

Summarised inspection findings

Loudoun-Montgomery Primary School

North Ayrshire Council

12 March 2019

Key contextual information

Loudoun-Montgomery Primary School and early years class serves the Fullarton area in the south-west of Irvine. The headteacher has been in post for three years. The school roll is 114. There are six classes, three of which are open plan. There is a school library, an ICT suite and a serendipity nurture room.

1.3 Leadership of change

weak

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 and staff have created a nurturing and caring environment. Partners and parents talk about the family atmosphere that has been created by the school. Almost all parents speak positively about their children being happy at the school and feel they are supported. Partners discussed how welcome they feel in the school and how the headteacher is very keen to foster partnerships with the local community.
- The senior leadership team and staff know the children and families well. They have a good understanding of the social, economic, and cultural context of the local community. They have a commitment to children and families in the community and have an awareness of the importance of delivering equity for all children. They are mindful of the importance of recognising and closing any attainment gap, however require to develop this further.
- The headteacher and staff are a hardworking committed team. They now need to ensure their hard work improves further outcomes for all children. The staff told us how the headteacher encourages them to come to her with ideas and that they are encouraged to take forward these ideas. Staff have the opportunity to take after school clubs and a few staff are leading developments across the school. There is scope for this practice to develop further to align more fully with the school improvement plan and provide further opportunities to develop leadership skills across the staff.
- The headteacher is supported well by the acting depute headteacher. The staff spoke very positively about how well they worked as a team to help the staff. The senior leadership team have introduced a quality assurance calendar to enable staff to be aware of the quality assurance activities carried out during the session. This calendar is shared with staff. The senior leadership team have introduced peer observations within the school. The staff enjoy visiting each other's classes and report that this helps them to share practice.
- To support school improvement the senior leadership team recognise the need to provide robust high quality feedback on quality assurance activities to enable improvements in raising attainment and the quality of learning and teaching.
- There is a positive, collegiate ethos among staff. This will support staff when reviewing and developing pedagogical practices across the school and create more effective leadership of

learning among teachers. There is a need for the school to be outward looking in its approach and to take cognisance of national guidance, expectations, and good practice across the local authority and beyond.

- The headteacher has led the review of the values of the school with the children during assemblies. Together they have developed the new values of leadership, engagement, achievement, respect and nurture (LEARN). The headteacher has asked the opinion of staff and parents on the values. The headteacher is aware of the need when reviewing the vision and aims to consult with parents, partners, and stakeholders.
- The headteacher completes the professional review and development meetings with teaching staff. The headteacher has encouraged staff to engage with professional learning opportunities through North Ayrshire's Professional Learning Academy. There is scope for the school to take a more active approach to professional enquiry and the use of research based learning to influence change. The headteacher should provide greater strategic direction to this approach across the school to ensure that professional enquiry appropriately targets and supports the school's drive for improvement.
- The headteacher and staff are in the early stages of making use of self-evaluation processes to support the leadership of change process and school improvement. These processes are limited and not yet fully sufficient or robust to give accurate information on which to take further action. The headteacher should ensure information from self-evaluation activities is accurate and leads to ongoing improvements. A clearer focus is needed on how all information is scrutinised, including monitoring children's attainment, in order to ensure that interventions that are put in place are appropriate. The school should involve stakeholders and partners in systematic approaches to planning, evaluation, and school improvement.
- The senior leadership team are aware of the need to become more strategic in the way they lead and implement improvements across the school and early years class. This has the potential to lead to a faster pace of change in a more consistent way. They have engaged with the inspection team well and are keen to implement the advice and guidance they have received.
- The school improvement plan outlines how the school intends to use the pupil equity funding to support improvement. There is scope to be clearer about the focus, measures, and impact of the interventions.
- The school has made a start to increasing the leadership skills of children. The school should continue to build children's leadership skills at all stages across the school and involve children more in identifying areas for school improvement.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- The values of the school underpin a nurturing ethos where care and kindness effectively characterise relationships in the school. Children, staff, and stakeholders are proud of the school, which sits at the heart of the community. Staff know all children and show a clear commitment to children's welfare and development. As a result, children happily participate in the tasks and activities they are given. The majority work well with their peers.
- There is evidence of a range of digital technology used across the school, which is enhancing the learning experiences of children. In a few lessons, there is good practice around the use of digital technology. Children are responding positively to this approach. Staff should consider ways in which they can share and evaluate their developing practice through professional collaboration and dialogue. There is scope to develop this throughout the school in a planned and progressive way.
- Formative assessment strategies have been evident in a few lessons. In most classes, the learning intentions are shared however, children are unable to articulate what they are learning. The success criteria should be more explicit to allow children to evaluate their own learning. Feedback during lessons generally focusses on praise for completion of a task. Across the school, children should now begin to set targets to inform their next steps in learning. Staff should now revisit Assessment is for Learning strategies to support children in developing themselves as learners.
- Staff need to ensure that children are more consistently engaged in the learning process. There is scope for children to have greater responsibility for their own learning, demonstrating increasing independence in their learning, and opportunities to work collaboratively. Too many lessons are teacher led and directed at the whole class. In most lessons, the pace of learning should be improved.
- The quality of teaching varies considerably across the school. To plan for appropriate challenge and to match activities to the needs and abilities of children teachers need to have a better understanding of the children's prior knowledge and next steps in learning. In the best lessons, children are motivated learners who are active participants in the learning activities provided. They understand the purpose of their learning and can articulate what they are learning and identify aspects they need to improve. However, in too many classes, children do not experience sufficiently high quality learning experiences. Action should be taken to ensure that children's engagement is sustained through motivating and challenging tasks which are well matched to their needs and capabilities.
- The approaches to assessment across the school are limited. As a result, staff are not yet able to provide sufficient valid evidence to show progress through a level and achievement of a level. The senior leadership team acknowledge the need for more regular and robust

