

# Summarised inspection findings

Valley Primary School

Fife Council

26 March 2019

## Key contextual information

Valley Primary School serves an area of West Kirkcaldy. The school consists of a nursery class, for children aged two to three years in a separate modular unit and another nursery class for children aged three to five years. The primary school has 11 classes with 265 children and also two Additional Support Classes P1-3 and P4-7 for children from the Kirkcaldy area. The headteacher is supported by two full-time depute headteachers.

### 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

- Valley Primary School and nursery have spent a significant period of time developing and establishing a common vision “be the best we can be” which is recognised through the school values of, respect, honesty, responsibility kindness and teamwork”. The values are known and understood by children in the school and have been shared with parents and partner agencies. The school is aware of the social, economic and cultural challenges that families face and has spent a lengthy period of time establishing positive relationships with children and families. The senior management team now recognise that this has been at the expense of other important aspects of school life. As a result, the pace of change in other aspects such as developments in learning and teaching and raising attainment have been slower than what is required. There now needs to be more prompt, effective leadership and direction to help the school and the nursery class move forward to fully achieve the vision “to be the best we can be”. In doing so, leadership at all levels needs to be developed with staff across all stages to sustain a collective commitment to improvement.
- At the primary stages the headteacher and senior management team (SMT), have focused on building relationships between children and staff and building trust with parents. They have now addressed concerns about behaviour management which were previously negatively perceived by the local community. The school would benefit from more proactive engagement to develop partnerships within the local community and to be more visible. These changes should be discussed and decided with staff and clearly communicated to parents and carers.
- In general, communication with staff, parents and partners is an area which requires improvement. Too often, decisions and notifications are not fully discussed and are sent out with insufficient time for parents in particular, to respond positively. This was an area noted in the pre-inspection questionnaires. The school should review how best to keep staff and parents informed and seek the best means of communication.
- There is significant scope to improve strategic planning for improvement in the work of the school. There needs to be a more strategic approach to developing and improving the school and nursery class which involves all staff. This should take account of parental views and involve the Parent Council. There are positive strengths such as the quality of relationships and

the focus on managing behaviour. Overall, staff and the senior team need to focus on improving the quality of learners' experiences and the pace of change as a matter of priority.

- Staff morale needs to be improved across the school and all staff should aim to improve collective teamwork in an open and transparent manner. At the primary stages, staff take opportunities to plan together within stages, and are now discussing assessment and moderation. However, there isn't yet a consistent understanding of the curriculum standards or levels expected. Clear direction is particularly important when looking at, for example, children's progress in learning. The school needs to develop its approach to ensure that children's progress in literacy and numeracy is being accurately reflected. In doing so, senior managers need to provide clearer support and direction to staff to develop tracking and monitoring more effectively. Clear, unambiguous guidance from the senior team will help to improve attainment for all children.
- Most staff value continuing professional development. Opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, professional learning opportunities and practitioner enquiry, should be increased in order to help move the school forward. There needs to be shared approaches, of how this new learning is shared amongst staff and how it impacts on improved learning and teaching and how these steps achieve change. The school should put in place a monitoring calendar to ensure key self-evaluation processes are carried out timeously and with rigour.
- The school improvement plan for 2018/19 focuses on learning, teaching and assessment, personalised support and family learning. We recommend that the school improvement plan be reviewed with all staff within the school and nursery class in light of inspection findings.
- Classroom observations within the primary classes are largely based on informal visits. Senior managers should develop a systematic approach to observing learning and teaching. This will ensure that teachers are clearer about expectations and how to improve learners' experiences. There is a need to increase the range of activities that form the overall self-evaluation process including, using the quality indicators and challenge questions of How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Further activities should include monitoring of planning, learning and teaching, peer evaluation and classroom visits.

