

# Summarised inspection findings

**Rephad Primary School**

Dumfries and Galloway Council

27 June 2023

## Key contextual information

Rephad Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the town of Stranraer. At the time of inspection, there were 209 children across nine classes on the school roll. A few classes are composite classes. The school also has a nursery class which operates term-time. Across the school, approximately 15% of children are registered for free school meals, which is below the national average. The headteacher and depute headteacher serve as the school's senior leadership team. During session 2021/22, COVID-19 continued to have a significant impact on the school community with an increase in staff and children's absence.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher worked closely with children, parents and staff to agree and shape Rephad Primary's vision and values. Together they created an aspirational motto for the school community, 'be the best you can be'. This is understood well by all primary children and is becoming more familiar to children in the nursery. In school, most children recognise and understand how the chosen values relate to their lives. Senior leaders discuss these regularly during assemblies and in newsletters. Staff celebrate children demonstrating the values through house points and awards. Younger children will benefit from continued support to understand how the school values impact on their own experiences.
- The headteacher has prioritised building trust and relationships with staff, children and parents while leading the school through periods of change over recent years. She is establishing a clear strategic direction for the school which is underpinned by her aspiration. The headteacher is assisted very well by the depute headteacher. As a senior leadership team, they are committed to having an open approach and working closely with families. As a result, most parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or any issues.
- Working with the local authority, senior leaders need to review roles and responsibilities of the leadership team relating to the nursery class. They need to ensure remits enable senior leaders and staff in school to work closely with nursery senior leaders and practitioners to build capacity within the nursery team. This will support nursery staff to deliver high quality learning experiences and help all children to make better progress throughout the early level of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Senior leaders provide a range of opportunities for teachers to take on areas of school improvement and develop further their leadership skills. Teachers feel supported and encouraged by the headteacher and depute headteacher. Most teachers have completed practitioner enquiry projects focused on positive changes in their classroom practice. Support staff lead on programs and resources to assist children's learning. They make good use of the knowledge they gain from professional learning, for example approaches to play. Senior leaders and staff identify and agree areas of school leadership through professional review and

development discussions. For example, this year, there are staff leading on rights-based learning.

- Senior leaders are planning appropriately for school improvement using information from school self-evaluation and attainment results. They make relevant links to local authority and cluster schools' priorities. The headteacher consults with all staff when deciding areas of focus and when evaluating the school's progress. There are positive signs of impact in areas, such as writing and rights-based learning. Senior leaders inform the Parent Council on the school's plans for improvement and update all parents through school newsletters. They display posters which highlight the key priorities for the session around the building. This helps to maintain a high profile on the school's improvement work. Senior leaders should now increase children's, parents' and partners' involvement in planning and evaluating whole establishment improvement.
- The headteacher has developed a well-considered quality assurance calendar and completes regular evaluation activities across the school. This includes learning observations and focus group discussions with children. Senior leaders use 'How Good is OUR school?' as a framework to gather children's views on teaching and learning. The headteacher plans regular, protected time for staff professional dialogue, learning together and self-evaluation. These approaches support her to manage the school's pace of change appropriately. The school's quality assurance approaches should now be extended to provide support and direction for the nursery. Senior leaders discuss the overall information gathered with staff and use it well to inform school improvement. As a result, all staff are developing a shared understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school. They would benefit further from re-establishing opportunities for peer observations and visits to other establishments.
- The headteacher and staff have a deep understanding of the school's social, economic, and cultural context. Teachers and support staff are aware of the potential barriers to learning children face and any gaps in their learning. They understand their role in raising children's attainment and are clear on the agreed strategies to support children to progress, such as the shared approach to teach writing. Senior leaders have a strategic plan for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) that targets support for individuals and groups in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. The headteacher recognises using clearer and measurable targets will help staff to evaluate more robustly the impact of planned PEF interventions on children's attainment and progress.
- Older children are proud to take on roles of leadership that help them to develop skills for learning and life, for example, house captains. They are supported by senior leaders to prepare and share information at assemblies. Across the school, children represent their class through leadership groups, such as the pupil council and reading committee. Staff support children on the groups to gather the views of their peers and select areas of school life to improve. Children can identify and share a few positive changes they have initiated, such as playground improvements and a new library layout. Most children feel the school listens to their views. Senior leaders should continue to help all children to understand how their views are taken into account and the actions the school take as result.