arrangements for moderation. The senior leadership team should therefore review its approaches to assessment and moderation to support teachers' judgements about children's progress in learning. The senior leadership team and staff should now ensure that approaches to assessment become integral to the planning of learning and teaching.

- The senior leadership team and staff are at the very early stages of developing approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring learning. The planning process requires to be reviewed to ensure that the purpose of learning is identified: assessment is an integral feature and evidence of learning informs next steps. The senior leadership team should now develop rigorous monitoring and evaluating processes, which provide clear information about learners' progress and the impact of targeted interventions. The senior leadership team and staff should be mindful of those children with additional barriers to learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The school has created a curriculum rationale for literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing.
- The school now needs to work with parents and children to develop a clear curriculum rationale, which covers all areas of the curriculum and which underpins curriculum design. This will ensure that the curriculum reflects the local context and the aspirations of the children.
- The school has recently introduced the Professional Learning Academy's numeracy progression framework. The school should now develop appropriate curriculum learning pathways for all other curricular areas. This has the potential to enable children to maximise the benefit from learning opportunities, which develop their skills and knowledge progressively across all contexts for learning.
- The teachers plan for interdisciplinary studies. As part of the review of planning, there is scope to develop a shared understanding of the approaches to interdisciplinary learning. This will help to develop a collegiate understanding of how to help children make natural, relevant, and meaningful links across learning.
- The school makes use of the local supermarket by visiting it on occasions and have discussed the different roles the supermarket staff have. There is potential for more opportunities for children to increase their understanding of the world of work. As the school develops its approaches to supporting this, they should make use of the Career Education Standard.
- The school should now consider developing their approaches to outdoor learning and learning for sustainability. Children's experiences are currently limited in this area. Developing approaches in these areas has the potential to develop children's investigation, enquiry, and problem-solving skills. This will support the school's development of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. As this work develops, staff should ensure children can articulate the skills they are developing and their relevance to learning, life, and work.
- In the first term, there has been a focus on learning Spanish as their third language. The staff speak positively about learning the language along with the children.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- See choice Quality Indicator

