Summarised inspection findings

Gartmore Primary School

Stirling Council

18 June 2019

Key contextual information

Gartmore Primary School serves the community of Gartmore village and surroundings which include a large geographical area within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. The school benefits from being set within grounds that include a wildlife pond and garden. There is a large grass field which has a range of physical play equipment and a natural story area.
The school has a shared headship with Port of Menteith Primary School. The current school roll is 32 children organised into two classes with 13 children in P1-P3 and 19 pupils in P4–P7.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	very 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	

Learning and engagement

■ Relationships across the whole school community are positive, respectful and reflect a commitment to placing children's needs and rights at the heart of the school. All staff and children contribute to the school's warm, welcoming ethos. The school values of Respect, Compassion, Creativity, Resilience, Integrity and Determination, which have been recently refreshed after consultation with the whole school community, underpin all aspects of the school's work. Children are proud of their school and its many achievements. Staff know children and families very well and give generously of their time to secure the best learning experiences and outcomes for every learner. As a result, children are well supported, valued and encouraged to aim high, both in and out of school.

■ Children have a strong voice in the school and contribute fully to the wider life of the school and its community through a range of well-planned leadership roles in various school development groups such as Digital Dragons, Eco Warriors, Healthy Heroes and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Champions. Decisions are based on the ideas and opinions of children, taking their interests and needs fully into account. Each group has an action plan which is reviewed regularly. A well-judged plan to continue and extend their engagement with How Good is OUR School? is supporting learners to take increasing responsibility in leading their own learning.

■ Pupils in Gartmore Primary School experience high quality learning and teaching across the curriculum. Learning is planned for beyond the classroom with pupils regularly taking their learning outdoors and into the local community. They work with the Horticultural Society, and Gartmore Sewing Group. This enhances children's learning experiences and extends their range of life skills. The school has its own orchard of apple trees and children collect the apples to use in baking. Experiences such as these provide opportunities for children to be successful, confident and responsible. Pupils at Gartmore Primary School have a very clear understanding of sustainability and their responsibility for the natural world. This is reflected in their Eco work which has resulted in the school receiving its sixth Eco-Schools Green Flag.

- Admirably staff planning incudes opportunities for links to the world of work and career education. The school has now begun to track children's progress in this area.

- A whole school approach has been implemented to support social and emotional aspects of the Health and Wellbeing programme, alongside work to promote positive mindsets. This has improved children's self-esteem, resilience and perseverance resulting in learners who are motivated, engaged and enjoy their learning. Both classrooms provide a very calm and purposeful environment for learning where expectations and aspirations are high. All children are keen to embrace challenge and talk positively about trying a range of strategies in their learning. They describe confidently how mistakes can assist their learning.

- Digital technology is used very effectively to support and enhance learning. Children have opportunities to develop a wide range of digital skills such as using tablets to create videos. The school social media site is populated by pupils, parents and staff. A wide range of technology is available for children in all classes and there are opportunities in all classes for learners to exercise choice in when this is accessed. The school has a pupil group of Digital Leaders to support developments in learning about and through technology. Use of technology is embedded in most contexts for learning within the school. The school was recently successful in achieving a Digital Schools in Scotland award.

- Learning and teaching is underpinned by positive, respectful relationships. Staff know children's strengths and needs very well. In all classes this knowledge is used effectively to plan appropriate learning experiences. Children are involved in planning learning across the curriculum, for example in relation to the focus of contextual learning. In both classes, the purpose of learning is shared with children and a range of assessment strategies are used across the school. Feedback is focussed on improving learning. Children talk about self- and peer-assessment and report that this is helpful in supporting their ongoing progress. In taking this forward staff should continue to develop their present work on holistic assessment.

- All staff model themselves as learners and are keen to take an evidence-based approach to improving their practice. There is a culture of professional learning supported by annual professional review meetings. Recent developments in the way maths is taught already shows a significant impact on children's attainment. Staff work well together and teachers plan collaboratively. Local authority guidelines on progression pathways are used by staff to support planning and achievement of a level in all curriculum areas.

- Following moderation sessions at cluster and cross-authority level, staff have a good understanding of planning for assessment and how to make effective use of National Benchmarks. Teachers use a variety of assessment approaches, including a range of standardised tests. They are continuing to develop confidence in planning high quality, periodic assessments which allow learners to apply their learning in new and unfamiliar contexts. This supports and validates teacher professional judgement.