## 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

- Senior leaders and staff create a calm and purposeful learning environment which supports a positive school ethos. All adults in the school community contribute to the strong relationships between adults and children. In classes, children demonstrate the school values through their daily interactions. They are proud of their school and their successes. Throughout the school, children are articulate and polite to adults, peers and visitors. Almost all children are attentive during learning times and most cooperate well in pairs and groups. Almost all show a positive attitude to learning and engage well in experiences across the curriculum.
- Across the school, children and staff enjoy and promote a positive reading culture. All staff have developed classroom environments that promote enjoyment and interest in books. Children regularly access and read a range of fiction and non-fiction books from the school's library spaces. The school's pupil-led reading committee help to give reading a high profile and this approach is encouraging all children to become enthusiastic readers.
- In almost all lessons, teachers' instructions are clear and children understand the purpose of their learning. All teachers set up clear routines and share expectations. They help children to settle to learning using well-considered and calm approaches. In lessons, teachers provide differentiated tasks and activities that help most children to engage with learning. Staff should continue to review their approaches to ensure all children receive the correct level of challenge and that the pace of learning is right. Most teachers use effective questioning to check for understanding and stimulate curiosity. This supports children to engage in learning and extends their thinking. Senior leaders share their expectation of quality learning and teaching at Rephad through planning materials and professional dialogue. Teachers should continue to use these supports to help embed consistent approaches across the school.
- Support staff assist children skilfully with their learning, both in class and when working with small groups. They are sensitive to the needs and wellbeing of all children. Support staff provide a range of interventions which support children to revisit and practise their literacy and numeracy skills. This is helping children with barriers to their learning to make progress.
- In most lessons, teachers make good use of digital tools and resources to consolidate and support children's learning. Across the school, children use a variety of technologies with growing confidence, such as laptops and applications. This supports their independence and engagement. Children benefit from using online games regularly to practise their mental mathematics and literacy skills. Older children use digital presentation tools well to share and present their learning with others. Younger children enjoy playing games on the interactive whiteboard and tablets. As planned, teachers should enrich further learning experiences using digital technologies and support children to apply their growing skills across the curriculum.