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

- The headteacher and staff have created a welcoming and happy ethos within the school. They feel passionate about the care and welfare they provide for the children and are proud of their nurturing environment.
- In the pre-inspection questionnaire, of the children who responded, most feel safe at school and they have someone to speak to if they are upset or worried about something. Most children feel they are treated fairly and with respect by staff and other children. This was also reflected when we spoke to children in our focus groups. Most parents strongly agreed that staff knew their child as an individual.
- Children tell us they enjoy learning about aspects of health and wellbeing. Children are at the early stages of developing their understanding of the wellbeing indicators. Most children talk about how to stay safe and understand how to be healthy. A few children talk confidently about food hygiene and cross contamination. The majority of children are aware of how to stay safe on the internet. A few children are able to talk about the relationship between their feelings, emotions and behaviours. Children are not yet able to link this to the wellbeing indicators. The school should now ensure children have the necessary skills to make well-informed decisions and choices for themselves. Staff should work with children to help children develop and share a common understanding of appropriate language and expectations for themselves and others in relation to health and wellbeing.
- The junior road safety officers are active within the school. External visitors have provided input to children on abuse. Within this input children's rights were discussed. The school should progress with its plans to develop children's knowledge and understanding about United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- The school has not yet built on the health and wellbeing framework developed across the local authority to design pathways in this curricular area to ensure children are developing their skills in health and wellbeing in a progressive way. There has been work in one class to evaluate the health and wellbeing of children. Staff need to ensure children's prior learning and experiences are taken into account. There is a need for staff to track and monitor health and wellbeing and demonstrate improved outcomes for children.
- Staff are keen to ensure that children are treated fairly and that barriers to learning are minimised. Children, including those with additional support needs are regularly extracted from class to continue their learning supported by classroom assistants. Staff need to develop better differentiated learning approaches, including the use of appropriate tasks, activities, and resources to improve children's experience of inclusion. The senior leadership team are aware of the need to review the deployment and type of support provided by the classroom assistants based on the tracking meetings with staff and the needs of the children.

- The management of record keeping for children with additional support needs requires significant improvement to ensure its effectiveness in improving outcomes for children. The staged intervention approach needs to be used more effectively to consider the needs of children and identify appropriate interventions. Staged intervention plans require to be reviewed and updated as a matter of urgency for children who are considered as having barriers to learning. The senior leadership team should review their approaches to staged intervention to ensure all children who require support have appropriate planning in place. These plans need to have current, appropriate, and measurable short and long-term targets. Plans need to be reviewed and updated regularly with parents, children, and other appropriate agencies.
- We have asked the local authority to support the school to review their practice, procedures and policies, particularly around staged intervention, safeguarding and to ensure all statutory duties are being fulfilled.

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Attainment is weak in literacy and numeracy. Overall, children are making adequate progress in reading. However, children are making insufficient progress in numeracy and mathematics, listening and talking, and writing.
- More effective moderation processes and a greater understanding of national standards will support staff to make more robust and reliable judgement of children's progress through a level and attainment of a level. There is significant scope for raising attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school. The school now needs to track more robustly the progress of attainment of different groups of learners to ensure all children make the best possible progress.

Literacy and English

Reading

- Overall attainment and progress in reading is satisfactory. At early level, the majority of children are using picture clues to support the understanding of texts and are showing an interest in storybooks. They are beginning to use phonic strategies to decode simple common words. At first level, most children read a prepared text aloud with expression and some fluency. At second level, the majority of children identify a variety of genres and identify a fiction book that they like and who the author is. They are able to identify the key aspects of a book including the title, illustrator, author, and publisher. The majority of children are showing a positive attitude towards books and reading and can give examples of how this skill can be used in their wider life. The school is beginning to use identified strategies to support comprehension of reading. Across the school, core reading schemes are used and are supplemented by novels. This has the potential to support the widening of children's skills and maintain enjoyment.

Writing

- Overall attainment in writing is weak. Across the school, there is considerable scope for children to be offered regular, planned opportunities to write at length. Overall, the teaching of writing requires a fresh focus to ensure skills are being taught developmentally and progressively to ensure consistency.
- At early level, a few children are writing independently. At first level, a minority of children can spell the most commonly used words correctly. At second level a few children are writing using a variety of genres for example a persuasive letter, balanced argument, imaginative story and the retelling of a story and are making use of descriptive vocabulary. At second level, a few children spell common words found in their reading book accurately or apply decoding skills and strategies to help them.

Listening and talking

- Overall attainment in listening and talking is weak. Across the school, the majority of children listen to staff well during lessons. The majority of children can speak confidently with adults including visitors. Children's skills in listening to, responding to, and building on the ideas of their peers is very limited. The school requires to develop listening and talking skills in a coherent and progressive manner at all stages. Children's use of the language of learning is limited.
- At early level, a minority of children make simple predictions about texts. At first level, a minority of children listen and respond appropriately to others in a respectful way, for example, by nodding or agreeing, asking and answering questions. At second level, a few children show respect for the views of others and offer their own viewpoint.

