Summarised inspection findings

Locharbriggs Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

28 August 2018

Key Contextual Information

Locharbriggs Primary School has a roll of 130 children and 33 in the nursery class. It is part of the Dumfries High School cluster. The headteacher has been in post since February 2018.

1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory

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 recently appointed headteacher has strong values and a clear vision for the future direction of the school. In the short time in post he gathered a wide range of views and data showing accurately the strengths of the school and areas of improvement to inform improvements priorities. His expectations for children, parents and staff are high and his creative approaches to managing change are motivational. Through leading staff in professional reading and well-judged career-long professional learning (CLPL) he sets high standards that are achievable by all. Community engagement activities are well received and appealing to all stakeholders. The events that promote participation of all develop a sense of identity and belonging for the whole school community. Children, parents, staff and partners spoken to by the inspection team, welcome the headteacher's dedication to the school, his vision, and values. Of note, is the leadership involvement of clerical staff to collate data and introduce an action plan outlining them as equal partners in developing the ethos across all areas of the school. Although the school is at the early stages of collegiate working to develop a shared ownership of the vision, values and aims, the impact of the approaches to date are very positive.

- Staff are inspired by the leadership style of the new headteacher. They are motivated to work closely as a team. Already they use their strengths effectively to affect positive change and raise the profile of the school. They are developing well approaches to achieve the highest quality learning experiences for children. Over the past few years, the majority of staff demonstrated strengths in leadership of learning within their classrooms. As a result, the examples of good practice in children's standards of writing and the organisation of the curriculum show some evidence that previous school improvement plans supported improvements. There is much room to improve the leadership and strategic direction of the school. The ethos and relationships throughout the school are beginning to create a purposeful learning environment where everyone feels safe and valued. There is a need for a clear understanding of the links between relationships, good behaviour and learning. In addition, there is scope to support a minority of children to develop higher expectations and goals for themselves as responsible citizens.

- The school sets out a clear agenda for improvement and strategic planning. It works closely with the local authority with appropriate plans to build on the already very positive approaches to partnership working. We have asked staff to prioritise improvements with a focus on wellbeing and learning and teaching, including additional support for learning and pedagogy,

across the nursery and early level. In addition, there is a need to reflect the unique context of the school within core learning and teaching. It would be beneficial to involve all staff in taking forward identified priorities through participation in CLPL and working groups. Revisiting the remits of all staff, promoted and non-promoted and identify opportunities for leadership roles across the whole school community that affect change would improve the pace and effectiveness of change. Once these are agreed the school should ensure that they are rigorously monitored and evaluated.

- With the continued leadership and direction of the headteacher, the school is well placed to continue to improve. However, current approaches are not sustainable and we have asked the local authority to support a review of the leadership opportunities across the school to accelerate progress for a few of the identified areas for improvement. While the headteacher has made an impressive start, there is a need to address areas of wellbeing and in-class support for additional support for learning of targeted groups of children as a matter of priority.

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 their successes and achievements. The themes are:

■ learning and engagement
■ quality of teaching
■ effective use of assessment
■ planning, tracking and monitoring

■ Significant work has recently gone into developing a calm and positive ethos in and around the school. Children are encouraged to practice 'fantastic walking' around the school, hold doors open for each other and use kind words. Staff should now build on the improved ethos and culture across class learning with more opportunities for enjoyment. There is scope to make more use of the school's substantial grounds for outdoor learning and for learning in and through the local community, all underpinned by challenge.

■ Most learners are keen to learn and engage well with their learning experiences. In the best examples observed, learners' experiences are motivating, matched to children's needs and linked to their interests. Activities are structured to allow learners to develop their thinking and challenge themselves. Learners have some opportunities to work across classes. For example, the P7 class supported P4 partners with PowerPoint presentations and learning about transitions and animation. Children in P6 visited pre-school children in the nursery to support their transition into P1 with a view to being their 'buddies' in the new session. However, across the school the quality of learning and teaching is variable. There is scope for learners to take more responsibility for, and become increasingly independent in, their learning.

■ Events, such as the upcoming school show, provide a context for learning across a range of curriculum areas. Learning intentions and success criteria are shared in most classes, and in a few examples, these are used to support learner discussion about learning, progress and next steps. In a few classes, children are involved in assessing and evaluating their own work and the work of their peers. This includes making use of video footage in physical education (PE) so that learners can reflect on their technique against shared success criteria. Plans to access the Moderation Hub and reflect, as staff, on good quality learning intentions and success criteria will support a shared understanding of effective practice. This in turn should support better quality feedback for learners, matched to success criteria.

