

Summarised inspection findings

Kirkbean Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

31 March 2020

Key contextual information

Kirkbean Primary School, which is partnered with New Abbey Primary, is a small, rural school situated on the Solway Coast, south of Dumfries. The headteacher was appointed to the partnership as headteacher on a permanent basis in June 2019. In November 2018, the local authority placed her in the partner schools as acting headteacher. A principal teacher is in post to support the headteacher. Kirkbean Primary has a single, multi-stage composite class. There are eleven children from P1 to P7. In several stages, there is only one child.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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

- Since the appointment of the headteacher in November 2018, there is clear evidence that she has led improvement effectively. She is confident in her role and has established positive relationships across the school, its community and partners. She has worked to strengthen partnership working, especially with the partner school, New Abbey Primary. She has earned quickly the respect of the school community where she is highly valued. She contributes significantly to the positive and friendly ethos, which is characterised by care, respect, participation, responsibility and fairness for all.
- At the beginning of this school session, the headteacher carried out a significant piece of work to review the vision, values and aims of the school. She has ensured that all involved in school life, including neighbours in the community, were meaningfully involved in this important development. As a result of her approaches to consult widely, the new vision, values and aims are already becoming embedded. She ensures that the new values of honesty, equity, ambition, respect and teamwork are central to the school's work. She encourages all children to be involved appropriately in leading this development. Children are passionate ambassadors for their school and talk animatedly about the meaning and purpose of the revised vision, values and aims.
- The headteacher includes the local community in all aspects of school life. Partners support school shows, end of term services and contribute well to improving school grounds and children's curricular experiences. The school has a high profile and plays an important part in village life.
- Across the school, staff are dedicated to achieving success for all children. They know children and families well and understand their individual needs. They place high importance on supporting the social and emotional needs of children and have created a welcoming environment where all are valued. All staff are knowledgeable about the rural context of the school and the opportunities and challenges that this has for children's learning and achievement.

- The headteacher is supported effectively by the principal teacher. They have a positive impact on developing effective teamwork. The headteacher recognises the importance of building capacity for improvement to overcome any challenges, which can surround a small rural school. Staff work effectively together as a small team. The headteacher encourages successfully shared leadership. She uses professional review and development well to support staff to identify leadership roles. All staff lead an aspect of school improvement, which reinforces staff's shared responsibility for improving children's outcomes. The headteacher encourages all staff to access professional development opportunities. She is working towards ensuring staff's professional development focuses on the small number of well-judged improvement priorities.
- Within a climate of trust, professional responsibility and growing confidence, the headteacher has introduced effective collaborative working with the partnership school. All staff value the chance to learn from one another, capitalise on each other's strengths and work efficiently to improve children's outcomes. This collaborative approach extends to children, parents and partners in the school's drive to provide the best possible experiences for children. Everyone involved in this is enthusiastic, and appreciates the benefits for children and overall school life.
- The headteacher implements appropriate strategies and approaches to promote an empowered school community. Through building trust and working collaboratively, she is developing a supportive and empowering culture where staff are well supported. All children are growing in confidence through developing their own leadership and participating in making decisions about the school community. They enhance school life. Their leadership of the review of the vision, values and aims is a good example of their collective impact.
- The headteacher and teachers invite and encourage parental involvement in school life. All parents feel valued and respected partners in their child's education. The headteacher actively seeks their views and responds to them. Parents said they wanted more information on their children's progress. This parental feedback has resulted in staff developing helpful learning conversations, which involve children, their teacher and their parents. Parents speak about the positive impact learning conversations are starting to have on their knowledge of their children as learners. The headteacher has made improvements to the quality and regularity of information sharing. Parents welcome these changes and feel included and involved.
- The headteacher plans and manages well the pace of change. She fosters collective ownership for school improvement among staff who support one another well in a culture of collegiality. The headteacher involves staff fully in identifying a small number of well-judged improvements focused on improving children's experiences and attainment. She ensures the school's improvement priorities are the focus for development and lead to improvements.
- Children are at an early stage of engaging with 'How good is OUR school?'. The headteacher is keen to involve them more in curricular developments. Together with staff, the headteacher should take forward plans to include partners in evaluating the school's work.
- The headteacher tracks meticulously children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Regular discussions between teachers, learning support staff and the headteacher ensure a key focus on raising attainment and expectations. The headteacher's strong emphasis on robust tracking and monitoring of children's learning supports their progress.

