

Summarised inspection findings

Ochiltree Primary School

East Ayrshire Council

17 September 2019

Key contextual information

Ochiltree Primary School is a small rural school serving the village of Ochiltree and its surrounding area. At the time of the inspection there are 100 children enrolled in the school. There are five classes P1/2, P2/3, P4/5, P5/6 and P7. The school has a central hall area with all the classes surrounding it. There is a large concrete playground and a grassy area beyond this where the children can play and they have developed a garden area. The school is a focal point in the local community it serves.

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

- Throughout the school, children experience a calm and nurturing learning environment. Staff know children and their families well. Children are considerate, respectful and polite to each other. The climate in the classrooms is positive and encouraging. Relationships are consistently positive between staff, children and among children. Staff and children have revisited the school's values. These are displayed in each classroom and are being used by children and staff to underpin the positive environment for learning. Children are proud of their school and their achievements. The school has planned to develop further the outdoor spaces in order to maximise their potential for delivering high quality outdoor learning. Staff should also review the organisation of the internal space so that play based and free flow learning experiences can be more easily provided.
- Most lessons are well organised. Teachers are clear in their explanations and instructions. There are positive examples of children being active and in their learning, where they are given the opportunity to work independently. In almost all lessons teachers use questioning well to check pupil understanding. Children's responses and contributions to learning are valued. Teachers should continue to build on this practice to ask questions which develop higher order thinking skills and encourage fuller responses. In a few lessons, children are given opportunities to plan how they are going to carry out a task. This practice should be extended to allow children at all stages more personalisation and choice in their learning. Almost all children are keen and eager to learn. Most children engage well in lessons and listen well to their teachers. When children have the opportunity to work in pairs and small groups, they respond enthusiastically and support each other well. Teachers should consider how to increase the time children spend on independent open ended tasks that allow them to manage and lead their own learning. This will also allow teachers to make timely interventions to both support and challenge individual and groups of children. A whole school approach has been implemented to support the development of a positive mind set. This is improving children's self-esteem, resilience and perseverance and is encouraging children to increasingly respond to challenges that they might face.

- Teachers and children are beginning to make effective use of digital technology. In a few classes, children are beginning to record their learning digitally. Teachers use interactive whiteboards in the classroom and children use tablets to support their learning. A few children are learning how to remotely code electronic toys. Children are enthusiastic about using digital technology to gauge their progress in reading. Children's progress in digital learning will benefit from continued development and a clear strategy for improving digital literacy across the school.
- In almost all lessons the purpose of learning is shared with children. In most lessons, previous learning is revisited prior to new learning taking place. As a result of teachers' clear descriptions of the aims of learning, most children understand what successful learning looks like. In a few lessons children actively contribute to forming success criteria to guide them in their learning. Children should now be involved more fully in agreeing what will be successful learning. This should focus on children exploring and understanding the skills they are developing.
- Most children take part in self and peer assessment activities. Children at early level have made a good start at evaluating their learning and identifying next steps based on feedback. In writing, children receive helpful feedback on what they need to do to improve. While these examples are having some impact on learning, some additional formative assessment strategies are not yet firmly embedded across the school. Staff should review their approaches in order that children are more consistently and meaningfully involved in planning and reviewing their learning as they progress through the school.
- Staff have taken part in moderation activities within the school and with cluster partners. These have so far focused on aspects of literacy and numeracy. The school should ensure that moderation exercises focus on raising expectations of standards which will lead to increase challenge in children's learning. A useful next step would be for staff to adopt a more structured approach to joint and whole school planning across the curriculum. This would provide a focus for monitoring progression from early through to second level and beyond.
- The head teacher has termly meetings with staff which generates useful information relating to progress in learning over time. These meetings assist the leadership team to have an understanding of where to target support for learning. Interventions have been shown to have a positive impact on meeting the needs of individual children as they move through the school. The leadership team should now review their approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring progress in learning and achievements for all 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- Overall attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. According to the data provided by the school most children achieve the expected level in literacy and numeracy across the school with some children exceeding national expectations. Most children across the school are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Children requiring additional support are making good progress in line with their individual learning needs.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children across the school are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across the school most children speak confidently and articulately. They respond well to each other and adults. They would benefit from more opportunities to develop their skills when working collaboratively with partners and in groups. At the early level, most children listen and respond to others appropriately. They answer questions about texts to show and support understanding. At the first level, most children listen and respond appropriately to others in a respectful way by asking and answering questions. They communicate clearly and audibly. At the second level, most children contribute a number of relevant ideas, information and opinions when engaging with others. They know how to prepare and deliver an organised presentation and take part in debates. They are currently creating videos of a Charles Darwin documentary to further develop their listening and talking skills.

