data provided by the school, is based on teachers' professional judgements. This is supported by a range of standardised assessments, moderation and on-going professional dialogue with promoted staff. From the data provided for 2016/2017, most children at P1 and P4 achieved expected levels in literacy. Overall, at P1 and P4, most children achieved appropriate levels of attainment in numeracy. However, by P7 only just over half of the children achieved appropriate levels. Staff are confident in their predictions, that across the school most children will achieve appropriate levels this session.
- Inspection activity, including class observations at all stages, sampling of children's work and engaging with pupil attainment groups supports the school's evaluations. The headteacher recognises the impact that staffing shortages have had on learning and teaching at the upper stages. There is a need to ensure older children receive a high quality experience and receive sufficient pace, breadth and challenge in their work.

#### Attainment in literacy and English language

- Children are making good progress, overall, from their previous levels of attainment. Last session, staff identified the need to improve reading across the school in order to raise children's attainment further. Staff supported each other and shared good practice as they introduced a new approach to reading across the school. Staff should continue to develop a fuller understanding of national benchmarks to help children better understand how to improve their learning. The school identifies children who experience difficulties developing their literacy skills and well-targeted strategies are put in place to help them improve.

#### Listening and Talking

- At all stages, children are making good progress in developing and applying skills in listening and talking across their learning. At the early level, most children listen to their teacher, follow simple instructions, and make attempts to take turns to talk in class and in groups. At the first level, children are keen to contribute their ideas, but sometimes need to be reminded to listen to each other too. Children in a sample group working within second level listened well to each other, shared their ideas and built on each other's contributions. There is scope to continue to develop listening and talking across the school.

#### Reading

- Overall, children's attainment in reading is good. Across the school, children enjoy reading and are encouraged to borrow books from the school library. A majority of children in sample groups said that they read at home for pleasure. At the early level, children enjoy learning to recognise letter patterns, sounds and common words. Most children who have achieved first level read their class texts aloud with understanding and expression.

Children working within first level are developing the skills of reading for understanding. Those at second level are enthusiastic about reading their class novel and have made good use of the library to borrow books and as a resource for research in their learning across the curriculum.

### **Writing**

- Overall, children's attainment in writing is good. They are given regular opportunities to write for a variety of purposes in different contexts. At early level, children are making good progress in learning to form letters and words. At first level, they are taught strategies to spell accurately and to make their writing more interesting. At second level, children have produced a range of texts for different purposes. Most children at second level increasingly use appropriate punctuation and spelling and produce some writing linked to their learning in different curricular areas. The presentation of written work across the school is variable. Children would benefit from having more opportunities to practise and apply their writing skills.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. The school has taken steps to improve children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics. As part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), staff have undertaken professional learning in learning and teaching of numeracy and mathematics. They are also supported by a SAC officer from the Local Authority. As a result of this learning, they have changed approaches to learning and teaching of numeracy. This is at an early stage of implementation but there are positive signs of emerging improvement. Children interviewed told us that mathematics was a favourite feature of school. They particularly enjoy new approaches in class. Teachers note children can discuss their understanding of numeracy with increased confidence.

### **Number, money, measure**

- Across all stages, children are developing skills in numeracy and mathematics appropriately and most children are able to apply these skills well. Children are beginning to explain mental strategies which they apply accurately. There is scope to deepen children's learning by regularly re-visiting some of the mathematical concepts, particularly in relation to measure, and information handling.
- Across the school, children are developing their mental agility skills well. They benefit from regular opportunities to practise mental agility at the start of each day's numeracy lesson. This practice is consistent across the school and supports children's progress. At P1, children enjoyed using digital games to order numbers. At P3, children practised calculating ten more and ten less. Others completed a timed challenge to note down different ways to make 50. At P5, children practised place value recording four digit numbers. They are gaining confidence using 'skipping back' as a strategy to support division sums.
- By P2, most children can identify a range of coins. They can use the coins to make 10p in simple games and written tasks. Older children understand the purpose of learning how to calculate percentages, and can apply this in working out discounts on purchases.

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

- Children in sample groups were confident in discussing the properties of two dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects. Older children described symmetry in the environment well.

### **Information handling**

- Children can recall opportunities they have had to conduct surveys and create bar graphs. This included monitoring traffic outside the school. Older children used data from elections to make a bar graph illustrating results for political parties in Scotland.

### **Attainment over time**

- Regular tracking meetings have a clear focus on individual children's progress over time using a range of evidence including standardised test results. The management team and staff meet regularly to plan appropriate interventions to ensure, as far as possible that children can improve year on year. Children who have additional support needs have their progress towards their targets reviewed regularly. Overall, staff are confident that most children are making good progress over time.

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

- Children across the school are developing a range of skills and attributes. There is a range of opportunities for pupil voice to be heard, including through the pupil council and at assemblies or together times. The school has used curriculum weeks for example STEM, Health and Careers as a vehicle to promote skills for learning, life and work. The staff are keen to ensure this learning is embedded across the curriculum. On Friday afternoons all children participate in Rich Task groups. This offers children good experience in participating in whole school initiatives, including the Rights Respecting School Award and the Eco committee and in developing aspects of the life of the school including approaches to behaviour in the playground.
- Achievement in and out of school is celebrated through assemblies and on wall displays around the school. Staff recognise the need to support children to understand the skills and capacities they are developing through participation in achievement opportunities. Tracking of wider achievement and accreditation is in the early stages of development.
- Overall, most children are successful learners and are confident talking about their learning and the pride they have in the school. The school should continue with its plans to make their approach to tracking achievement more systematic.

### **Equity for all learners**

- The school has developed systems for tracking children's progress in literacy and numeracy. During inspection activity the management team worked with inspectors to develop this further. All staff know the children, their families and the community very well. Staff are committed to recognising barriers to learning and minimising the impact of these. In discussion with inspectors, they also acknowledged the need to reflect on curriculum choices to better meet the needs of children, and their life experiences.
- The school has outlined its proposed use of the Pupil Equity Funding to achieve excellence and equity. There has been a delay in securing staff to progress this aspect of support for children and it is hoped this matter will be resolved soon.

## 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.

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