■ There is evidence of differentiation in most classes, however, staff need to ensure that tasks, activities and resources are well matched to the needs of all learners. The pace of learning could be increased across the school whilst ensuring current standards of work are maintained and built upon. In a few classes, children are being encouraged to challenge themselves and work has begun to build their resilience as learners. A number of children talked about the importance of learning from their mistakes and not giving up when their learning is 'hard'. These key messages are shared through assemblies by the headteacher and followed up by staff in the classroom. Staff should consider their use of questioning to promote curiosity and develop higher order thinking skills and to make interventions that allow learning to further develop.

■ The planned improvements in relation to moderation within the school are well judged and will build capacity for staff in understanding standards and developing high expectations for all. Judgements made during the course of teaching need to be better informed through, for example, engagement with the National Benchmarks. Staff are keen to engage in collaborative planning and explore opportunities to open up learning across classes and Curriculum for Excellence levels. Staff have participated in cluster moderation opportunities and this should continue as planned. Assessments need to be much more clearly linked to the planned learning and teaching as part of the ongoing work in classes. This would ensure that learners are provided with activities through which to demonstrate their learning. An overview of opportunities for application of learning in relevant, real-life contexts should be planned, for example, in line with the annual calendar and wider life and work of the school.

■ The recently introduced tracking system captures relevant information for each child and allows for monitoring of progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff discuss the progress of each learner with the headteacher using the tracking and monitoring system. As staff develop confidence in using this information it will further support them to identify appropriate interventions and make predictions of achievement in line with shared expectations and aspirations for all. There is scope for children to have a greater role in planning for their learning across the school, participating in discussions about the curriculum and things they would like to learn more about.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ There are plans for staff to work together to refresh learning pathways to ensure they support all groups of learners to build on prior learning at an appropriate pace. Existing planning frameworks based on the experiences and outcomes are being reviewed to ensure that whilst children benefit from coherent and progressive learning experiences as they move through the school, there is also flexibility to meet the needs of all learners. As a result of the existing learning pathways, children are not always motivated and engaged in their learning. As identified by the headteacher more use could be made of the outdoor space to organise learning as well as providing opportunities for children to learn through the life of their school and community. Local partnerships that will support staff to work towards this, have been identified and established.

■ From observations and discussion with learners, there are some gaps in these areas of the curriculum, for example, music and technology. The school's health and wellbeing programme needs to reflect the unique context of the school. All staff should work together to develop a shared understanding of the universal support and strategies offered in every classroom and their role within this. Clear expectations of the learner's role and the strategies available to them to become more independent in their learning should lead to increased confidence in talking about their strengths and next steps. This will enable learners to become more resilient in their learning and make healthy and sensible choices.

■ A recent Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) open afternoon provided parents and the local community with the opportunity to share the school's approach to learning within these curriculum areas and how these support the development of skills for learning, life and work. Plans for increased partnership with parents and the local community could provide rich learning opportunities to enhance these areas of the curriculum whilst building on the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) agenda.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ Focus groups of parents, social media, Parent Council meetings and parental surveys are a few of the approaches used by the headteacher to seek the views of parents in the life and the work of the school. More recent events and initiatives to promote parental participation are becoming increasingly popular. The parental engagement strategy, at the early stages of development, has a clear vision and plans to embed rigorous measures to evaluate its impact.

■ In the past few weeks, the headteacher prioritised the need for all visitors, including parents, to feel valued when they approach the school. A Parental Engagement Lead post, created through the school's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation, and events such as the STEM family challenge afternoon and headteacher's Afternoon Tea are a few of the initiatives that are making a difference. In addition, the sign-in arrangements at the front office include feedback cards to monitor the first point of contact of the school. The school plans to continue to monitor the responses and views by parents and partners about how welcome and supported they feel when they visit the school.