- At early and into first level, teachers are developing learning through play approaches. They create stimulating classroom environments to support play-based experiences and encourage children's curiosity. The agreed 'Smart Start and Successful Six' approach provides opportunities which allow children to lead aspects of their learning and make personal choices. Staff should continue to develop and share further their understanding and approaches to play, taking account of national guidance. This will support progressive learning experiences across levels and allow young children opportunities to develop further their independence.
- Teachers use oral and written comments to provide children with encouragement and helpful feedback on their learning. In almost all classes, children are given opportunities to self and peer assess aspects of their work. Most children are developing the confidence to talk about their progress in learning. This is most effective in writing, where teachers give individual feedback which highlights children's strengths and provides clear next steps. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to support children to identify and discuss clear measures of success in tasks and activities across the curriculum.
- Teachers support children to set targets for literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing twice a year. This provides children with opportunities to discuss their strengths and what they need to do to improve. Children would benefit from revisiting and setting their targets more regularly. Teachers are developing their approaches to identify more clearly for children the transferable skills they are learning and applying. This is helping children to develop a growing awareness of how these skills relate to their own lives and in the world of work.
- Senior leaders developed a yearly assessment overview to support teachers in gathering a range of information on children's progress. Teachers plan regular observations of children's learning and assessments for reading, writing and mathematics. This includes standardised assessments and at key milestones, Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA). This is enabling senior leaders and teachers to closely track and monitor most children's progress well and identify any support required.
- Teachers plan across all areas of the curriculum. They have established helpful collaborative approaches to ensure they are planning children's progress across stages and levels. This is supporting teachers to plan learning that builds on most children's prior skills and knowledge. They should continue to develop how they use assessment information to set next steps in learning more effectively for a few individuals and groups.
- Teachers engage in regular moderation activities together and with cluster school colleagues as part of planned events. They have experience in moderating their planning and assessment of a number of areas including writing and digital skills. As a result, teachers are developing sound professional judgement and a shared understanding of children's achievement of a level.
- Senior leaders and staff meet termly to discuss children's progress. The headteacher provides a comprehensive tracking overview for classes and the school. Working with senior leaders, teachers are beginning to understand and use this range of information to inform their planning. Together senior leaders and staff should develop approaches to track more effectively the impact of interventions for individuals and groups, such as children who are care experienced and those with additional support needs. This will allow all school staff who are involved with supporting learning to have a clearer overview of the progress children are making and their next steps.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use progressive pathways for literacy and numeracy and a few other curricular areas to plan a range of experiences for children. Senior leaders have plans in place to create and develop a curriculum rationale with children, staff and parents. In doing so, they should consider what their curriculum offers children and capture more fully the uniqueness of their school and its community. As planned, senior leaders and staff should agree and develop clear pathways for the remaining curricular areas.
- Working together, teachers are beginning to develop shared approaches to learning which links across different curriculum areas. They collaborate on their planning and share practice. Children engage in a range of experiences and, with support, they are beginning to transfer and apply their knowledge across areas of learning. Teachers encourage children to take ownership of aspects of their learning and make choices on how they learn. Teachers should continue to develop and embed this approach consistently across the school.
- Senior leaders and staff have well-planned arrangements to support children as they move from nursery to P1 and P7-S1. Nursery practitioners share helpful information to support children to settle well as they start school. School staff make good use of the close proximity of Stranraer Academy to ensure regular, varied and enhanced support for older children before their move. Secondary staff team-teach with primary colleagues to get to know children and help prepare them for change.
- Teachers provide engaging opportunities for children to learn outdoors in the playground and local area. Children benefit from gardening activities with the community, visiting local areas such as the park, and seasonal walks to the woods. This supports children's wellbeing and helps to develop transferable skills. Teachers are beginning to more regularly use the outdoor environment as a meaningful context for learning. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop outdoor learning in a planned and progressive way.
- Staff work effectively in partnership with organisations and local businesses to enhance the curriculum for children. Recent partners include Fèis Rois, Youth Music Initiative, Incredible Edibles and Dumfries and Galloway College. Several groups of children receive free music tuition, such as woodwind and brass, giving them access to quality music making opportunities. A few children have progressed further in their instrument learning and play in local bands.
- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours high-quality physical education each week. Teachers make use of both indoor and outdoor spaces to deliver a progressive programme for children. Staff work well with Active Schools and local clubs to increase engagement and promote achievement through physical activities and sport, such as curling.
- Teachers provide a skills-based programme for French across the school. Children engage well during lessons and enjoy exploring the language. Older children are beginning to learn Spanish as a third language. All children are also given the opportunity to learn and recite a Scottish poem annually which supports their growing awareness of Scottish culture and heritage. Staff should continue to develop French and Spanish as a regular part of the curriculum and learning about these cultures should be integrated further into children's language learning.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Staff value parents as key partners in the life of the school. Most parents feel that the school communicates with them well. For example, through regular school newsletters, termly curricular updates and online platforms. Senior leaders support parents of children who require additional support to connect with relevant partner agencies.
- Parents welcome the increasing number of ways to engage with their child in school. This includes events such as charity coffee mornings, a harvest festival and family 'drop in' sessions. During open events, senior leaders regularly arrange for organisations to attend and display their services for parents. For example, catering services prepared examples of children's lunches and shared information. Senior leaders offer a variety of ways for parents to share their views, including on the curriculum. A few parents are now involved in Rephad's children's rights steering group.
- The Parent Council inform parents about their work through a new magazine style newsletter, social media and the school app. They recently surveyed parents and pupils on which after school clubs and activities they would like to see provided. Children are excited to attend a wide range of clubs which the Parent Council has now arranged for the summer term, including baking, comics and photography.