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

- The school has a positive, supportive learning environment. All children are polite, respectful and enthusiastic about learning. All members of the school community contribute to the strong relationships which are supported by the recently reviewed vision, values and aims, identified by children as “Team Kirkbean”. Children are very proud of the school and have a good knowledge of the wide range of learning they celebrate and share. Staff use the attractive, rural grounds effectively for enhancing children’s outdoor learning and their play.
- All children are respectful, considerate and polite to each other and to visitors. Most are attentive during direct teaching and, in most lessons, they cooperate well with peers in pairs and small groups. Almost all children are motivated to learn and work well independently. This is particularly evident when teachers match learning activities well to children’s needs. Teachers should encourage children to lead their learning across different curricular areas.
- Children develop confidence and a sense of responsibility through contributing effectively to school life. They participate in local community events and take key roles as house captains, junior road safety officers and lunch hall monitors. Children are unable to articulate the skills they are developing through participating in these activities.
- The learning environment is bright and stimulating. Teachers provide clear explanations and instructions and share effectively the purpose of lessons. They discuss intended learning and how children know when they have been successful. Children’s use of self and peer assessment is becoming more effective. Teachers provide useful and ongoing verbal feedback to children during the course of lessons, which supports children focus on how to improve their work. They use a helpful code regularly for written feedback. Children know when they are successful and are aware of their next steps in learning.
- Teachers set most learning tasks and activities at an appropriate level for individuals. Teachers use questioning to check children’s understanding and build effectively on what children already know. Teachers should use higher-order questioning more regularly to ensure they challenge all children in their learning. They should provide children with learning experiences and tasks, which are open-ended and encourage critical thinking.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards, laptops and tablets successfully to support children’s learning. Children use computers and tablets well to access a range of interesting software to consolidate their learning. They are skilled and confident in coding, and in using numeracy games, which enhance their learning. Teachers should use digital technologies more in all areas of the curriculum to develop further children’s learning.
- All teachers and children agree long-term targets for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing through helpful, planned, learning conversations. Teachers review and update these

long-term targets twice a year. Children record and review short-term literacy and numeracy targets in 'My Learning Journey' workbooks which they share with parents. Children and parents comment on progress towards agreed targets in literacy and numeracy. Parents' feedback on this process is extremely positive. Teachers should ensure targets have clear connections to learning and teaching, and are meaningful and relevant to all children's learning and progress.