■ Parents of children with barriers to learning are at the early stages of being regularly involved in meetings to plan and review their child's progress. This helps them to work more closely with the school and feel an important part of the process. There is a need to continue to ensure that moving forward all parents are clear about their child's progress in learning.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	weak

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

- Evidence shows that in the short time in post the headteacher's leadership and approach to wellbeing for children, parents and staff is transformational. He places the highest priority on the wellbeing of children, parents and staff. In doing so, the changes to the ethos of the school are very positive with a motivated school community eager and keen to maintain this much needed start. We have asked the school to create a strategic plan that drives the school's work and is central to imporvements. There is a need to improve relationships and develop further the early signs of a strong sense of community. In addition, ensure that healthy living is built into the school's culture. To achieve this, it will be important to ensure that all staff have the skills and capabilities to support children. In addition, the school recognises that children should have the highest possible expectations of themselves and develop skills of responsibility. In doing so, there is a need to provide a scaffold for children to achieve these important skills using stratgeies that are accessible and 'visible' to them.

- Staff are aware of child protection and safeguarding. The headteacher recently organised systems and processes to ensure that record keeping and notes fulfilled statutory duties. Chronologies and paperwork is meticulous and highly organised. However, there is a need for the whole school community to ensure these same standards across their practice to ensure the care and welfare of all children. Children and parents identified the need for a consistent approach to promoting positive behaviour. A few staff effectively use restorative practice to resolve concerns and children are motivated by class points and 'shout outs' to celebrate positive behaviours. Most children respond well to these systems which are most effective when children are motivated in their learning. Most children spoken to in focus groups can talk about how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They have explored emotions and aspects of mental health and how physical activity and nutrition are important in maintaining health and wellbeing throughout life. Children have shared their nutrition-based learning through informative displays and by providing opportunities for their peers to make alternative choices for snacks. There is a need for all children to develop self-respect and that their emotional wellbeing is secure with values of tolerance and respect for each other.

- The majority of children and staff are resilient and have skills to cope with challenges and difficulties when they arise. We have asked the school to plan appropriate time and space to improve the emotional wellbeing within the school community. This may, where necessary, involve the expertise of external agencies. Staff health and wellbeing should be an integral part of the strategic plan. There is a leadership opportunity for a planned programme of activities for staff that is embedded within the strageic health and wellbeing overview. During the inspection week, the inspection team observed children with barriers to their learning arising from their emotional wellbeing. While a number of children feel that approaches to anti-bullying are positive, too many perceive this as an issue and there is a need to address the school's approaches to anti-bullying. As a matter of urgency, prioritise children's understanding of their health and wellbeing and resilience. They do not yet have a sufficient

understanding of the language of the wellbeing indicators. Developing children's understanding of this would enable them to engage better in assessment of their own wellbeing. All children need to feel safe and well looked after and their voices heard on a regular basis.

- Learning assistants and teachers work closely with individual children and are positive about inclusion. They know the children well and develop positive relationships to support learning. Learning assistants work well as a team and participate in informal discussions with each other to share practice. After a period of staffing issues, an effective process has been introduced to identify and plan interventions for children experiencing barriers to learning. Staff are beginning to develop a broad understanding of the barriers some children have to their learning and strategies to enable children to self-regulate and improve their emotional wellbeing. Moving forward, there is a need to plan strategically, creative ways of all staff working together, and with partners, to address children's barriers to learning. There is a need for clear roles and protocols to support children's emotional wellbeing within class and ensure there are not patterns of interrupted learning. The success of the strategy needs to be regularly monitored and evaluated and that all learners' experiences are positive, inclusive and equitable.

Health Promotion and Nutrition Act

The main duties under the Act are being fulfilled.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory

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
- equality for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is good with important strengths in writing, fluency in reading and problem solving using number processes. From data provided by the school, most children in P1 and P4 are on track to achieve at early level and first Curriculum for Excellence levels respectively. The majority of children at P7 are predicted to achieve second level by the end of the school year.

- The current professional judgements made at P1, P4 and P7, are broadly robust. Overall, the range of evidence currently used by teachers to inform their professional judgements on children's progress and attainment is of a good quality. Staff are beginning to engage with analysing data in discussion with the head teacher. As planned, we have asked the school to continue to develop the range of evidence it uses to enable robust data on achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level to be generated.

- The school is aware of the need to develop its assessment approaches in line with national guidance, making increasing use of the National Benchmarks. Further moderation within school, as well as with colleagues from other schools, will support this work. In addition, the school should capture some of the high-quality work that is evident across classrooms as exemplification of standards to support developing a shared understanding. This will support teachers to better identify appropriate levels of pace and challenge for all learners.

