

Summarised inspection findings

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Dundee City Council

21 January 2020

Key contextual information

St. Joseph's RC Primary School is a denominational school. It is situated in Dundee, on a shared campus with Victoria Park Primary School and Balgay Hill Nursey. In October 2019, the school roll was 342, divided between thirteen classes. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, a deputy headteacher and two principal teachers. The headteacher has been in post for four years. The school has enhanced provision status.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- There is a welcoming and purposeful ethos in the school. This is supported well by the very strong leadership of the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and staff who have created a positive culture of learning. Gospel values, including values such as support, teamwork, justice and honesty, underpin the school's work. Almost all children are confident, respectful and polite and they are supportive of each other's learning. Relationships amongst all children and between almost all staff and children are positive.
- Almost all children are enthusiastic learners. In most classes, children experience learning which is well matched to their needs. At all stages, the pace and challenge of learning for the most able children needs to be increased. At the upper stages, most children are skilled at working collaboratively and independently. At the early stages, children are being given opportunities to develop these skills well. A few children would like more opportunities to lead their learning.
- Almost all children are given opportunities to reflect on their learning. At all stages, children discuss their learning with each other. Most children talk enthusiastically and articulately about their next steps. Almost all teachers use feedback well when assessing writing tasks. This supports children to understand their learning. Teachers now need to develop their use of feedback across all curricular areas. Learning logs are used in all classes to help children reflect regularly on what they have learned. These should be shared more often with parents to empower them to support their children's learning more effectively.
- In almost all classes, teachers give clear instructions and explanations to children. In a few classes, teachers use questioning skilfully. As planned, staff should continue to develop questioning across the school to help children develop their thinking skills. In most classes, teachers use children's prior learning well. This is enabling children to make good progress and develop their skills appropriately. Most staff use creative approaches to engage children in their

learning. This is helping children to becoming more motivated and curious. Teachers also use learning environments thoughtfully to engage and motivate children.

- Almost all teachers are developing and expanding the use of digital technologies to support learning and teaching. They should continue to develop their skills to enable them to use digital technologies more consistently and confidently. Children gain digital skills through their use of the computer suite. These skills should now be practised across the curriculum. The school is beginning to use outdoor learning well to support children's learning across the curriculum and develop their skills for learning, life and work.
- Almost all staff engage in collaborative professional learning linked to learning, teaching and assessment. A few teachers are engaging in enquiry-based approaches, which are beginning to lead to improved outcomes for children. Other staff are involved in creative work with professional partners. This is helping them to develop their understanding of pedagogy, and practice.
- All teachers use a range of assessments to evaluate children's progress. Consistently, they use summative assessments to help them understand children's learning needs more effectively. This includes national standardised assessments. Teachers use assessment linked to the school's approach to writing effectively. All teachers use the National Benchmarks for literacy and numeracy to help them assess and determine children's progress. They should continue to work together to develop their understanding of the National Benchmarks for all curricular areas. This will help them to ensure children make more coherent and consistent progress at all stages.
- Teachers plan learning well, over different timescales, to ensure that children receive their curricular entitlements. Recently, teachers streamlined their approach to planning to link more closely children's experiences and outcomes to the assessment of their learning. This is helping staff to develop a better understanding of how they can support children's learning more effectively. Teachers are beginning to use 'progression frameworks' that have been designed by local authority staff, to help them plan and assess children's progress across all curricular areas.
- Increasingly, teachers are making effective use of data to track and monitor children's progress. They are using data to plan targeted interventions to support the learning of individual and groups of children. A next step for the school will be for senior leaders and staff to continue with their plans to develop a better understanding of ways in which interventions are having an impact on children's learning. This will help them to ensure that all interventions are appropriate and timely, leading to raised attainment. Staff need to develop their approaches to tracking to help them develop a better understanding of children's learning and progress across the curriculum.
- All teachers are using their professional judgement to determine children's progress regularly in literacy and numeracy. They evaluate and record children's progress at different stages in the school year. Teachers' professional judgement continues to improve as a result of them engaging in collaborative activities in the school and local cluster. Teachers evaluate one another's work regularly. This is also helping them to develop increased consistency in their learning and teaching.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

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

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Evidence provided by the school on children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels for 2018-2019 shows that by P1, most children achieved early level in reading, listening and talking and numeracy. The majority of children achieved early level in writing. At P4, most children achieved first level for reading, listening and talking and numeracy. The majority of children achieved first level in writing. By P7, most children achieved second level in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. A few children exceeded these levels.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning make appropriate progress.
- Inspection activity agrees with most of the school's attainment data in literacy and numeracy. Further planned opportunities for the moderation of listening and talking will strengthen the reliability of teachers' professional judgement in this area.
- Regular tracking meetings take place between the senior leadership team and all teaching staff to discuss children's progress and attainment. Interventions are put in place for children who require additional support or challenge with their learning. These interventions are helping children to raise their attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children listen well to nursery rhymes and can recall and sequence key events from these. They are able to answer simple questions about a text to demonstrate understanding. A few children need to develop their confidence in talking about the stories they enjoy to a wider audience. By first level, most children take turns and contribute appropriately when engaging with others. At second level, most children use persuasive language effectively when debating. They are less confident in using of a range of questioning to support their comprehension of spoken text.