## 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

- Staff place a strong focus on developing positive relationships across the school through the use of the 'Valley values'. Almost all children are polite, respectful of others and keen to learn.
- In the best examples, most children engage well in activities that are matched to their needs and are able to talk about their learning with developing confidence. A few children would benefit from a more personalised approach to their learning to ensure sustained engagement and focus. There is a need to provide children with more opportunities to work collaboratively. There should also be more opportunities for children to learn outdoors, both within the school grounds, and in the wider community. The use of digital technologies could be developed beyond word processing and research based learning to extend children's technology experiences.
- Most children are able to speak confidently with adults and their peers, sharing ideas and expressing and listening to the views of others. They are keen to interact with adults and are clearly proud of their school. In the best examples, children are given opportunities for personalisation and choice as part of their learning.
- Children across the school have limited opportunities to contribute effectively to the school and the wider community. The Learning Council, with representatives from P3-7 and the Additional Support Class (ASC), are enthusiastic about their role and are at the early stage of representing the views of children across the school. The Learning Council is very confident and articulate in expressing their views. Commendably, they demonstrate the school values and act as role models for other children. The majority of children say that the school listens to their views and takes them into account. A few P7 children are school Learning Ambassadors and take a leading role during school assemblies. These leadership opportunities for children need to be developed strategically to become an integral part of the school curriculum. Further opportunities for children plan and lead school events, engage with charities and local businesses within the local community will enhance their learning experiences.
- Across the school the quality of teaching is variable. The senior leadership team and staff recognise the need to develop a shared understanding of high quality learning and teaching at Valley Primary School. They are keen to work collaboratively with children and the wider community to establish practice that is coherent along with consistently high expectations and high standards across all classes.
- Staff recognise the importance of working collaboratively, in a planned and cohesive way, to moderate and ensure consistency across the school. Teachers would also benefit from more regular and sustained professional development. This will improve pedagogy as identified during the professional review and development process and more accurately reflect the school improvement priorities.

- In almost all lessons, staff are using an agreed lesson structure that includes learning intentions, success criteria, learning and teaching strategies, assessment and plenary. Staff would benefit from moderating this process to ensure that learning intentions and success criteria are consistently effective in all classes and that assessments and the plenary support next steps in children's learning.
- In the majority of classes, explanations and instructions are clear and understood by most children. There is scope for teachers to develop their questioning further to ensure depth and application of learning. In the most positive examples, teachers ask skilled questions and give appropriate thinking time to challenge and extend children's learning.
- In a few lessons, teachers plan active and creative activities, which promote problem solving, curiosity and team work. This good practice should be shared within the school to raise standards and improve the overall experiences for children. Teachers should provide more opportunities for children to learn outdoors, both within the school grounds, and in the wider community.
- Play-based learning is still at the very early stages of development. Teachers would benefit from shared planning to ensure that activities are well thought through, appropriately resourced and allow children to lead and build upon current and prior learning. This is a development area for staff. Teachers recognise the importance of learning through play, and are keen to develop this approach in a more consistent and cohesive way.
- Feedback and plenaries are included in the agreed teaching structure within the school. However, overall the effectiveness of written feedback to children is not clear and needs to be more consistent across all classes to help inform children of their next steps in learning.
- The school now needs to develop a consistent approach in the use of assessments, to include both summative and formative assessment approaches. This will support teacher's judgements of progress through a level, as well as an achievement of a level.
- A shared understanding of approaches to assessment will support professional dialogue and enable the senior leadership team to deliver a series of high quality professional learning sessions with the whole staff team. This collegiate approach will increase teacher confidence in the assessment and moderation process, thus ensuring their evidence is valid and reliable.
- Planning for learning across the classes in the school is inconsistent. As discussed, teachers would benefit from a more strategic lead on expectations across planning to ensure a consistent approach across the school. This will support pace and challenge within progress of learning for children and track progress. This is particularly important with multiple composite class groups being a feature of the school.
- Senior managers recognise the need to provide staff with clear leadership and strategic direction on how to monitor and track progress of learning in class. A more consistent and thorough approach to professional dialogue, during tracking meetings would further develop staff skills in use of data, benchmarks and moderation. The senior leadership team should consider stage tracking meetings to ensure moderation of pace and challenge across a year group cohort of children. Clear evidence of the professional dialogue, and the agreed actions would enable the staff team to plan, and coordinate appropriate interventions, and monitor impact. This will ensure they are well supported to make robust and reliable judgements of children's progress.

