

Summarised inspection findings

Channelkirk Primary School

Scottish Borders Council

10 September 2024

Key contextual information

Channelkirk Primary School and nursery class is in the village of Oxton in Scottish Borders Council. The school roll is 41 children working over two multi-stage classes. The headteacher has been in post for five years. She is also the headteacher of Channelkirk nursery class and a partner primary school with a nursery class in the local authority. There is one principal teacher who works across Channelkirk Primary School and the partner school. There is a total of 1.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff. There are 2.6 FTE classroom assistants. Almost all children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 7. For the current school session, approximately 39% of children require additional support with their learning.

Channelkirk nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months. Therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

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

- There is a highly inclusive, nurturing ethos across the school and children have a firm sense of belonging to the school community. Children know the school values well and demonstrate them successfully. Staff encourage children effectively in their learning with star certificates and with praise notes which children take home. This ethos supports children effectively to be confident and engaged in their learning.
- Older children learn about global goals which helps them to understand clearly how their rights impact on their learning and everyday lives. Staff need to implement their planned processes to support all children's understanding of the importance of their rights. Children participate actively in the life and work of the school through completing questionnaires and as members of a range of pupil voice committees.
- Almost all children are well-behaved, demonstrating respectful relationships with each other and adults. Children discuss their feelings using a shared vocabulary which helps them to have empathy for others. A few children require specific support to regulate their behaviour. Staff use agreed strategies to support children's behaviour effectively. For example, staff adopt a 'one adult' policy when children are dysregulated. This helps children to self-regulate without feeling overwhelmed by a number of different adults.
- Staff provide children with well-established routines within nurturing classroom environments. Most children listen attentively to teachers' instructions and work well together in pairs and

groups. They complete tasks and activities independently which enables teachers to work directly with other groups in multi-stage classes.

- Children use digital technology confidently to enhance and extend their learning. They are developing their digital skills well. They use the school's online digital platform successfully to support their learning and share their work and learning targets with their families. Parents value this information about their child's learning journey.
- Staff are developing approaches to play-based learning. They recently reviewed the learning environment with support from the local authority early years teacher. As a result, children have worthwhile opportunities to explore independently and sustain in play for longer periods. Staff are developing their interactions to provide children with an effective balance of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led experiences. Staff should continue to develop their approaches to observing children's learning to identify clearly their next steps.
- Younger children have regular outdoor learning experiences with children from the early learning centre in the shared outdoor space. The school has a number of outdoor spaces which could be used to a greater extent for outdoor learning. It would be helpful for teachers to develop progressive approaches to outdoor learning for all children. This will provide children with meaningful opportunities to apply their learning and develop their skills for learning, life and work in real-life contexts.
- Teachers are committed to improving the quality of learning and teaching. They have worked collaboratively to develop a 'teacher toolkit' which outlines clearly the expectations for a high-quality lesson. This is helping to build consistent approaches to high-quality teaching and improving children's learning experiences. The headteacher empowers staff to research and develop specific aspects of pedagogy. Teachers undertake useful peer observations with a 'coaching buddy' focusing on these agreed aspects to develop their professional skills.
- In almost all lessons, teachers provide children with clear instructions and explanations. Most children are clear about the purpose of learning and what they need to do to demonstrate success. Teachers plan learning that is set at different levels of difficulty to take effective account of children working at different stages within each class. This meets the needs of most children well. A few children would benefit from more challenge in their learning. In most lessons, teachers use questioning to support children's understanding. As a next step, teachers should develop their questioning to deepen and extend children's learning.
- Teachers use an assessment calendar to plan assessment as an integral part of planned learning. They use a wide range of assessment processes including high-quality assessments. The headteacher quality assures teachers' assessment evidence through sampling of children's work. This is helping to ensure that teachers gather relevant assessment evidence that is linked to children's planned learning. The headteacher rightly identifies the need for staff to make more use of the national Benchmarks in their assessment processes. This will better support teachers to measure children's progress through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. Teachers share assessment information with children and almost all children know their next steps in literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers moderate their planning with each other in school. They also moderate with colleagues from their partner and cluster schools. The headteacher has developed a helpful

graphic which outlines how teachers should use the moderation cycle. Teachers would benefit from further moderation opportunities with colleagues across the cluster to support their professional judgements about children's progress and attainment. They are well-placed to participate in planned local authority moderation sessions.