## 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.



This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- All staff understand the importance of developing children's health and wellbeing as a responsibility for all and treat children with respect. Interactions between staff and children are positive and caring. Children can talk articulately about the wellbeing indicators and how the school is helping them understand and improve their health and wellbeing. The headteacher and pupil council surveyed children on aspects of wellbeing, including being safe. This supported staff in identifying the areas of focus that were important to children. This approach has helped children to better understand risk and feel safer. Children are able to talk about ways to respect others and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Almost all children feel able to share any concerns they have with their teachers and feel confident that their views will be listened to.
- Senior leaders hold weekly assemblies that focus on health and wellbeing. This provides children with regular opportunities to learn about rights and wellbeing indicators. Children feel that this supports them to understand their own wellbeing and factors which impact on their life. As a result, children are able to recognise what makes them feel safe and know what they can do to be healthy. Staff should use wellbeing indicators to assess children's wellbeing more frequently. This will provide clearer information on what children are thinking and feeling. It will enable senior leaders and staff to monitor all children more closely and identify further appropriate interventions.
- The school's 'Skills for Life' programme is supporting adults' understanding and effective use of 'restorative' conversations to promote positive behaviour and relationships. Teachers plan lessons in recognising emotions and developing social skills. This is supporting children to better understand their emotions, how they respond to situations and what strategies they can use to support their resilience. As a result, children feel more able to express themselves and resolve disagreements. Staff make use of a house points system to encourage children to make positive choices and recognise their contributions to the life of the school.
- All children have regular opportunities to engage in a range of play experiences to promote their physical development. Staff make effective use of extensive grass spaces, outdoor obstacle courses and loose-parts play materials to support children to develop their physical coordination and balance skills. In the upper stages, children develop team-building skills through a 'play maker' program and support younger children to engage in sports and games. This range of opportunities helps children to develop caring roles and friendships across the school.
- Most children experience leadership opportunities across a range of pupil participation groups. Being a member of these groups and committees contributes well to children's sense of wellbeing and agency. Children speak positively of the skills they are learning such

as working with others, making decisions and planning events. This approach is supporting children to develop a meaningful understanding of skills for learning, life and work. Senior leaders support all children who wish to take on roles in the life of the school to have the opportunity. They should ensure that no children are at risk of missing out due to their individual circumstances.

- The headteacher monitors attendance closely and regularly across the establishment and overall attendance is above the national average. There are a few recorded incidents of exclusion and a few children have lower attendance rates. Senior leaders work well with partners to support families experiencing difficulties. For a few children this is beginning to remove barriers to attending school.
- Overall, staff have a good understanding of their duties and responsibilities to improve outcomes for children and young people. In line with statutory guidance, senior leaders need to ensure all children with additional support needs arising from one or more complex or multiple factors, including those who are care experienced, are considered for a coordinated support plan.
- Staff create plans for children who require additional support for their learning, including individual education plans (IEP). In these plans, staff record individual targets, and the interventions children receive. In a few of these plans, staff should ensure targets are more specific and measurable. Senior leaders and staff should review and measure children's targets more regularly to ensure approaches and interventions are effective and lead to improved outcomes. They should also ensure children's voice and participation are more consistent features of this process. A few parents feel their child does not receive the help that they need to do well and could be making better progress. Senior leaders need to involve parents more regularly in discussing and planning support for their child.
- Across the school, children are developing their understanding of equality, inclusion and diversity. Staff refreshed and expanded the range of books in the library to support children to engage with a more diverse selection of texts. Senior leaders and teachers use assemblies and learning across the curriculum to provide children with opportunities to celebrate and develop their understanding of diversity. As a result, children are developing their skills and confidence to address discrimination and intolerance. They will benefit from developing their learning about diversity in a coherent and progressive way across levels. This will help children to develop further their understanding of their place in the world as a global citizen.

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, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good, with most children achieving nationally expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. Across the school, a few children at each stage are exceeding expected levels. Most children who require additional support are making appropriate progress from their prior levels of learning.

### **Attainment in literacy and English**

- Overall, children are making good progress in literacy and English. Senior leaders identified common gaps in children's learning in literacy and have interventions in place that are helping to address these. Across first and second level, the majority of children make good progress in reading and writing. Across the school, most children make good progress in talking and listening.

### **Listening and talking**

- At early level, most children listen well to each other and adults. They use new vocabulary in different contexts to express their ideas and feelings. At first level, most children contribute their ideas when working in groups. They listen carefully, recount experiences and share ideas confidently. By the end of second level, most children justify their reasoning very well on a range of topics. At first and second level, children will benefit from further practice engaging and influencing listeners in creative ways.

### **Reading**

- At early level, most children recognise a range of common words and can talk about characters from simple stories. The majority of children working towards first level, answer literal and inferential questions with confidence. They read aloud familiar and unfamiliar texts with growing fluency. They will benefit from practice using context clues to read and understand more complex texts. At second level, most children offer a personal preference for the genre and style of books they read. They identify and summarise the main ideas of text. Most explain differences between fact, opinion and persuasion. Children are less confident recognising techniques to influence readers.