- The use of a more comprehensive and streamlined tracking system would enable senior leaders and staff to identify clearly where children are in their learning, and the progress they are making within literacy and numeracy.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The Leadership team has consulted widely with staff and stakeholders gathering views and information on the local community and environment to inform the curriculum rationale. Staff are now well placed to further review the curriculum rationale to ensure that it reflects the context of the school in its community. The rationale should articulate an ambitious and aspirational vision for the school. Staff should continue to consult with the learners and their families to further develop and refine a clear curriculum rationale statement that reflects the local context and the aspirations of the whole school and local community.
- The school is at the early stages of making use of the national benchmarks and these should be used to further attainment levels within the school and develop assessment as integral to all learning and teaching activities. The consistent and agreed use of effective and embedded pathways for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing should now become a priority. Staff have identified the need to work in greater collaboration to agree consistent approaches in using the curriculum pathways. As a priority senior leaders should now undertake rigorous monitoring and evaluating of these plans. This would allow teaching staff to further develop continuity and coherence in children's learning across the school.
- Learners need more opportunity to be involved in curriculum design and planning. In the school's approach to interdisciplinary learning there should be more emphasis on consulting with children and gathering their views and interests. This would help develop a shared understanding of how to create natural, relevant and meaningful links across learning. As the school continues to improve the curriculum, global citizenship and skills for learning life and work should be integral and progressive features of children's learning. Developing the Young Workforce is an emerging opportunity in the school. Introductory work on the world of work and a skills based programme should now be further developed to include more of the learners and offer them a range of inclusive activities and contexts.
- There is scope to improve children's experiences of outdoor learning. A revised programme of activities should be developed which enables all children an opportunity to articulate their growing skills when learning through investigation, enquiry and problem solving.
- The school offers children the recommended two hours per week of quality physical education provision.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Overall the school has a few of ways of engaging and communicating with parents about the school and their child's learning. This could now be improved to involve parents more fully in learning to help raise attainment. The development of family learning will build naturally on existing positive relationships.
- The wellbeing of all children is a priority of the school and the headteacher knows families very well. Parents readily approach the headteacher with concerns.
- The school has consulted with parents on the curriculum rationale. This work should be developed to engage with parents around the development of the curriculum in order to share how parents can support children in their learning.
- The school is well supported by the Parent Council. Their work enhances children's wider achievement through fundraising activities. This role now needs to develop to involve parents in children's learning.
- Recently introduced approaches to parents meetings involving parents as interpreters for families who have English as an additional language have had a positive impact. This could now be built upon to engage parents more fully in learning to help raise attainment.



