Summarised inspection findings

Stobhill Primary School and Nursery Class

Midlothian Council

23 June 2020

Key contextual information

Stobhill Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the village of Gorebridge. At the time of inspection, there were 204 children on the school roll. There are eight classes, one of which is multi-stage composite class. The associated secondary school is Newbattle High School. Approximately 30% of children in P4-P7 are registered for free school meals, which is above the national average. The majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones one to three.

1.3 Leadership of change	good
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 works effectively to build trust and relationships across the school community. She is highly respected by children, staff, parents and the school's partners. The headteacher is providing effective leadership and direction, and she is supported well by the depute headteacher and acting principal teacher. Together, they have a very good knowledge and understanding of children's and families' individual needs and use this well to plan targeted support, wherever necessary.

- Children, parents and staff recently reviewed and refreshed effectively the school's vision, values and strapline of 'live, learn and grow together'. Staff and children explore and reinforce well the values in health and wellbeing lessons and at assemblies. As a result, there is a clear and shared understanding of these across the whole school community. Almost all children relate well and can talk about the values, which are displayed prominently throughout the school.

- Senior leaders and staff correctly identify and prioritise health and wellbeing and raising attainment in literacy and numeracy in the current school improvement plan. They make appropriate links with national, local authority and learning community priorities. Senior leaders consider carefully and manage the pace of change well. They work with staff effectively to evaluate the work of the school using 'How good is our school? 4th edition' (2015). As a result, almost all staff know the school's strengths and areas for development well. Senior leaders increasingly consult parents and children when creating and evaluating school improvement priorities. There are positive signs of impact from a number of improvement areas, such as children's readiness to learn and parental engagement. Senior leaders recognise they need to develop measures to identify more clearly the aspects of school improvement work that are making a difference to children's learning. They should ensure they consistently take forward actions which will have the greatest impact on outcomes for children.

- The school is in receipt of Pupil Equity Funding, which senior leaders use appropriately for a range of universal and targeted interventions. They have interventions in place to address identified gaps in children's learning. For example, Pupil Equity Funding has been used to effectively target support for children's wellbeing and intensive literacy and numeracy

programmes. Senior leaders can evidence positive steps in reducing the attainment gap across aspects of reading and numeracy. However, approaches to measure the impact of interventions supported by Pupil Equity Funding are not yet robust. Working closely with staff, senior leaders should develop clear measures of success to evidence the impact of interventions on children's attainment and achievement.

■ Almost all staff are engaged appropriately in taking forward areas for improvement across the school. They feel empowered by the headteacher's encouraging leadership. Almost all staff participate in helpful peer visits, which support and encourage reflective practice. Staff's annual professional review and development links appropriately to the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards. Most teachers enjoy leading a particular area of responsibility, for example, as subject champions. This is helping to develop staff confidence and support school improvement. A few teachers engage in practitioner enquiry and other professional learning, such as Masters level study, which is building staff capacity to lead change. Senior leaders should direct and support staff to evaluate the impact of their work to ensure they can demonstrate improved outcomes for children.

■ Senior leaders and staff support children's meaningful participation in school improvement effectively. All children in the upper school contribute well to groups, such as the learning and teaching committee. Most children are able to recognise and talk about examples of positive changes made in school as a result of their suggestions. Senior leaders and staff use 'How good is OUR school?' (2018) effectively with groups of older children to support evaluation and improvement planning. A few children, with adult support, are able to understand and make suggestions about budget spending. Staff should continue to develop ways to involve more children across the school in participating meaningfully in school improvement processes.

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 work well together to create a purposeful environment for learning. Relationships between adults and children are positive and nurturing. Across the school, most children work well as individuals, in pairs and groups. Teachers are using a range of strategies with increasing effectiveness to promote children's engagement in learning. There is evidence of the positive impact of the work on the school vision. Senior leaders, together with staff, should continue to promote the vision throughout the school, to improve further consistency of expectations and children's readiness to learn.

■ In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. The majority of children understand the purpose of their learning, however, are not yet able to identify the skills they are developing. Teachers need to discuss with children the features and skills of successful learning. In most lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to support children to develop understanding. Teachers need to develop further their questioning skills to deepen and extend children's learning. Currently across the school, children spend too much time on learning activities which do not provide sufficient challenge. Additionally, most lessons and experiences are too teacher led. Senior leaders and teachers need to develop further the balance between adult and child-led activities. There is a need to increase children's independence and improve the pace in learning.

■ Learning assistants are providing well-judged support for children across the school. They assist children's learning well in class and small group or individual activities. Support staff work well with teachers to share helpful information which is used in planning.