- The headteacher regularly monitors learning and teaching in the school. Teachers and children share learning discussions where work and progress is evaluated and assessed. The resulting professional dialogue where class teachers report back to senior leaders provides an opportunity for detailed discussion of all learners and their progress. This, in addition to regular tracking and achievement meetings between headteacher and teachers, enables the identification of children and groups who require additional support or challenge in their learning. There is a clear focus on raising attainment and improving outcomes for all learners. Dialogue with class teachers is rigorous and robust. Previous interventions are reviewed and evaluated. Staff are very motivated to provide the best possible experiences and opportunities for children and families.

■ Teachers' planning includes focussed assessment both formal and informal. The data collected is used effectively to plan next steps in learning and to deliver appropriate interventions where required to progress children learning. A few children would welcome further challenge. Staff should continue the work already in place to ensure appropriate challenge is available for every learner. This will support a further increase in pace and progress for learners. Classroom resources are well organised and accessible to children.

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	**very 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

■ The number of children at each stage varies between one and nine. Therefore, overall statements have been made about progression to ensure the anonymity of individual children concerned.

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy
■ Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. Almost all children achieve or exceed national guidelines for literacy and numeracy. All children are making very good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Almost all are on track to achieve or exceed appropriate levels in the coming session. Inspection activity indicates that teachers' professional judgements of achievement of a level are robust and reliable.

Literacy and English
■ Overall, attainment in literacy is very good across the school. Almost all children attain levels in literacy at or above the national average and all children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment. Children who require support and challenge to progress their learning are identified through ongoing assessment. Appropriate interventions are put in place to progress learning and raise attainment. Children's attainment is tracked and monitored very effectively and benchmarked against local and national standards. From the data provided by the school, almost all pupils are on track to achieve appropriate levels this session with evidence that applied interventions are having a positive impact on progress and achievement for identified groups of learners.

Reading
■ There is a strong culture of reading in the school both for enjoyment and information. Children and staff make very good use of the school library and the visiting library bus which comes to school every two weeks.

■ The school's very detailed tracking shows that there has been a measurable impact on children's reading age during this session.

■ At early level children identify common words and read aloud simple texts. They predict events in simple stories and answer questions on characters. At early and first level children are developing literacy skills linked to world of work through the creation of a community reading café. They plan roles for workers in the groups, detail job tasks for the employees and select books for the café.

■ Across the school most children read with fluency and understanding at an appropriate level. They readily identify different genres and author styles. They identify main characters and events. They have opportunities to predict outcomes of stories.

- Children working at first level, are gaining confidence in developing a range of strategies to decode such as reading to the end of the sentence and breaking words into syllables.

- Children undertake personal research in non-fiction texts to find information and explain meanings of texts in their own words. They are developing skills in discerning when text is written to influence their thinking such as in marketing and advertising.

Writing
- There are many opportunities for children across the school to develop skills in writing across all curriculum areas. A range of writing from reading and topic research is displayed in classrooms and corridors. Records and predictions are written in science with appropriate vocabulary being used. Pieces of extended writing by children at first and second level demonstrate planning and redrafting skills, appropriate punctuation and sentence structure. There are very good examples of reflective formative assessment and recent professional development ensure that this good practice is consistent across the school. The school identified that presentation of work in jotters was not consistently good and a focus on handwriting and presentation was developed. This is already having an impact and will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure consistent improvement.

Listening and talking
- Almost all children listen to others and respond to questions appropriately. They are developing skills in distinguishing fact from fiction when listening to debate. In some observed lessons children were exchanging information and summarising the main finding of their research. Almost all children communicate confidently with adults and other children in a clear expressive manner.

Numeracy and mathematics
- The data presented by the school demonstrates that almost all children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

- The recent introduction of a whole school 'mastery approach' to teaching numeracy and mathematics is improving attitudes to learning numeracy, increasing the children's engagement in their learning and raising attainment in numeracy and mathematics. Children are developing deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and a wider range of techniques and strategies to use when solving word problems. Children reflect on this approach stating that they don't just learn the answer, they learn how to get an answer and discover other ways of doing it. Children are developing more confidence in their ability to talk about numeracy in a wide variety of contexts, including outdoors.

Number, money and measure
- At early level children use relevant vocabulary such as longer than and more than to estimate measure. They have a sound knowledge of number to 20. Children would benefit from additional opportunities to explore clocks, calendars and other areas of time. Children working within first and second level have a good understanding of number and number processes, use of money to £20 and tell the time in analogue and digital formats. Further practice with mental calculations and in estimating would be beneficial at first level. At second level children require more opportunities to expand their knowledge of equivalent forms of common and decimal fractions.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level children recognise, describe and sort common 2D shapes and 3D objects and use the correct words when giving simple directions. They should continue to develop their awareness of symmetrical pictures and patterns. At first level most children recognise right angles and follow directions to create paths on squared paper. More opportunities to learn about 2D shapes and 3D objects in context would further consolidate children's learning. At second level children confidently use mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles within shapes in the environment. They would benefit from further opportunities to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of measurement including finding perimeter and area of simple 2D shapes and volume of 3D objects.