- The school has useful programmes of learning in place for every curricular area. Teachers base these programmes appropriately on children's experiences and outcomes and link these to National Benchmarks. These help teachers to plan a breadth of learning activities, which support children's learning. Teachers evaluate learning well across all curricular areas on a termly basis. Children are involved in planning interdisciplinary learning, through discussions about what they know and what they would like to find out about a given context. They value this contribution to their learning. Children should be more involved in planning their learning in all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers provide parents with a comprehensive, termly overview of children's planned learning.
- Teachers use a broad range of assessment information to judge children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They gather useful information on children's progress through observations of learning, ongoing class assessments, standardised assessments, engagement with National Benchmarks and learner conversations. This information supports teachers in their professional judgement of achievement of a level. The headteacher, with staff, should develop more high-quality assessments to ensure children have breadth, depth and application of learning.
- Teachers work collaboratively with colleagues within their cluster to moderate their expectations for children's progress within numeracy and writing. This collaboration is leading to more robust professional judgements. Teachers need to continue to develop moderation with colleagues in their partner school. They need to ensure they have a shared understanding of standards related to children's progress and achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level.
- The headteacher places a strong emphasis on robust tracking and monitoring of children's learning and progress in literacy and numeracy. Regular discussions between teachers, learning support staff and the headteacher focus strongly on raising children's attainment and expectations. Where there are concerns about children's progress, staff take appropriate action, discuss, agree and implement appropriate interventions. The headteacher and teachers should ensure that valuable learning conversations contribute to this process. The school has helpful information relating to children's attendance, attainment and their wider achievement. All this detail supports staff to plan suitable interventions which help children to progress. Staff review regularly the impact of these interventions on children's learning. They need to check how well children perform in all curricular areas, including the skills they are developing through their wider achievement.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Kirkbean Primary School has clear principles for the curriculum which reflect its unique context. Children understand the overview of the curriculum and explain how it translates into their school experiences. The headteacher and teachers ensure the curriculum is underpinned by the school's vision, values and aims.
- Teachers use established programmes of learning to support them deliver all curricular areas. The headteacher, with staff, should review these programmes to support and ensure further progression in children's learning. Teachers are developing currently a revised framework for health and wellbeing, including suggested contexts for interdisciplinary learning. Staff use this guidance well to respond to current events and children's interests. This helps ensure coherence and progression for all children. Teachers teach French and Spanish across all stages and children are developing their knowledge and understanding of other countries. Children develop skills in physical education and engage on a weekly basis with a specialist teacher.
- Teachers enhance the curriculum through effective partnership working with a range of individuals who support staff in delivering creative learning activities. Children participate in Nordic walking, stargazing, cooking, pond building and tree planting, as well as a range of appealing sporting activities supported by partners. A local artist recently delivered an art workshop within the school. Children speak positively about this experience. Parents and members of the local community contribute to the delivery of the curriculum through focus days, World of Work events, Maths Week and outdoor learning. Through these opportunities, children are developing their understanding of the skills for learning, life and work. Children speak enthusiastically about their increased experiences in developing coding skills after input from Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) ambassadors. As a next step, teachers should support children in recording the skills they are developing through wider achievements.
- Children speak positively about their outdoor learning activities. Staff make good use of the local context to enhance the curriculum. They need to develop further children's outdoor learning in the school grounds and surrounding area, which provide a wide range of opportunities and possibilities.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Effective partnership working with parents is having a positive impact on children, and all families engage positively with the school. This ranges from participation in the Parent Council, sharing experiences in the work place, supporting educational excursions and contributing to school developments. Staff often seeks parents' views. They listen to their ideas and opinions and act upon them. They are highly-valued partners in their children's learning.
- The Parent Council is supportive of the school. Almost all families are represented on the committee and meetings are well attended. They support fundraising, review school policies and make suggestions and improvements which relate to the school's life and work. In response to requests from children, parents have provided funds to improve further the playground. They reviewed the school's vision, values and aims along with children, partners and the local community. Children are proud of the contributions made by their parents and partners.
- Parents appreciate the highly-effective ways in which the school communicates with them. These include a fortnightly newsletter, a termly curriculum overview for each level, texts, emails, phone calls and the use of social media. They appreciate the school keeping them up-to-date about a wide range of topics including progress with school improvement priorities.
- Staff support parents effectively to engage in their children's learning. Teachers share children's learning journals with parents on a weekly basis. Parents report that teachers keep them well informed about their child's progress. They have the opportunity to write comments and feel involved and included in their children's learning as a result. Children appreciate the chance to share their learning in this way. They acknowledge that sharing their learning journal with their parents helps to keep them focused on their learning. Teachers are developing this further with the introduction of learning conversations this session. Parents value these recent improvements to learning more about their children's progress. Children play an active part in this process.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- The headteacher ensures everyone in the school community shares the responsibility for creating a positive ethos and a climate of respect and trust. The headteacher and staff recognise that positive relationships and nurturing principles are central to developing a whole school approach to wellbeing. They have a shared understanding of wellbeing and of children's rights. Children are treated fairly and with respect. Older children show patience and care for younger children. Children feel happy, safe and included.
- All children are included and engaged in decisions about the life of the school. They describe motivating ways they are included and involved. All children take responsibility for aspects of school life. All are members of the pupil parliament. They meet regularly to discuss school improvement. The headteacher and staff listen to and value all children's views and ideas. Children's opinions informed the recently developed positive behaviour agreement. As a result, children gain leadership and organisational skills, as well as confidence, when talking to groups. Children develop self-respect and respect for others through the caring and responsible roles they undertake with pride.
- Children know and understand the language of the wellbeing indicators and reflect regularly on their own wellbeing. They are confident teachers are sensitive and responsive to their needs. Children feel comfortable sharing concerns with an adult in school who knows them well. They trust staff to listen and care for them. Children create short-term wellbeing targets and know how to make improvements.
- All staff have good awareness of individual children and their families. Staff promote equality and inclusion. They ensure that every individual has equal opportunities, to make the most of their talents and abilities. Staff's knowledge of children's needs is having a positive impact on their wellbeing and inclusion.
- Teachers draw successfully on the expertise of supportive partners to improve children's health and wellbeing (HWB) outcomes. Children's learning in HWB benefits strongly from partnership working between teachers, health professionals and sports coaches. Children speak confidently about how the school supports them to lead a healthy lifestyle. They understand the importance of regular physical activity and all take part in after-school clubs. Teachers and partners plan learning successfully that takes account of the school's context and meets children's individual needs. They overcome challenges of rurality and a small school roll. Partners value being involved in planning and decision-making processes.
- The headteacher's introduction of learning conversations is helping children to participate more fully in their learning. All children set personal targets with teachers. Their learning conversations with teachers help them to recognise with increasing confidence, their strengths and areas to improve. Parents speak positively of the impact and quality of conversations they