### **Writing**

- At early level, most children write short sentences using simple words with growing confidence. They create their own stories and characters in imaginative ways. The majority of children working towards first level, write well for a variety of different purposes and audiences. They can convey information, describe events and combine ideas. At this level, children should continue to develop more extended vocabulary and grammar. Across second level, all children write regularly for a variety of purposes and audiences across genres. By the end of second level, most children understand well the difference between factual,

persuasive, descriptive and narrative writing. They should practise engaging their reader further through their layout and presentation choices.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children achieve national expected levels of attainment at early and second level, and the majority of children at first level. At P2, the majority of children are making appropriate progress and most children in P3, P5 and P6 are making good progress. Across the school, all children will benefit from further practice applying their numeracy and mathematics skills to problem-solving and multi-step calculations.

## **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, most children make good use of concrete materials and visual prompts to support their addition and subtraction. They double numbers to a total of ten using a range of strategies. Most children working towards first level, have a good understanding of place value. They increasingly select and explain their processes and solutions clearly. Children will benefit from further practice with fractions. At second level, most children have good mental agility, completing calculations accurately. They apply their learning and skills in number and money to real-life, practical contexts, such as budgeting. They are less confident linking concepts across fractions, decimals and percentages.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- Almost all children at early level, recognise and describe common two-dimensional shapes. They are beginning to explore the language of position and direction. Most children working towards first level, describe the properties of shapes using the correct mathematical vocabulary. They are less familiar identifying right angles. Most children working towards second level, describe and classify acute, obtuse and reflex angles with growing confidence. They will benefit from revisiting their understanding of the properties of circles.

## **Information handling**

- At early level, most children apply their counting skills to display information and answer questions from a simple table, such as favourite fruits. They use their knowledge of colour, shape and size well to match and sort items. Most children working towards first level, are confident using Venn and Carroll diagrams to display information. Across second level, most children extract key information and answer questions from an increasing range of charts, bar graphs and tables. All children should continue to extend their information handling skills in real-life contexts, including using digital technologies.

## **Attainment over time**

- The headteacher has established a clear and comprehensive system to collate and track children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. School data shows children's attainment decreased post pandemic, particularly in writing. Senior leaders prioritised this as an area of whole school improvement which has secured positive impact. There is a sustained improvement across all stages, in both literacy and numeracy, and children's attainment is returning to or exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to track and monitor attainment of individuals, cohorts and groups of children to inform and evaluate planned school improvement.
- Across the curriculum, most children are building on prior skills and knowledge and making appropriate progress in their learning. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop processes to help check children's progress over time in discrete curricular areas.

## Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children have regular opportunities to share their successes in class and at assemblies. Their achievements are celebrated widely in newsletters, social media and special wall displays. Staff recognise the personal achievements and important milestones in children's lives very well. They value and celebrate equally the skills children gain from hobbies, interests, work in community and from representing the school. Staff also recognise and highlight children's achievements through organised clubs and competitions. Senior leaders ensure adults in the school community have their achievements and learning celebrated and including areas of life, such as sports and farming. The school's approach is helping children to identify and understand the wide range of ways to be successful and celebrate many different strengths.
- Senior leaders and teachers are beginning to track children's participation across wider achievement experiences. As planned, staff should support children to make links between their learning and achievements and the skills for learning, life and work.

## Equity for all learners

- The headteacher tracks effectively the progress and attainment of groups of children with potential barriers to their learning. Senior leaders identify gaps in children's attainment using a range of data and use this information well to plan targeted support for individuals. PEF is used appropriately to fund additional support staff and for professional learning. Staff also provide tailored wellbeing support for children, such as playground support and nurturing sessions. These targeted interventions are helping children with barriers to their learning to make progress against their own targets. The headteacher is not yet able to evidence how successful interventions have been in narrowing and closing the school's poverty-related attainment gap. She is developing further her knowledge and skills in using data to help identify specific gaps in learning and evidence progress more clearly. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop ways to measure the impact of work to raise attainment. This information will help staff to ensure targeted supports are accelerating progress and improving outcomes for all children.
- Senior leaders have arrangements in place to ensure that financial constraints do not prevent any children from taking part in opportunities for learning and achievement. The headteacher and Parent Council work together well to plan ways to reduce the cost of the school day for all parents.

## 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.