■ Children talk positively and confidently about how 'Learning Superhero' and 'Stob Star' learner qualities are helping them in their learning. This approach is highly visible across the school and referred to regularly in class. School staff regularly celebrate children's achievements in learning and, as a result, children's self-esteem is increasing.

■ Across the school, there are a few opportunities for children to influence what they learn. For example, in a few lessons children take on leadership roles during collaborative learning. In the majority of classes, children have a say on aspects of the learning context they wish to investigate. Most children have a few targets to support their learning. Teachers' approaches to setting targets with children and providing feedback on learning are not yet consistent across the school. The majority of children are not clear about what they need to do to improve their learning. Teachers need to work together to agree how to support children to reflect on their progress and next steps in learning.

■ Staff are at an early stage of developing a play-based approach to learning in the early years. Children are beginning to engage in more play and activity. Staff are beginning to

consider children's prior learning and experiences. Working together across the early level, senior leaders and staff need to develop a shared understanding of play-based pedagogy. This should support the development of high quality play that meets the needs of all children.

■ Senior leaders and teachers are currently reviewing approaches to planning. They are beginning to make links across Curriculum for Excellence through experiences and outcomes. Often, planning for children's learning is resource-led. There is a need for teachers to increase the focus on the skills children need to develop and how they can provide opportunities for children to apply these. Assessment is increasingly becoming a part of teachers' planning. Senior leaders and teachers need to streamline approaches to planning to make this more consistent across the school. They need to ensure that planned experiences provide progression in learning and better meet all children's needs.

■ Teachers use a variety of assessment approaches appropriately to understand individual children's achievement. This includes a range of summative, standardised and diagnostic assessments. Scottish National Standardised Assessments are analysed to identify gaps in individual children's understanding. Teachers find regular planning and tracking meetings with senior leaders helpful. They discuss individual children's progress and together plan any required interventions. This is supporting children to make more progress in their learning. Teachers should continue to develop the use of high quality assessments to plan breadth, challenge and application for children's learning.

■ Almost all teachers are involved in professional learning with colleagues and other schools and this supports well their understanding of children's achievement of a level. Teachers are using National Benchmarks to support their professional judgements and assessment in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders should continue to develop opportunities for teachers to participate in activities to share expectations and standards. This should support further staff confidence in making judgements about children's progress in literacy and numeracy.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ Staff are considering and reviewing curricular progression pathways. They now need to increase the pace of change to ensure consistent use of progression pathways is in place for all curriculum areas across the school. Staff should use these pathways to build on children's prior learning and ensure progress for all.

■ Staff create contexts for interdisciplinary learning (IDL) to ensure coverage of experiences and outcomes and progression in learning across the school. Children enjoy and are interested in linking learning to real-life contexts. Teachers should develop further IDL to allow children to develop and extend their literacy and numeracy skills in context, such as information handling or report writing. A few IDL themes should be reviewed to ensure these are relevant to school and local area context.

■ Children benefit from an established, structured programme for modern languages. They learn French from P1 to P7 and selected languages between P5 and P7. This is helping children develop knowledge and skills in language learning.

■ The school's approach to developing digital literacy skills is in the early stages. Children use tablets to research information and for literacy and numeracy games. Teachers need to plan a wider range of digital technologies to support and enhance learning. They should develop a progression pathway which supports children to build digital skills for learning, life and work.

■ Children develop their knowledge of the world of work linked to 'Developing the Young Workforce'. They benefit from regular science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities and focus weeks. Science workshops, local and national business partnerships and enterprise provide real-life contexts for learning. Working together, senior leaders and teachers should develop links between these experiences and the 'Career Education Standards 3-18'. This should support a structured, progressive approach to developing skills for life and work.

■ Teachers are developing children's experiences and exploring taking learning outdoors. Children are enthused and engage well in activities, trips and Eco schools projects. Teachers should consider further how the school grounds and local area could be maximised to support this in a planned and progressive way.

■ Across the school, children are not yet consistently receiving two hours high quality physical education. Senior leaders and teachers need to review and develop the school's approach to ensure children develop core skills and learning progressively.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ Parents are an important and valued part of the Stobhill school community. Almost all parents are positive about how staff support them and their children. A few parents volunteer their time to share sporting and STEM expertise, which is supporting children's learning. Children benefit from experiences funded by the Parent Council, such as theatre visits. Staff provide helpful 'Proud Work Weeks' termly, in addition to other family activities. These are supporting well parental involvement in children's learning. Families receive these events well with attendance steadily increasing.

■ Teachers share helpful information about the life of the school through newsletters and online apps. Parents feel communication from the school is improving as a result. They appreciate the opportunities to meet regularly with teachers and be involved in school. A minority of parents feel the school needs to review children's activities to provide the right level of challenge, including homework.