Literacy and English

- Overall, children are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and English. Last session, the school identified the need to improve children's writing and aspects of reading. This focus impacted well on the standards children attain. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of second level, children use author's persuasive techniques well in their writing and can write extended text with meaning. In reading, across the school the consistent application of developing basic reading skills enables most children to read with fluency and meaning. In listening and talking, a minority of children do not listen well to staff or each other. They are unable to discuss topics or learning using appropriate skills that build on each other's ideas.

Listening and Talking

- At the early level, the majority of children follow instructions and most make eye contact when talking to the class or in groups. Children at first level are beginning to share their ideas and discuss the meaning of text. They work well in pairs and trios sharing their knowledge about a new topic or learning in the class. By the end of second level, children recognise persuasive language and discuss the main features of texts. They make and organise notes from listening to oral accounts or digital media well. However, there is much

headroom to improve the listening and talking skills of children. The majority of children do not engage respectfully with others in different contexts. Their questioning and contributions do not enable meaningful discussion to build on ideas.

Reading
■ Overall, children make good progress in developing their reading skills. Of note, is the fluency of almost all children and their ability to skim and scan. At early level, and first level, children recognise common words and read aloud simple sentences. They recognise patterns in language and decode unfamiliar words very well. At second level, most children find, select and sort information from a single source. The majority answer and create inferential questions. There is a need to widen the range of sources that they access including contexts that are relevant to them within the school, the local area and globally. In addition, there is a need to continue to develop their reading for enjoyment through a wide range of motivational texts and books.

Writing
■ There are examples of contexts that motivate children to write well. In these examples, children are clear about the purpose of their writing and use appropriate language for the intended audiences. Next steps are to build on the good standard of writing that is evident across the school, vary the contexts and ensure children and staff have high expectations from early through to second level writing. At the early level, all children understand that writing conveys meaning. Most use their knowledge of phonics and common words to create texts that accurately express their ideas. At first level, most children use an appropriate variety of punctuation and structure. By second level, the use of author's techniques is applied very well in examples of persuasive writing. Report writing is well-structured and children apply an appropriate knowledge of structure and style.

Numeracy and Mathematics
■ Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. There is scope for staff to increase meaningful and relevant opportunities for children to demonstrate and apply their learning in a range of real-life settings and in the outdoor environment.

Number, money and measurement
■ Within early level, most children can count on and back to add and subtract and recognise and can order numbers to 20, and in a few cases up to 99. Children explore length, height, weight and capacity, developing use of relevant everyday language through a range of practical activities. At first level, almost all children can tell the time using o' clock, half past, quarter past and quarter to, using both analogue and digital 12-hour clocks. They are developing confidence in their use of multiplication facts and use this to support their calculations of fractions of a number. By the end of second level, almost all children can round whole numbers to the nearest 10,000 and 100,000. Most learners can confidently solve multi-step problems, which incorporate the four operations and have a good understanding of measurement. They demonstrate an ability to calculate area of both regular and irregular shapes.

Shape position and movement

■ Almost all children working at early level are able to identify common 2D shapes and 3D objects. They explore pictures and shapes with one line of symmetry. At first level, most children can follow and describe directions using words associated with angles, such as, clockwise, anticlockwise, right turn, left turn and right angle. They know, and can use, the four main compass points. Within second level, almost all children can plot and record points in the first quadrant making confident use of coordinate notation. They explore congruent shapes and lines of symmetry within these.

Information Handling

■ At the early level, most children can contribute to a pictorial display of information where one representation is equal to one data value. By first level, most children can construct simple bar graphs to organise and display data. They are confident in using tally marks to organise the information they are gathering. At second level, learners can describe a variety of ways to collect and organise information depending on the nature of the task. They are aware of pie charts and line graphs and explore the use of digital technologies in relation to these.

Attainment over time

■ The school presented data from standardised attainments showing that children at early level children attain higher than the local authority average in mathematics and reading. At first level, children are in line with the local authority average and at second level, they are below the local authority average. The school was unable to provide data based on professional judgement showing improvement over time. However, after recent initiatives staff confidence in assessing children's levels is improving. The school now has a clear procedure in place to track the progress of children. Data is at the early stages of being collated by all staff. We have asked the school to continue to use data to plan effectively the next steps in learning for children.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

■ As a matter of urgency the school needs to review the progress that children make across all areas of the curriculum. Children do not demonstrate well enough their skills in developing the four capacities. There needs to be an immediate focus on ensuring that all children are responsible citizens in class and outwith the classroom. Children have too few opportunities to develop their skills and strengths positively. The school is at the early stages of improving this outcome. The school celebrates and recognise the achievements of children at school assemblies, on social media and on displays around the school. The school acknowledges the need to further develop how it monitors and tracks achievements and perhaps make use of accreditation schemes to build a stronger understanding of the importance of children's achievements amongst its community.