## 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.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- There is a positive, nurturing ethos across the school. Ensuring children's wellbeing is integral to the school's vision and values. The approach to positive relationships and behaviour was developed collaboratively with children, staff and families. Children benefit from caring, positive relationships with staff. There are aspects of very positive practice in the approaches used by staff to support children's emotional development. This is evident in most classes but particularly in the ASC. Children are valued, cared for, respected and included. The school takes good account of the social, economic and cultural context of children and their families. They have a detailed knowledge of individual children and the potential challenges they may face. This information is used to ensure equity for all children.
- Pupil support assistants play an important role in supporting children in class and outside in the playground. A positive start has been made to ensure that the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators are understood and implemented by all staff and children in the school. Older children are able to describe some of the wellbeing indicators in relation to their own circumstances. The wellbeing indicators are reflected for some children in individual care plans. This needs to be consistent for all children who need a plan. Children in a focus group spoke well about what it feels to be safe, healthy and nurtured. Further work is in hand to embed the wellbeing indicators to help with all children to have a clear common understanding of all indicators. It would be useful to use the wellbeing indicators in a more visible way to help children relate them to their own circumstances more consistently. Children are less confident in their understanding of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Most children who have additional support plans are making appropriate progress from their prior levels in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The system for support for learning in the school is organised well by the support for learning teaching staff and delivered throughout classes. Progress for children is appropriately monitored. In the best examples, planning includes the wellbeing indicators as part of the assessment of wellbeing for all children in the school with a chronology of key events. The school seeks the views of parents and children where appropriate and regularly reviews children's progress.
- Care experienced children are carefully monitored and supported to make progress. Key staff, including the support for learning teacher and educational psychologist, regularly attend multi-agency reviews and child planning meetings for children with more significant needs and barriers to learning and wellbeing.
- As a next step, the school should review the management of planning to ensure that approaches to planning and record keeping are consistent and manageable. For example, each file should have a clear chronology of key events and agreed outcomes including the dates when these are achieved.

- The majority of children who responded to the inspection survey told us that they are encouraged to do the best they can in their learning and that the school treats them fairly and with respect. The school should ensure that all children feel safe and secure at all times.
- The school is developing links with partners to improve outcomes for children who face barriers to learning. There is scope to further develop partnerships to ensure that key agencies play an important role in improving outcomes for children.
- The school understands and values diversity through inclusion. Children with additional support needs and disabilities are included in the life and work of the school where appropriate. Staff now need to focus on other aspects of equalities including discrimination, religious intolerance and issues of gender.
- Through Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), the school is developing a range of strategies to close the poverty related attainment gap. There has been an initial focus on developing a range of strategies to support children who face barriers to learning. These include family engagement sessions and working with children to improve their wellbeing. As a next step, the additional staff deployed through PEF need to work more closely with teaching staff team to develop shared approaches to improve children's attainment in literacy and numeracy.

## 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.

- There is significant scope to raise children's attainment across the school. As a result attainment in literacy and English is weak overall. Senior managers need to identify appropriate strategies for raising attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school, share this with staff and ensure that all are provided with the appropriate professional learning to enable them to take this forward.
- The school needs to raise expectations of what children are capable of achieving. As discussed, improved resources will be important in literacy and numeracy, to replace outdated materials and to support high expectations. Staff should ensure more frequent opportunities for children to apply literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, building on the approaches to applying these skills in outdoor learning and interdisciplinary activities. The school's approaches to home learning should ensure children are offered high quality literacy and numeracy activities, to support their learning.
- From a range of inspection activities, inspectors found that children's progress and levels of achievement in literacy is not tracked with confidence. The school is aware that its assessment data is not fully robust and it is difficult to gauge year on year progress. Tracking now needs to be developed by management to simplify the collation of data to support staff in their planning and the assessment of appropriate levels.
- One particular support for learning initiative has a strong focus on literacy for learning. Children participate in an approach involving targeted and universal support to all pupils. A commercial resource is used throughout the school which allows each learner, at an individual level, to access an adaptive electronic programme which contributes to their development in literacy. This whole school programme is coordinated and managed through support for learning and has a high level of resourcing and commitment. Children are enthusiastic about the programme and school data and achievement is beginning to demonstrate a positive impact on attainment. A more sustainable approach now needs to be developed for this successful intervention to become an integral part of classroom practice.