have with their children at home about learning. Children speak meaningfully about learning, which is leading to parents having a clear understanding of what children tell them. Learning conversations give all children valuable opportunities to be involved in planning learning.

- Teachers identify promptly, children who have barriers to learning and require additional support. Children are supported effectively through individualised learning plans. Teachers are at the early stages of helping children to make the connections between learning conversations and individual learning plans. Teachers need to continue to develop these connections to add richness and greater meaning for children with additional support needs.
- Teachers are reviewing and developing a progressive HWB programme to meet the needs of all children. They should continue to develop professional knowledge and understanding and share HWB plans with parents. They should collaborate further with children and partners to involve them in the HWB review. Their HWB plans need to reflect the school's unique context and provide increased experiences and challenges for children when outdoors.
- The headteacher has a good understanding of legislative requirements. She ensures that school staff comply with legislation and guidance relating to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. She ensures all staff are aware of their responsibilities and have undertaken appropriate professional learning.
- The headteacher plans for religious observance across the year. A number of partners support the delivery of this, including the local minister and other faith representatives. Staff in the multi-stage composite class facilitate opportunities for children to learn together and from one another. Through religious and moral education, children are exploring a range of beliefs. The headteacher and staff encourage children to be tolerant and understanding of one another. A few children show some awareness of diversity. Children are not confident in their ability to recognise and challenge discrimination, should they become aware of it. Teachers need to ensure that the curriculum offers sufficient, explicit opportunities for children to develop greater awareness of diversity and discrimination. They should provide these experiences in a planned and progressive way across the four contexts of children's learning.

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, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy, with a few children exceeding national expectations. Almost all children are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Most children are expected to attain expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in the current academic year.

Literacy and English language

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is good. Most children are making good progress in all areas of literacy and English language.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children engage well with one another and with adults. Most are articulate and speak with confidence. At early and first level, children listen and respond to one another appropriately and with respect. All children contribute to discussions and are learning to take turns. At second level, children listen and talk effectively in pairs and small groups. They build on one another's answers and ask relevant questions to clarify their understanding. Across the school, children speak enthusiastically about their positive experiences when presenting to a larger audience.

Reading

- Children's attainment is good. Across the school, children talk enthusiastically about favourite books and preferred authors. They use the school library to access a range of fiction and non-fiction books. At first level, most children read with fluency and expression. They describe confidently the features of fiction and non-fiction texts. At second level, most children read with fluency, expression and understanding. They identify a few genres and justify their choices of favourite authors. A few children are capable of attaining more.