Reading

- Across the school children enjoy reading and make personal choices as to which books they would like to read. At the early level, most children can read aloud familiar texts with attention to simple punctuation. They answer questions about events and ideas in a text. At the first level, most children read aloud a familiar piece of text adding expression and can show understanding. They have strategies to decode unknown words. They explain preferences for particular texts and authors. At the second level, children explain preferences for particular texts and authors with supporting detail. They read with fluency, understanding and expression using appropriate pace and tone.

Writing

- Across the school children write for a range of purposes for example, poems, letters and to prepare a balanced argument. At the early level, children make an attempt to write a few sentences using a capital letter and full stop and spell familiar words correctly. At the first level, children enjoy writing imaginative stories. They organise writing logically and as appropriate to audience for example when writing persuasive text. At the second level, children create a

range of short and extended texts regularly for different purposes. For example, they wrote to a local Member of Parliament for more cigarette bins to be installed in the local area.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. New approaches to pedagogy have led to more active approaches to learning and teaching. The school should continue to build on this and develop it further.

Number, money and measurement

- At the early level most children are developing confidence in working with number. They were able to order numbers and recall the number sequences to 20 both forwards and backwards. Most children could count beyond 20. All children were developing an understanding of time and could read analogue and digital o'clock time. Children were able to identify every coin up to £2 and could combine appropriate coins to make a given total. Children who have achieved the first level are able to demonstrate an understanding of the commutative law using multiplication tables. They could apply their knowledge of fractions to real life contexts. Most pupils were able to tell the time using half past, quarter past and quarter to. They could use knowledge of everyday objects to give reasonable estimates of length. At second level pupils were able to partition a wide range of whole numbers and decimal fractions to three decimal places. Pupils were confident in using the range of multiplication tables.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level almost all of the children were able to identify and classify a range of simple 2D shapes and 3D objects. At first level children can name and identify the properties of a range of 2D shapes and 3D objects. They use mathematical language to describe the objects including side, face, vertices and angle. Second level pupils were confident at using mathematical language including acute, obtuse, straight and reflex to classify a range of angles. They can accurately measure and draw a range of angles using a protractor.

Information handling

- Across all stages, children would benefit from regular planned opportunities to collect, display and interpret information from a variety of charts, diagrams and tables using digital technology.

Attainment over time

- The data provided by the school indicates that most children are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Teachers are becoming more confident in making their professional judgements by using the National Benchmarks, Scottish National Standardised Assessments and in house assessments. There is scope to utilise the benchmarks more for moderation of standards. The head teacher has a long standing system of tracking attainment and progress over time. This system should continue to be developed to include the data collected from recent National Standardised Assessments.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children have a range of opportunities for achievement in and out of school. This includes a variety of clubs after school and at lunchtime including football and homework. Swimming is a very popular, longstanding after school club with parents now training to be swimming instructors. Children have been trained as life guards, swim buddies and have gone on to be swimming teachers supporting the after school club. A Buddy system is in place where P6 and P7 children support the new P1 pupils through transition from nursery. The Eco Committee are currently working towards gaining their sixth Eco Green Flag and have an updated Fair Trade award. Primary seven children work towards gaining the John Muir award and the school holds the Sports Scotland Silver award. Children are encouraged to share their achievements outside of school and their achievements inside are recognised. These are celebrated at

school assemblies. The school's main event is a summer celebration attended by children and parents where all children are awarded certificates about particular achievement that year. Children are very involved in the local community receiving financial awards from the Ochiltree Community Council and making crafts for the local cattle show. They also have established links with local businesses and the Community Hub. There is scope to work with the children to make them more aware of the skills they are developing as a result of their involvement in wider achievement, and how these relate to the world of work.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a good awareness of children who may face barriers to learning due to socio-economic circumstances. All children in P6 and P7 have the opportunity to attend a school trip to London and to attend a residential experience in Lockerbie Manor. By sourcing additional funding the school ensures vulnerable groups participate in learning activities.
- The Pupil Equity Fund has been used to introduce interventions, including employing an additional teacher, to improve attainment in literacy and there is evidence to demonstrate positive impact in this area. Teacher professional learning has also been a focus, in particular training on metacognition, higher order thinking skills and intra personal skills. The impact of this will be measured in due course

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.