### Listening and talking

- Children across the school are welcoming, friendly and polite. They engage appropriately with each other and the adults in the school. In the early stages, most children were observed being able to take their turn when talking and listening and make use of developed social skills in group work. There is a limited number of opportunities for children to develop their social skills. This could be further developed throughout the school with children's level of participation being supported by extending leadership roles, committee and pupil council roles. There is scope to increase opportunities for talking through a range of activities to promote the growth of vocabulary and improve children's skills in communication. In most classes children are

attentive and respond well to the teacher's direction and questions. In a few classes children need prompts and support to listen to the teacher and each other. At the second stage a few children, in discussion, listen well and show respect for one another's point of view, extending the conversation by adding relevant ideas and demonstrating higher order thinking.

## Reading

- The overall quality of children's reading is satisfactory. The school should take prompt action to review approaches to learning and teaching to ensure children are making appropriate progress in reading. A review of appropriate resources is now required to support children's reading throughout the school. At first level children discuss their reading with confidence and can name their favourite authors and have an awareness of genre. In the P7 class a few children discuss why they choose certain books and are aware of characterisation, sequence and plot.

## Writing

- The overall quality of children's writing is weak. There are a few instances of satisfactory pieces of writing, however, both the quality and the quantity of children's work throughout the school is variable. Presentational skills, including appropriate use of punctuation and sentence structure are inconsistent and there is a limited number of positive examples of writing across the genres. Children at second level discussed their awareness of a number of writing styles and ways of creating text. Children enjoy writing and express the view that they would like more help with writing. A consistent, coherent and progressive approach would enable consistency of standard and raised attainment in writing.

## Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is weak. According to the data provided by the school, most children in P1 achieve early level, a minority in P4 achieved first level and the majority of children in P7 achieve second level. Teachers' lack of confidence in professional judgement of achievement of a level leads the inspection team to believe that the data is not reliable. The school now needs to refresh its approach to the delivery of numeracy and mathematics. A consistent approach to presentation and layout of work and correction is required. The time allocation for numeracy and mathematics requires review across the school. The senior leadership team should ensure children have increased opportunities to apply and adapt their knowledge to new and relevant contexts.
- At early level, most children recall number sequences forwards and back up to 20. They add and subtract within ten and recognise and use coins up to 10p. At first level, the majority of children read, write, order and recite whole numbers to 1,000 with confidence. They record amounts of money accurately, but cannot use the correct notation. They are less confident when solving addition, subtraction, multiplication or division problems with numbers up to three digits using mental strategies. They need to develop their understanding and application of skills in number money and measurement. At second level, most children are confident with a range of numerical calculations and explain their approaches. The majority convert between fractions, decimals and percentages and calculate fractions of a quantity with confidence.

## Shape, position and movement

- At the early level children can demonstrate an understanding of simple patterns. At first level, a few children use mathematical language to describe the features of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Most children would benefit from developing their understanding of right angles to support them in describing the size of other angles. At second level, most children describe three-dimensional objects and two-dimensional shapes using correct vocabulary. They are less confident in identifying and classifying a range of angles using appropriate mathematical language.

## Information handling

- At early level, children use their knowledge of different properties such as size and colour to match and sort items. At first level, children use tally marks to count and create bar graphs. Children at second level, use data to create bar graphs and line graphs. There is scope for children to have greater opportunities to gather and use a wider range of data more regularly.
- Children would benefit from being taught strategies for problem solving. None of the children inspectors spoke with could suggest any problem solving strategies.

## Attainment over time

- The school gathers a range of information about children's attainment, but now needs to make more effective use of this to improve children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy over time. An increased focus on the progress of individual children, groups and cohorts is required. Currently, children are unclear as to what progress they are making across their learning.
- The school now needs to improve tracking approaches by establishing regular formal and informal monitoring of progress. A greater focus on professional dialogue with teachers to build on the progress in learning and assessment evidence will provide a basis and plan next steps for all learners.

## Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children's school-based achievements are recognised and celebrated to an extent, for example, through class rewards and at assemblies. There is no clear evidence of effective rewards or incentives systems in classes or across the school which would add value in motivating children to aspire to higher achievement.
- Many children achieve well in the different clubs and activities offered in the school. The school does not yet gather information on children's achievement beyond the school, although it is clear that many children participate and succeed in sports and activities in the wider community. In time, staff should begin to map children's wider achievements. This will ensure any barriers to participation are addressed and that all children have planned opportunities for achievement.
- P7 children benefit from a week of residential experience at an Outdoor Centre. The school has taken steps to review alternative experiences in the local area for children to participate in wider activities.

## Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and depute headteacher demonstrate a clear understanding and detailed knowledge of children who face barriers due to socio economic circumstances. They now need to track and monitor the progress and impact of targeted interventions more closely.
- The senior leadership team is committed to focusing the PEF on improving the health and wellbeing of the children. Additional staffing is facilitating the various programmes which are coordinated by a teacher. There is now a need for increased liaison between teachers and PEF support staff. Whole school strategies are at an early stage of development and require closer tracking and monitoring in order to improve the life chances of the children. These should now be extended to literacy and numeracy.
- The partnership with St Andrews University to build resilience in a small number of children is positive. This work is extended as the children progress in secondary education.

## Choice of QI: 2.5 Family Learning

- Engaging families in learning
- Early intervention and prevention
- Quality of family learning programmes

- The school engages with parents through a range of initiatives which aim to recognise the role of parents and involve them as partners in their children's learning. The school actively seeks the views of parents about the range of ways and opportunities that would encourage and support their involvement in the children's learning.
- The PEF Solution team has led on a number of targeted activities such as, opportunities for family members to attend school with their children to work with staff on supporting learning at home. Specific interventions encourage and foster sound reading habits between home and school, particularly in one weekly session with children whose first language is not English. The Friday Fun club provides a regular opportunity for social interaction, advice and support to the parent network associated with the school.
- A number of these interventions are at an early stage and staff are aware that some are more successful than others in terms of parental response and involvement. Staff also understand that reviewing the response to these initiatives is integral to their short and long term planning. It would be helpful moving forward to reassess the impact of the interventions. This could be achieved by involving a wider consultative group which could include, senior leaders, support for learning and class teachers to ensure a collaborative approach to planning interventions is developed and the rationale for the activity is shared and agreed.
- Staff should now develop further ways in which they can work with parents throughout the school. This includes targeting various levels of need, to support families through planned and accessible workshops on numeracy and literacy.
- The school is beginning to make use of informed data to identify and support their learners through family learning. This information on children's progress in school and their barriers to learning should now be used to shape the school's response to their approaches to family learning and identify the level of support needed. These approaches, based on the data, should now be built on to close the attainment gap and meet the needs of the children more widely than at present.
- Teaching staff set targets to share with parents. There is scope to extend this in most classes. The school has developed positive relationships between teaching staff and parents and staff should continue to develop this partnership work to develop further their approaches to family learning.
- 'Review of Family Learning Supporting Excellence and Equity,' (2016) and the Scottish Family Learning Network were discussed with the headteacher and proposed by the inspection team to assist with the start already made on the school's approaches to family learning.



### Context

The ASC at Valley Primary School offers an area resource for a maximum of 20 primary children in two classes from P1-P4 and P4-P7. Children have a wide range of additional support needs including complex needs. Placement at the ASC is by application to the Area Management Group. At the time of the inspection, 19 children attended the ASC on a full time basis. Children have opportunities, where appropriate, to join their peers in mainstream classes for some lessons during the week.