Writing

- Children's attainment in writing is good. Across the school, most children write effectively for a range of purposes. They are developing skill in writing recounts, descriptive texts, poems and letters. At early level, children are beginning to develop their skills in writing. At first level, children write independently. They use capital letters and full stops with increasing accuracy. Most children link sentences using a few conjunctions and are beginning to use paragraphs. At second level, most children use paragraphs appropriately to organise thoughts and ideas. They use a range of punctuation marks accurately, including speech marks. Children use personal spelling lists when writing freely. They spell words with increasing accuracy. Across the school, a few children are capable of making better progress.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making good progress. A few are capable of making better progress.

Number, money and measure

- At first level, most children have a good understanding of place value and identify the value of a digit in a whole number. They are developing their knowledge and application of multiplication facts. All children at first level recognise all coins and make total amounts of money in different ways. Older children add and subtract sums of money accurately. Most children understand and use appropriately units of time. Children, across the school, estimate realistically the lengths of objects, with older children measuring to check for accuracy. Most children find the area of simple shapes. At second level, most children show good understanding of place value, including tenths and hundredths. Most children round large numbers to 10, 100 and 1000 with accuracy. They find fractions of a whole number and identify equivalent fractions. Most children calculate simple durations. They draw and measure lines of specified lengths with increasing accuracy. Most children read information from a scale, with some support. All children need to develop their skills in using a range of mental strategies to calculate answers as there is an over-reliance on written calculations.

Shape, position and movement

- At early and first level, all children name and identify simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Most children describe simple properties of common shapes. They understand compass points and are beginning to identify right angles. At second level, a few children recognise right, acute and obtuse angles. Children need to improve their attainment in shape, position and movement to ensure depth of understanding.

Information handling

- Across the school, children are not skilled sufficiently in information handling. At first and second levels, most children understand and use tally marks. They recognise and interpret simple bar graphs. Most children are not confident in recognising line graphs or pie charts. Across the school, children need to improve their attainment in information handling and apply their skills across their learning.

Attainment over time

- The school has information on children's progress for the last five years. A more robust approach to tracking children's progress has been in place since last session. Staff are aware that the small numbers of children in each cohort make it more difficult to evidence improvements in attainment over time. Overall, the school assessment information shows that most children are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Teachers celebrate children's wider achievement through assemblies, an achievement wall and learning journeys. All children and young people are proud of their achievements. They recognise how the school has supported them to build their confidence and develop new skills. Focused occasions such as World of Work Week, Maths Week and National Outdoor Learning Day allow children to develop skills for life, learning and work. The school has made a positive start to tracking children's involvement in wider achievement activities. Children need to continue to be aware of and identify the skills they are developing through their participation. Staff need to ensure that opportunities for achievement are progressive.

Equity for all learners

- All children are included and valued within the school community. Children have a clear understanding of equity. They explain the difference between equity and equality very successfully. Staff's use of the Pupil Equity Fund has helped children to achieve success.

Those children who need support though targeted interventions are achieving and attaining. The headteacher has effective systems in place to monitor the impact of these interventions, ensuring improved attainment for children in literacy or numeracy.

School Empowerment

■ Parental and community engagement

- The headteacher's strategic leadership is characterised by collaboration and collegiality. In her time in post, she has enabled staff to lead and co-create a supportive and empowered culture. Supported by all staff, she works collaboratively with the Parent Council and the wider parent forum. She encourages and supports parents and partners to be involved in the life of the school and in decision-making.
- The headteacher's approach to developing the review of the school's vision, values and aims, highlights the importance she places on empowering the school community. Children, staff, parents, partners and members of the local community are included. The resulting vision, values and aims already underpin successfully a culture of improving outcomes for all children.
- Parents and partners talk enthusiastically about the increasing opportunities to be involved in supporting the life and work of the school. Parent Council members are involved in making decisions with the headteacher about how she allocates the school budget. Parents make valuable contributions to enhance the curriculum. For example, sharing their experiences in the world of work. They are involved in learning conversations with their children and teachers. They feel valued and equal partners in their child's education as a result. Partners value regular opportunities to plan collaboratively with school staff to improve outcomes for children. Partners are actively engaged in informing change and supporting school improvement. The headteacher continues to explore ways to empower further parents and partners. She plans to begin involving them in developing and evaluating the school curriculum alongside children and staff.
- Parents and partners feel increasingly empowered to initiate and lead change.

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.