Reading

- Staff are using a structured and targeted approach to develop children's reading skills. This is having a positive impact on children's progress and attainment. There is a positive culture of reading in the school. At the early stages of primary, most children are making good progress in identifying initial letter sounds. A few children can blend letters to make words. Most children can identify punctuation clues such as capital letters, full-stops and question marks. Children should now practise reading aloud using these clues. At first level, most children can explain

the difference between fiction and non-fiction. At first and second level, most children talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and books. At second level, most children apply a range of reading skills, such as skimming, scanning and predicting. They are beginning to develop their understanding of summarising and how to determine the reliability of sources of information.

Writing

- At the early stages of primary, most children are forming letters and attempting to spell familiar words correctly. They are using capital letters and full stops to write sentences. Children are developing their use of vocabulary to convey meaning within different contexts. At first level, most children can identify nouns and connectives in their writing and use adjectives to make their texts more interesting. All children write in different genres. Children need to become more confident in writing about what interests them. At second level, most children are developing their understanding of using metaphors and similes. They can produce high-quality extended pieces of writing and creating texts for a range of purposes. They make relevant links between their literacy skills and the world of work.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. At all stages, a few children would benefit from receiving additional challenge in their learning. This would help them to attain more deepen their learning.

Number, money and measurement

- At early level, children count items accurately and use a range of strategies to solve addition and subtraction problems. They now need to develop their understanding of sharing and grouping. Almost all children use mathematical language well in relation to time, money and measure. At first level almost all children solve problems involving whole numbers and fractions. They would benefit from further experience in ordering fractions. They also need further work on estimating and measuring accurately in a range of relevant contexts. At second level, the majority of children can solve problems using their knowledge of whole numbers, fractions and decimals. Most children work confidently with money and time. Children now need to learn how to calculate area, perimeter and volume and apply this in real life settings.

Shape, position and movement

- Children at early level can name 2D shapes and 3D objects. Most children at first level are able to describe them using appropriate mathematical language. Almost all children at this level know the four compass points and can perform calculations involving 90 degree turns. At second level, all children can draw acute, obtuse, straight and reflex angles. Children across the school need to develop their learning of shape, position and movement by applying their knowledge in different contexts.

Information handling

- Children at early level collect information to undertake surveys. At first level, children talk confidently about the probability of events happening. This is helping them to develop their reasoning. At second level, all children can calculate probabilities using fractions. Children at first and second levels would benefit from more experience in working with data, including data from digital sources, across the curriculum.

Attainment over time in literacy and numeracy

- The school provided data on children's progress across literacy and numeracy for the last three years, including children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels. The data is based on teachers' professional judgment. Teachers' professional judgement is informed by a range of assessments, including standardised assessments.

- Data indicates that the school has raised attainment in literacy and numeracy over time. Whole-school approaches to improving learning, teaching and assessment in reading and writing and a focus on conceptual understanding in numeracy have contributed to school improvements in these areas.
- Senior leaders scrutinise data that is gathered by the school over time, as well as data that is provided by Dundee City Council. This is discussed with teachers at tracking meetings. Although the school is data-rich, there is scope for all staff to develop further confidence in using data to plan appropriate learning for children. This will help to ensure that all children are supported well in reaching their potential.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children enjoy a range of relevant opportunities for wider achievement. They participate in extra-curricular clubs and groups, such as the choir, football and an Eco Council. They also volunteer for roles of responsibility, such as the pupil council, house captains and peer mediators. Children lead successfully the 'toast café'. Children also take part in activities such as the Pope Francis Faith Award, which involves them in volunteering and engaging in charity work. As a result of these activities, children are developing a range of skills for learning, life and work. They are becoming increasingly aware of the contribution they can make to the school and local community. Children's successes are shared and celebrated. This helps them to develop a sense of pride and build their confidence. Across the school, children demonstrate caring attitudes towards each other and are learning how to be responsible global citizens.
- Staff encourage all children to participate in activities outside of the classroom, building on their talents and interests. The school tracks children's participation in these activities, as well as children's engagement in leadership roles. Senior leaders recognise the potential of the school's tracking system to identify children who are at risk of missing out. A next step for the school will be to use the tracking system more fully. This will help to ensure that all children are able to take part in activities and are aware of the skills they are developing.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and all staff have a good knowledge of the varied socio-economic context of the school. They know their children and families very well and have created an inclusive learning environment. This environment values and celebrates diversity across the school community. Staff review regularly their approaches to curriculum design. This is helping them to provide all children with creative opportunities for success.
- Pupil Equity Funding has been used in a variety of ways to raise the attainment of individual and groups of children in literacy and numeracy. This has included senior leaders introducing whole-school approaches to reading and writing, and providing professional learning to all staff to improve their pedagogy. Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy has improved. Commendably, senior leaders have engaged with stakeholders to create a 'Cost of the School Day' plan. This is ensuring that children at risk of facing barriers to their learning make good progress from their prior levels of attainment.

Other relevant evidence

- There is a strong culture of leadership in the school. The headteacher and senior leaders continue to support children and all staff to develop their skills and contribute well to the life of the school.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Children from across the school participate well in activities such as the 'toast café'. The 'toast café' is an enterprise activity that children facilitate for their peers. They fundraise through the activity and take on leadership roles. These include welcoming people, taking orders and preparing food and drink. Children apply to take part in this activity and undergo an interview before being selected. Children are enthusiastic about their participation. They highlight 'giving something back' and 'being kind to others' as reasons for their involvement. Support staff and classroom teachers support children very well in this activity.

Explanation of terms of quantity

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

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| 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.