■ A number of parents and children work together on mathematics through a masterclass approach. As a result, parents report they have a better understanding of how to support their child. Together with teachers, senior leaders should continue to explore ways in which families can learn together. This should include developing similarly effective methods for other curricular areas.

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	good
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	

■ Staff know children, their families and the community very well. They have a shared focus on creating a nurturing and caring environment for children. As a result, almost all children feel respected and valued. Teaching and support staff engage in regular professional learning to continually improve their skills in supporting children's wellbeing. This reflective approach to improving practice is having a positive impact on wellbeing and inclusion for children.

■ Children's wellbeing is very important to all staff. They implement well a range of supports across the school, such as nurturing approaches. As a result, most children are increasingly able to self-regulate their emotions and make good choices in their learning. The headteacher and depute headteacher meet regularly with staff and partners to plan effective strategies that are reducing barriers to learning for identified children.

■ Most children have a good understanding of the wellbeing indicators. They give examples of how they are exploring what these mean to their lives. Children explain the strategies they use to protect themselves and others, such as protecting themselves when using social media and keeping safe in the community. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to revisit the indicators regularly with children to ensure they are an integral feature of learning.

■ Children feel their learning in health and wellbeing is having a positive impact on their own and others' behaviour. They are developing skills in building relationships, resilience and supporting emotional and social wellbeing. Children have an improving understanding that they and others may require support at different times in their lives. Senior leaders recognise the need to develop a progression pathway to cover fully all aspects of the health and wellbeing outcomes within Curriculum for Excellence.

■ Most children feel happy and safe in school as a result of the school's restorative and relationship-based approach. They are confident they will be supported if worried or anxious through a 'trusted adult' focus. Class teachers set high expectations for children, which is supporting improved behaviour and relationships across the school. Staff should now ensure all aspects of their approach fully reflect the nurturing and inclusive ethos they are developing. Working with staff, parents and children, senior leaders should continue their work in creating a relationships and wellbeing policy to ensure an agreed, consistent approach.

■ Senior leaders have effective systems in place to identify and assess children who may face barriers in their learning. Staff work well with partners to provide appropriate support for children who need extra help in their lives. Where required, children have appropriate individual plans and targets to measure progress in their learning. Senior leaders and teachers monitor regularly children's learning and the effectiveness of the support they receive. As a result, children feel well supported and included. Individual children who

receive therapeutic supports are improving in their emotional and mental wellbeing. Staff should continue to review and update regularly children's plans to make clear the progress children make from targeted support.

■ Senior leaders ensure they meet their statutory duties on children's attendance, exclusion and additional support needs. The whole school community contribute to the safeguarding of children. This ensures all children have a trusted adult and know where to seek help.

■ The school is meeting the main duties under the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 in providing access to free drinking water throughout the day, promoting the school meal service and having systems in place to protect the identity of those entitled to a free school meal. The nutritional analysis of the planned three-week menu cycle shows that further work is required to meet the regulations in full.

■ Children learn in class and at assemblies about rights. Children report this is helping everyone become more respectful to one another. Older children learn about sustainable goals and the practical application of these. They participate in planning events to support EcoSchools Scotland work. As a result, children are taking on citizenship roles and having a positive impact on the local community. For example, they take part in 'Operation Clean Up Gorebridge'. As planned, senior leaders and teachers should develop further a strategic approach to rights-based education. This should provide progression in learning for children across the school.

■ Children are developing their knowledge of faiths and cultures through assemblies and religious and moral education. They are not yet confident in their understanding of current and wider diversity and equality issues. Senior leaders need to develop a strategic approach to the teaching of these topics. They should plan further ways of celebrating inclusion and diversity at Stobhill. This should support children to develop a wider understanding and the skills required to challenge inequalities and discrimination.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory

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

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

■ At early and second levels, most children achieve nationally expected levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff recognise that attainment in reading and numeracy at first level, and attainment in writing across the school, require action. Appropriate improvement plans are in place to address this.

■ The majority of children with additional barriers to their learning are making good progress towards their learning targets.

Literacy and English

■ Overall, children across the school are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

■ Overall, children's attainment in listening and talking is satisfactory. Across the school, most children listen and talk with respect to each other, staff and visitors. At early level, most children take turns and use eye contact when listening to others. As they move through first and second levels, the majority of children develop listening and talking skills appropriately in a range of ways. These include sharing views, during group tasks and presenting to wider audiences. Across the school, children need to apply their listening and talking skills regularly in structured and meaningful contexts.