Number, money and measure

- Across the school, children are able to round well. Children would benefit from being given greater opportunity to apply their knowledge to solve problems in everyday contexts. Across the school there needs to be a strong focus on developing children's numeracy and mathematical skills in particular in mental agility.
- At early level, a minority of children can order numbers forwards and backwards to at least 20; identify the number before and the number after, and count on and backwards from a given number. Their ability to apply addition and subtraction skills using 1p, 2p, 5p and 10p coins to pay the exact value for items to 10p needs to be further developed. Most children working towards first level are able to identify the value of each digit in a whole number with three digits. However, they are unable to solve addition and subtraction problems with two digit numbers. Within the second level, the majority of children can read, write, and order sets of decimal fractions to three decimal places. They are developing their ability to calculate simple percentages of a quantity. Currently their success in doing this is limited.

Shape, position and movement

- The majority of children working at early level are able to recognise and describe some common two-dimensional shapes. Significantly fewer children are able to do this for three-dimensional objects. At first level, a few children have knowledge of the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Less than half of the children at second level correctly apply their knowledge of radius and diameter. A few children know a right angle is 90 degrees in size. However, their accuracy in measuring angles using a protractor was inconsistent.

Information handling

- At early level, the majority of children are able to interpret simple graphs. Across the school, there is limited evidence of the application of information handling skills and data analysis.
- Children at first and second level demonstrated more confidence in being able to discuss the likelihood of simple events occurring.

Attainment over time

- From the figures provided by the school, over the last three years there has been a declining trend in attainment across literacy and numeracy with the exception of reading at P4 in the last year where there is a slight increase.
- Further moderation with colleagues from other schools and across sectors will help to support teachers make robust and reliable judgements on children's progress and attainment.

- Rigour now needs to be added to the tracking systems and to the quality of professional dialogue to ensure all staff understand the actions needed to meet learner needs effectively. The value added to children's attainment has been very limited over time.
- All staff should now ensure they continue to widen the range of evidence they gather and judge this against national benchmarks to enable robust data on achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level to be generated.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- There is a recently improved range of opportunities within the school. These include house captain, various committees, digital leaders, new playground buddies, Junior Road Safety Officers. Children from across the school are developing as responsible citizens through taking part in litter picking and activities relating to improving their environment in the local community. Children are encouraged to participate in clubs and activities offered at lunchtime and after school.

Equity for all learners

- The senior leadership team have a good understanding of the social, economic, and cultural context of the local community. The senior leadership team are aware of the need to have a robust plan in place to support the spending of their Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). The local authority are aware of the need to support the school to make improvements. This will help in the articulation of the impact that they hope the fund will have. There is limited evidence that the PEF is having an impact in raising attainment for all children and particularly those from different socio economic groups.

Choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

- The development and promotion of partnership
- Collaborative learning and improvement
- Impact on learners

- The school has developed partnerships with many different organisations. Partners speak positively about how welcoming the school is and how the school seeks to develop partnership working. At the focus groups, partners described how the school works with the community keeping the local area litter free and visiting the local care home to sing to the residents. Staff report that they observe heightened engagement from children when community links are made and used productively to improve the curriculum.
- The school has correctly identified their next steps to sustain and enhance opportunities for partnership working to increase attainment and enhance the quality of learning for children. The school should continue with their plans ensuring that it is done in a planned, purposeful, and progressive way.
- Almost all parents speak positively about the school's open door policy and that they can speak to a member of staff to discuss worries or concerns. They are appreciative of the many after school clubs the school provides for the children.
- The local authority family learning team is involved in providing opportunities for families to be engaged in the life of the school. They have provided workshops for Read, Write, Count, and the Arriba Familia pilot project. Parents report that this has helped them to engage in their children's learning at home.
- At present, the school does not have a Parent Council. The school is beginning to consult parents more. They sought parents' views on the recently developed school values. The school has identified the need to build on the high levels of interest in parental engagement by consulting with parents on the most effective methods of gauging their perspectives. The school could build on this and involve parents and other stakeholders in supporting the development of the school improvement plan.
- The school has a parent teacher association, which is supportive of the school, and fundraises for bi-annual theatre trips.

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.