- Teachers plan children's learning using the experiences and outcomes of CfE. Senior leaders created useful planning expectations and guidance which supports consistent approaches. Teachers plan a yearly overview of key learning using local authority and school-based formats. They bundle other areas of the curriculum together in a three-year rolling programme. This ensures children receive breadth of learning across the curriculum as they move through the school.
- The headteacher and staff follow clear protocols for tracking meetings which take place three times a year. Staff focus on children's attainment and progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They identify promptly children who need further support. Teachers plan targeted interventions for identified children including those who are impacted by socio-economic factors. They set specific and measurable targets for children. Classroom assistants support children effectively with targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Teachers are developing well their use of data about children's progress and attainment. For example, they analysed attainment data successfully to recognise gaps in children's numeracy. In response, staff developed pedagogical approaches to teaching numeracy. This is helping children's mental maths and problem-solving skills. Building on this, children need more opportunities to revise numeracy concepts regularly and apply their mathematical skills in different contexts.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- There are small numbers of children at each stage. Therefore, attainment is expressed as overall statements rather than for specific year groups.
- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Almost all children attain national standards in reading and listening and talking. Most children attain national standards in writing and numeracy.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning, make good progress towards planned targets, with a few children making very good progress.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Almost all younger children retell familiar stories confidently in a logical order. They ask and answer questions during play experiences to share their likes and dislikes. Most children respond appropriately during discussions and take turns to build on others' views. A few children can be overly enthusiastic to share their ideas and need to be reminded to allow others to take turns. Almost all older children recognise the difference between fact and opinion. They discuss accurately the features of oral presentations and have a well-developed vocabulary for their age and stage.

Reading

- Staff have successfully embedded a positive culture of reading for enjoyment. All children access a wide range of texts in class libraries and the school library. They particularly enjoy receiving the 'Ravenous Reader' certificate. These approaches are engaging children well in reading for enjoyment. The school has recently received a national award for their development of a reading culture.
- Almost all younger children use their knowledge of letters and sounds confidently to read familiar words. They use picture clues successfully to help them understand texts. Almost all children at the middle stages read aloud fluently using punctuation correctly to add expression. They should continue to develop their comprehension skills. Almost all older children explain their preferences for different authors, justifying their preferences by referencing genre and the author's use of language. They identify successfully the key features of non-fiction texts.

Writing

- Across the school, children use a digital application successfully which provides them with specific feedback on how to improve their handwriting. Most children write legibly for their age and stage of development.
- Most younger children write simple sentences using capital letters and full-stops. At the middle and upper stages, most children write across a range of genre. They use taught spelling rules to spell most words correctly. Most older children use similes and metaphors successfully to add interest to their writing. Across the school, children would benefit from more opportunities to write freely and apply their writing skills across the curriculum.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Teachers need to ensure that children revisit mathematical concepts regularly throughout the school year to consolidate their learning.

Number, money and measure

- Most younger children count on and back successfully to amounts appropriate to their age and stage. They identify missing numbers in a sequence. They tell the time to o'clock successfully but need revision of half past. Most children at the middle stages add hundreds, tens and units successfully using partitioning strategies. They would benefit from revision of subtraction, and multiplication of two-digit numbers by a single digit. Older children have a firm understanding of place value up to one million and decimal numbers. Most children across the school have knowledge of units of length. They need more opportunities to consolidate their understanding of capacity and weight through practical tasks.

Shape, position and movement

- Across the school, most children identify accurately a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects according to their age and stage. Most children at the middle and upper stages use the correct mathematical vocabulary to describe the properties of three-dimensional objects. Children at the middle stages would benefit from revision of right angles, compass points and locating items in a grid. Older children are not yet confident discussing the properties of circles.

Information handling

- Most younger children sort and match items according to set criteria and can interpret simple pictographs. Most children at the middle and upper stages can interpret information from bar graphs to answer questions. Across the school, children are not confident in gathering and sorting information to create a range of graphs and charts. They need more opportunities to handle data, including using digital technology and for real-life purposes.

Attainment over time

- Overall, children's attainment remains high as they move through the school. Across the school, a few children could achieve more with further challenge in their learning. The small numbers of children at each stage make it difficult to identify trends and patterns in attainment over time. Teachers track effectively children's progress in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, physical education and in science. They should now track children's progress across all curricular areas.
- The headteacher uses data effectively to analyse progress and attainment for cohorts and specific groups of children. Teachers are developing well their use of data to identify gaps in attainment. The headteacher sets 'stretch aims' for identified children and staff implement appropriate interventions. Staff demonstrate clearly the added value of specific literacy

interventions. A next step is to develop further approaches to measuring the added value of specific numeracy interventions. This will support staff to identify what is making the biggest difference for children.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements in and out of school are shared and celebrated during 'achievement' assemblies. Staff track children's achievements in and out of school to ensure no child is at risk of missing out. This ensures all children experience success and helps them to be confident individuals.
- All children are members of a pupil voice group. They demonstrate their citizenship skills and organisational skills well in these groups. Older children act as buddies for younger children which is developing their leadership skills successfully.
- Children participate in sporting competitions and festivals where they demonstrate successfully their sportsmanship and teamworking skills. Children are very proud of their recent success in a cluster Olympics competition.

Equity for all learners

- The school receives a small amount of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Staff know children well and are clear about attainment gaps throughout the school. They provide targeted interventions to address children's identified needs. These interventions are accelerating children's progress toward closing identified gaps.
- Children across the school have a firm understanding of the concept of equity according to their age and stage. They demonstrate respect well for the differences in other people.
- The headteacher monitors children's attendance carefully. She takes steps to address attendance issues when it falls below certain levels.

Other relevant evidence

- Children receive two-hours of high-quality physical education every week.
- The headteacher advises the Parent Council on the use of PEF through school improvement planning processes whilst being careful to avoid identifying children.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.