

Summarised inspection findings

Fallside School

North Lanarkshire Council

17 December 2019

Key contextual information

Fallside School is a special school in Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire. It caters for children and young people with social, emotional or behavioural needs. The headteacher has been in post since August 2019. North Lanarkshire Council is currently undertaking a review of its provision for children requiring additional support.

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

- There is a need to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school. All staff work hard, led by the headteacher, to create a positive climate and ethos where young people are supported to achieve. Attractive learning displays contribute to a welcoming learning environment. Relationships between staff and young people are positive. Staff demonstrate high levels of patience with each young person and their interactions are caring and supportive. Staff use praise well to recognise young people's achievements. They do this both verbally and through feedback in jotters and workbooks. Young people feel valued when their views on activities within and outwith school are sought to help shape improvements. However, most young people are not yet aware of their strengths and next steps in their learning. Feedback provided by teachers needs to focus more on what young people can do well and what they need to do to improve. In a few lessons, teachers use effective questioning well to develop young people's thinking. This practice should be shared more widely across the school.
- In most lessons teachers plan learning activities that take sufficient account of each young person's interests. In a minority of lessons learning activities are not well matched to young people's needs. This results in young people becoming disengaged and disruptive. Teachers need to plan lessons which engage young people better in their learning. Lessons need to be differentiated more effectively to ensure each young person's learning is appropriately challenging and meets their individual needs. Staff need to raise expectations of what young people can do and are able to achieve. All staff would benefit from professional development to improve their approaches to promoting positive behaviour.
- An extensive range of partners enhance young people's learning experiences. Local community partners support young people to learn effectively in real life contexts. For example, learning about sustainable development in the local allotment. Local colleges offer a wide range of courses such as mechanics and music. Young people enjoy attending college and engage well in their learning when there. Teachers now need to develop further young people's understanding of the skills for learning, life and work which these experiences are helping them to learn.

- On initial placement at the school details showing young people's progress across the curriculum is often extremely limited. Staff are working with local authority colleagues to ensure more detailed information on what young people can do is provided prior to a placement starting at the school. This will support teachers to identify any gaps in children's and young people's learning and to plan activities better matched to their abilities.
- Young people's writing is assessed against the national benchmarks. This supports teachers to evaluate how effectively they are progressing in their writing. Young people's numeracy is assessed against a commercial resource, which supports teacher's professional judgements. Teachers now need to develop further their approaches to assessment across the curriculum. This will help provide accurate information on how well young people are progressing in all areas of their learning. Teachers need to develop their moderation skills further in collaboration with colleagues from other special and mainstream schools.
- Teachers plan learning activities in the broad general education using the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. In a few lessons young people have the opportunity to lead their learning by deciding which topic they will learn about. Teachers need to develop further their approaches to planning to take increased account of what young people can do and what their interests and aspirations are.
- Arrangements for tracking and monitoring of young people's progress lacks rigour and provides little useful information. The school has recently implemented a new process for tracking and monitoring young people's progress on a monthly basis. It is too early to determine whether this process is effective.

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

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

At the time of the inspection, 16 young people attend Fallside Secondary School ranging from S1 to S5. All young people have experienced high levels of exclusion or poor attendance during previous educational placements. This has impacted negatively upon their attainment and achievement prior to attending the school. As a priority, the school now needs to ensure that systems are put in place to accurately track and monitor progress made in attaining CfE levels in literacy and numeracy.

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The school is unable to provide reliable data of young people's attainment levels in literacy and numeracy at the broad general education.
- Based on 2018/19 data provided by the school, almost all young people in the senior phase achieved National Qualifications in mathematics and English.

Literacy and English

- Overall, young people's attainment in literacy and English is weak. A few young people engage confidently with adults and their peers, and are able to listen to and follow instructions well. However, across the school, most young people do not yet receive sufficient opportunities to develop their listening and talking skills when in class. Most young people can read with fluency and understanding. They are developing their skills in comprehension. Most young people lack skills in identifying specific reading strategies such as inference or contextual clues. Most young people need increased opportunities to write for a range of purposes and in different genres. Young people should be afforded opportunities to apply their extended writing skills across the curriculum. This will help them to build on prior learning and practise and refine their writing skills. Teachers should make use of the wider life of the school to contextualise writing. This would provide young people with a stronger source of knowledge to draw upon.