### Leadership of change

- Most parents and staff are clear about the purpose and aims of the ASC. They understand that children attending the ASC will have access to mainstream classes where possible but receive specialist support to meet their needs. The Local Authority will, as part of improvement activity, be reviewing aspects of the ASC provision within Valley Primary School. The school should ensure that parents and partners have clear information about the purpose and aims of the ASC including any proposed changes.
- Staff in the ASC can access a range of relevant professional learning to support them to improve their practice. Teachers review their own practice informally and continually seek ways to improve children's learning experiences. Senior managers should ensure that all staff working in the ASC are confident in using appropriate strategies to meet the needs of children with more complex additional support needs. This would be best achieved through professional development, regular reviews of the quality of learning and teaching within the ASC and routine checks on children's progress. While some improvement priorities for the ASC are included in the school improvement plan, staff recognise the unique nature of the provision. They would welcome opportunities to lead on areas for improvement relevant to the ASC including developing an appropriate curriculum which meets the needs of children with more complex additional support needs.
- Where appropriate, a few children experience opportunities to undertake responsible roles. They do this through membership of the pupil council and through weekly classroom tasks which involve managing, organising and distributing equipment and resources. They sometimes lead their learning through expressing choices.

### Learning, teaching and assessment

- Staff are sensitive to children's needs and strive to ensure positive relationships which help children to settle and get ready to learn. When children are actively engaged in learning activities, they are motivated, enthusiastic and keen to learn. Staff understand the need to ensure that children, particularly those with more complex needs are more consistently involved in the learning process through sensory experiences and greater use of real objects of reference. Children respond better when learning is well structured and they understand the purpose of learning. Staff could increase the range of activities and time spent on some learning activities to avoid too much waiting time.
- Staff encourage and support children to communicate their views and feelings verbally and where appropriate, using symbols and pictures. While most children are confident about interacting with staff and peers, a few struggle to manage change and this impacts on the pace of learning overall. Limited space within the ASC including sufficient low stimulus and quiet areas can present challenges for some children and for staff to manage their anxieties. The



authority and school should ensure as part of its review that the environment, resources and spaces available to the ASC support the number and range of children's needs. These should also include appropriate resources and spaces to help them to develop important life skills. Staff are making increasing use of the local community and outdoors to support children's health and wellbeing through, for example garden activities, road safety and walking.

- Teachers regularly track children's progress with their personal targets in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and record their progress in children's personal learning journeys. Staff should now support children to become familiar with their learning targets, by evidencing clearly the skills they have achieved and their next steps in learning.

### **Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**

- Staff are aware of the safety and wellbeing of children. Children are treated fairly and with respect. They learn about healthy lifestyles through learning about healthy eating, swimming, walking, and using the gym. Where appropriate, they are encouraged to try healthy snacks and lunches. Children's plans now take appropriate account of the wellbeing indicators and use these to inform practice and identify individual support needs, risks and rights.
- The headteacher and staff take due account of the legislative framework relating to children's wellbeing and additional support needs. Children in the ASC benefit from additional support plans which set out clear interventions linked to the wellbeing indicators. The range of children's needs requires the school to ensure that, at all times there are sufficient, appropriately qualified staff to ensure that children are safe and well supported to continue to make progress in their learning.

### **Raising attainment and achievement**

- The majority of children are making progress from their prior levels within the early level of curriculum in literacy and numeracy and some are working within the early level. A few children are achieving aspects of the first and second levels in literacy and the first level in numeracy. Staff are not yet confident in tracking and evidencing children's progress in other curriculum areas. Teachers could further improve their confidence in evidencing children's progress through moderation activities with other professionals including partner schools.
- Staff recognise children's achievements in photos and displays and at assemblies for those able to participate. Children from the ASC sometimes work with peers in outdoor learning activities, language and music and attend swimming classes in the local community. The school should continue to develop opportunities for children to achieve and record these more systematically.

### **Other information**

- The ASC has formed important links with its local authority service for supporting learners and a local special school to develop good practice in learning, teaching and assessment through shared professional development. Staff have jointly identified key areas for improvement, including autism friendly approaches to learning independently and the use of alternative communication. While these partnerships are developing well, it is too early to see the impact on children's progress and wellbeing.
- Staff in the ASC have developed signage placed throughout the school to provide a 'total communication' environment. This is supporting children from the ASC and other children to move around the school with confidence.

## 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.