Reading

■ Overall, children's attainment in reading is good. The school is taking positive action to raise attainment in reading at early and first levels. As a result, the majority of children are developing fluency and read with understanding appropriate to their stage. Across the school, most children talk enthusiastically about the books they are reading and their favourite authors and genre. As they move through first and second levels, they discuss with increasing complexity aspects of the writer's use of language, structure and setting. They are less confident in identifying the skills necessary to locate information in non-fiction texts.

Writing

■ Attainment in writing is satisfactory. The majority of children at early level have made a positive start to writing simple sentences independently. At first level, most children spell accurately commonly used words. The majority include paragraphs in their writing and use effective descriptive vocabulary to engage the reader. At second level, the majority of children are developing effective technical writing skills, including an increasing range of punctuation. Children need to practice writing extended pieces more regularly across a range of genre. Across the school, children need to apply their writing skills through relevant contexts.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

■ Overall, children's attainment and progress in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. A minority of children are capable of making better progress in numeracy. The school's improvement actions are having a positive impact on children's mental agility.

Number, money and measure

■ At early level, the majority of children recall number sequences forwards and backwards within the range 1 to 20. The majority of children use appropriate mathematical symbols correctly to record addition. At first level, most children identify the value of each digit in a whole number with three digits and round to the nearest 10 and 100. The majority of children answer calculations with increasing accuracy. Most children need further practice understanding and comparing the size of fractions. At second level, most children carry out calculations involving the four operations with accuracy and justify their choice of strategy. Most children need practice calculating durations of time. Across the school, children are not confident applying their mental agility skills in solving open-ended problems.

Shape, position and movement

■ Children are developing knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects appropriate to their age and stage. At early level, most children demonstrate understanding of the language of position and direction. At first level, children are not yet confident in their knowledge of right angles. At second level, most children discuss properties of circles and a range of angles using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Children do not yet apply their skills regularly in real-life contexts.

Information handling

■ At early level, most children sort correctly according to colour and size and understand a simple pictogram. By first level, most children record totals accurately using tally marks. They are not confident working with graphs and diagrams. By the end of second level, most children can use digital technology to gather, record and display information. All children need practice applying their data handling skills across the curriculum.

Attainment over time

■ Staff have robust attainment data for literacy and numeracy over the last four years. Overall, there is an improving pattern in levels of attainment across the school. Senior leaders should now analyse the attainment of different groups and cohorts of children as they move through the school. In doing this, they should identify any patterns of attainment or gaps in learning. The school does not yet have data to demonstrate children's progress or attainment across other areas of the curriculum.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

■ Older children develop confidence, take on areas of responsibility and increasingly contribute to decision-making through a range of experiences linked to school improvement. For example, through participation in leadership committees. Through these experiences, they are beginning to develop skills in communication, problem solving and teamwork. Children's achievements in both school and wider life are celebrated. As a result, children are developing pride in their abilities and recognise these experiences contribute positively to their lives. They are proud of their successes as a school in sporting and sustainability awards.

■ Senior leaders, with staff, should begin to track children's achievements and the skills they are developing. They should ensure all children are able to take increasing responsibility across a range of activities.

Equity for all learners

■ Staff have effective arrangements in place to ensure financial constraints do not prevent children from participating in opportunities for wider achievement. Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding to provide targeted interventions to support children's attendance, emotional wellbeing and raise attainment. A number of wellbeing interventions, show positive indications that they are increasing children's emotional wellbeing and attendance. Data does not yet clearly identify which targeted interventions are having the greatest impact on children's progress in literacy and numeracy. As planned, senior leaders should develop approaches to evidence the impact of interventions on children's attainment and achievement.

School Empowerment

■ Developing empowerment at children, staff and parent level

■ Senior leaders and staff have a good awareness and understanding of empowerment. The headteacher is making effective use a range of approaches to develop further an empowered school community.

■ Collaborative working is supporting staff to lead change. Almost all staff engage in a range of effective professional learning and most feel empowered by senior leaders to take on and lead aspects of school improvement. For example, a few teachers use experiences from international visits to lead learning for sustainability across the school and a few learning assistants lead on aspects of parental engagement. Practitioners in the nursery are becoming empowered to be leaders of learning as a result of professional learning. Children benefit positively as a result of this collegiate and empowered culture.

■ Senior leaders are developing parental empowerment in relation to school improvement. A number of parents are working with pupil committees directly and are beginning to support projects and activities relating to school improvement, such as the health and wellbeing committee. Senior leaders invite parents to be involved in budget decisions through consultation and events.

■ The headteacher and staff are supporting the empowerment of children to take lead roles in school improvement. Older children participate in meaningful decision making improving aspects of school life. Groups of children are involved in participatory budgeting and, where appropriate, involved in the recruitment process for new staff. Children's feedback and ideas are beginning influence curriculum and learning decisions.

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.