Numeracy and mathematics

- The majority of young people are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics from their prior levels of attainment. Improving attainment levels in numeracy are a priority for the school.
- With support, most young people at the broad general education can estimate the time between events and the length, and weight of everyday objects. A majority of young people can identify and use money accurately. They are able to describe a number of ways to make the same total using different coins. A minority of young people can identify and describe the properties of a range of 2D shapes and 3D objects. Most young people are confident identifying symmetry in pictures and shapes, and creating symmetrical drawings using mirrors.

A few young people are skilled at using addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, decimals and fractions to solve problems and apply mental strategies.

- A majority of young people at the senior phase are able to apply their numeracy skills in real life situations. For example, when undertaking health and safety e-modules, they can answer a range of numeracy based questions.

Attainment over time

- The school is unable to provide reliable data to demonstrate improvement in attainment over time. In recent years, all young people at the senior phase gained National Qualifications course awards or units in English, mathematics and modern studies. In session 2018-2019, all young people attained a small range of National 2 and National 3 qualifications with a few achieving units at National 4. The school now needs to increase the range of qualifications available to young people in their senior phase to improve young people's attainment. The school needs to introduce robust tracking and monitoring of progress and analyse attainment data systematically. This will ensure that improvements in young people's attainment can be accurately shown over time.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- All young people experience a range of activities designed to promote attendance, engagement and positive destinations. For a few young people, these activities motivate them to re-engage in their education. They also help them develop a better understanding of the skills they will need for their future adult lives. The school promotes positive destinations, including the army, college and work placements in mechanics. The school works with an extensive range of partners who contribute to young people's achievements. Skills for life and work offered by school partners include construction, vehicle care and hospitality. Skills based and experiential programmes offered in school include music, gardening in the allotment, bike maintenance, rural skills, golf and boxing. Young people enjoy the range of activities offered by the school and partners. As a result young people are developing their confidence in working in a range of environments. They are able to identify how to be responsible for their own safety, and that of others, when working with tools and equipment. Young people gain additional accreditation through Dynamic Youth Awards and City and Guilds Awards. The school should now seek to ensure young people are accredited for their work wherever possible.

Equity

- Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school has significantly reduced the number of exclusions. Prior to this session, exclusion rates at the school were too high. Staff need to continue to develop their approaches to promoting positive behaviour to ensure exclusion rates are kept to a minimum. A few young people have had a reduced school day for a considerable period of time. The school needs to work with the local authority to ensure young people attending on a part-time basis receive their full entitlement to education. Based on data provided by the school, a majority of young people have poorer attendance at Fallside compared to their previous school. The school needs to improve young people's attendance and engagement with their learning. In session 2018-2019 a majority of young people moved onto positive destinations.
- The school community has no plan in place for the use of allocated Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) this session. The school is unable to provide information or data to demonstrate how previous allocations of PEF have been successful in narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion – wellbeing

- The school is generally a calm and purposeful learning environment. Young people have positive relationships with all members of staff. Staff act as role models and show young people respect. Young people feel cared for. All staff are skilled at supporting young people effectively when they become anxious or distressed. As a result young people usually re-engage quickly in their learning. This positive learning ethos is helping to significantly reduce the number of exclusions in the school. Partners understand young people's needs well. They respect, and are courteous to, young people when teaching them in the community.
- The use of learning outdoors is having a positive impact on the wellbeing of young people. Young people are calm and engage positively when learning outdoors. Staff need to develop further their use of outdoor learning to improve young people's wellbeing.
- The wellbeing indicators are not yet an important feature of the school's work. Staff need to highlight their importance when planning to meet young people's wellbeing needs. Young people should be supported to develop a better understanding of the wellbeing indicators and how they can be used to support their wellbeing.
- The school's link educational psychologist has supported young people to better manage their emotions. As a result, most young people have a better understanding of their feelings and how to make positive choices when they experience challenges.

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.