Information handling

- Across the school, children need to continue to develop their understanding and experience of using and analysing data.

- Progress in other curriculum areas is monitored and tracked effectively.

Attainment over time

- Staff know the children very well and cater well for their individual needs. All children are making good progress from prior learning in literacy and numeracy. This means that overall patterns of attainment over time are very positive. The low numbers of children at each stage mean that small changes in the percentage attaining at each level can significantly alter trends over time.

- All children, supported by their class teacher, set appropriate learning targets which are regularly reflected upon and reviewed. These are recorded in a useful individual learning record. There is scope to develop this approach further to enable parents to play a greater role in supporting their child at home.

- Teachers in the school use a variety of ongoing classroom assessments including observations of, and learning conversations with, children to inform their professional judgement of achievement of a level. In addition they use standardised assessments as well as National Benchmarks and moderation exercises with colleagues within and outwith the school to improve consistency and increase the reliability of those judgements.

- Participation in local authority moderation events and in the learning community trios is supporting staff to look outwards to ensure evaluation of children's work is appropriately recorded. An online forum established with partner schools to allow collaboration, dialogue, sharing of plans and resources between teachers is further supporting them to look outward to both benefit from and share learning experiences.

- Monitoring and tracking information collated by class teachers for all children at all stages allows them to effectively demonstrate how different groups of learners, for example boys and girls, or those finding particular aspects of the curriculum more challenging are making good progress. Termly monitoring and tracking discussions between class teachers and the headteacher ensure an appropriate focus on improvements in learning for each child. Appropriate interventions are put in place. For some children there needs to be a greater focus on increasing further the challenge in learning to maximise children's potential.

Overall quality of learner's achievement

■ Participation in wider achievements both within and outwith the school is monitored, tracked and celebrated through certificates at assemblies, achievement displays, parental newsletters and increasingly through social media. Children who may miss out in experiencing achievement opportunities are supported to engage in clubs and other activities. Children regularly update the achievement wall with personal reflections on their achievements such as cantering on a 16 hands horse, overcoming a fear of heights or representing the school well in a local quiz.

■ Almost half of the children have represented the school at different sporting events and competitions such as Fun in Athletics, football, lacrosse and cross country. Sports ambassadors within the school, who were selected after a formal application and interview process, are developing their confidence by leading assemblies and promoting school clubs including the successful lunchtime art club and a newly established robotics club after school.

■ The school is very well supported by members of the local community who give of their time and expertise to offer additional achievement opportunities for children. Children talk animatedly about their opportunities to learn outdoors and the importance of learning for sustainability. They are proud of their school grounds and have a very good understanding of how to look after their local environment.

■ The pupil led improvement groups are allowing children appropriate opportunities to develop leaderships of skills, team work, consultation and action planning for improvement. As a result the school has gained the Digital Schools Award. Children influenced the recently developed 'Discovery Zone' and worked together to ensure the school received its sixth Eco-Schools Green Flag.

■ Teachers plan for and link the development of children's skills over a variety of contexts. They are now in the process of implementing an overview for all curricular areas to enable to track more effectively the development of those skills. There is potential for this to be linked more explicitly to the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence and to skills for learning, life and work.

Equity for all learners

■ All staff are aware of the socio-economic context in which the children live and along with parents, aim to 'poverty proof' the school day ensuring for example, equity of access to school excursions and limiting the number of charity fundraising events.

■ A variety of information including assessment data, professional judgement of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels and tracking and monitoring meetings inform staff decisions regarding the allocation of resources to close any attainment gap. Staff have decided to focus on a few key areas in order to raise attainment for all. These include early level literacy, first and second level numeracy, emotional wellbeing and developing skills for learning, life and work.

■ The school is using monies from the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) well to improve the range of reading materials available for children to enable greater personalisation and choice when choosing books for reading groups. Almost all children engage in reading books and have the opportunities to read for pleasure. Additional resources have been purchased to support the large intake of children to P1 this session. Additional training for staff is enabling them to better support and develop children's awareness of their wellbeing. Staff should continue with their plans to further consider the impact of PEF on attainment.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- The use of the school environment and surrounding area to develop understanding of sustainability and provide outdoor learning experiences.

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.