■ Children's achievements across the curriculum are increasingly shared and celebrated in a range of interesting ways. The core programmes for each level and curricular area set out clearly expected learning to support teachers' confidence. As a result, there are a few examples of high standards achieved in writing and art. This needs to be more consistently applied across all levels and all learning. In PE, children's performance in sporting events and lessons are recorded then used to discuss areas of strengths and improvements. Digital environments are used to share learning. In science, children working at first level demonstrate their knowledge of the impact of high sugar content drinks on the body in an appealing and easily understood visual format.

■ Children enjoy taking part in competitions and festivals representing their school as individuals and as part of a team. After-school clubs are on offer to almost all children and

there is a need to ensure that these are available for children at the early level to participate. The recently started school pupil groups offer children opportunities to have a say in the life of the school, represent their peers, and share their ideas and suggestions to address issues. In a few classes, children did not know what action the pupil groups had taken or of the successes they had achieved.

■ The school recognises the need to improve aspects of participation by children to help gauge improvements across the school. This should help children to adopt a skills-based approach and provide opportunities to put these into practice. There is limited opportunity for children to develop their confidence, leadership skills and become responsible citizens. In addition, there is a need for them to participate more effectively in the wider life of the school and have their voices heard more systematically. There is a clear commitment by the headteacher to address this area of development and ensure that all children make very good progress in developing these important skills.

Equality for all
■ The headteacher prioritises equality for all learners. He is clear about the poverty related attainment gap within the school. A range of targeted interventions are now planned to address any gaps in attainment and participation. However, there is a need to ensure that children understand equality. At times, a minority of children experience interrupted learning. In addition, there is a need for targeted interventions to ensure that all children feel safe at school and have well-developed emotional literacy skills.

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Choice of QI: 2.4 Personalised Support

This indicator focuses on the provision of high-quality support that enables all children and young people to achieve success. It highlights the importance of wellbeing and involving children and young people in decisions about how their needs should be met. Strong partnerships with parents and other partners who support children and young people are essential. Monitoring the impact of interventions and making timely adjustments to practice are key to providing highly-effective universal and targeted support.

- Universal support
- Targeted support
- Removal of barriers to learning

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- Staff are committed to improving outcomes for children. They articulate well the context of the school. The majority of children benefit from the approaches to universal support, evident within the core learning and teaching practices. Most staff have a few strategies embedded into their core learning and teaching practice that support the diverse and complex needs of children well. In these examples, staff are clear of the children's needs and effective strategies and interventions that lead to improvements. This is most effective when children are involved fully in understanding the goals that they are working towards and what helps them to achieve these goals. In addition, their progress is carefully monitored and their success celebrated.

- The recently appointed support for learning teacher created effective visual representations setting out clearly for children and staff the barriers to learning for some children. The charts identify, what 'triggers' certain responses, what the child is trying to achieve. Importantly what strategies both the child and adults can employ to achieve the improved outcomes are clearly stated. We have asked the school to continue to develop this approach, through discussions with the whole team, working with children, and including where appropriate, experts from external agencies. It would be useful once views are gathered, to fully analyse 'triggers' and trial 'support strategies. Positive next steps would be to create sustainable plans and approaches that can permeate universal support for all children. Over time, careful monitoring of the improvements will ensure that staff and children are equipped with the skills to improve outcomes.

- The high numbers of children with barriers to learning is evident across the school. Staff are aware that this is the context of their school and value working with 'experts' and partner agencies to develop their pedagogy. Their commitment to professional learning and to the children is clear and can be seen in their practice. They are well placed to work collegiately to broaden their understanding of what can be changed, improved and achieved for individuals. This includes children with specific barriers to learning and all learners across the school. Approaches observed are unsustainable, they rely too heavily on the headteacher's input. We asked the school to set out bureaucratically 'light' core protocols that involve addressing children's needs through the universal support in classes. There is a need to ensure clarity in procedures and expectations using approaches that are understood by all and promote fairness. There is a need to embed this within the promotion of positive behaviour strategies across the school and the stage intervention process. In doing so, ensure that the process is applied consistently across the school with all involved, including the children, clear of their roles and responsibilities.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.