

Summarised inspection findings

Hottsbridge Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

13 June 2023

Key contextual information

Hottsbridge Primary School is a rural school on the outskirts of the village of Waterbeck. The headteacher is responsible for the school partnership of Hoddum, Eaglesfield and Hottsbridge Primary Schools. Hottsbridge Primary School currently has 13 children on the roll. The number of children on the roll has fluctuated throughout the last year. 87% of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 5 and 6. The SIMD categorisation for the rest of children is unknown.

Children are organised into one multi-stage composite class. This session there are no children in Primary 3. The class teacher, who is also principal teacher, returned to Hottsbridge Primary School from a secondment, in January 2023.

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

- Hottsbridge Primary School has a very positive and welcoming ethos. Children are very polite, friendly and care for each other. Relationships across school are kind, supportive and respectful. Children talk proudly about their learning environment and achievements displayed throughout their school.
- Most children feel staff listen to their views and take them into account. All children contribute to the wider life of the school, as part of the pupil parliament. Children are becoming increasingly familiar with their rights and their relevance to school life. Staff are taking forward a rights-based approach, working towards further external accreditation. This approach is at the early stages of having an impact on school life.
- Staff have created a positive learning environment where children in the multi-stage class confidently and independently access resources. Children engage purposefully in their learning and are motivated to do well. They work well on their own and in pairs or small groups, supporting and encouraging each other. They use digital technology effectively to research and display their ideas and plans. They make confident, responsible choices about how and when to use digital technology. Children are proud to have achieved the Digital Schools Scotland Award.
- Children at the early years are not yet benefiting from learning that is developmentally appropriate, such as play pedagogy. Teachers are keen to take this area of development forward. The headteacher and teachers now need to work together to plan appropriate spaces, resources and learning through play. They should seek opportunities to work with early years colleagues from other schools to support the introduction of children learning through play. The headteacher and teachers should engage with national guidance and professional learning to develop their understanding of the close relationship between play and learning.

- Staff provide children with clear explanations and instructions. They support children well to understand the purpose of their learning and activities. In a few lessons, teachers make links across learning, using questioning skilfully to develop children's understanding and move their thinking forward. They observe children well to ensure understanding and give children well-timed, helpful, oral feedback. Children react positively to comments from their teachers. Each child has a learning conversation with their teacher each term. These conversations support children to know themselves better as learners. Children are learning to set meaningful personal targets, as a result. All staff should provide opportunities for children to reflect regularly on progress towards their targets, to develop this further. The majority of learning activities meet children's needs. Teachers should increase the pace and challenge of learning for a minority of children. Most children would like their work to be harder more often.
- Teachers use standardised assessments, summative and formative assessments, and knowledge of individual children to check children's progress in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher has an annual calendar of assessment and keeps an overview of assessment results. The headteacher should work with teachers to improve approaches to assessment. Teachers need relevant assessment information to plan effectively appropriate next steps in learning for all children. They also need a range of relevant information to inform their professional judgements about achievement of a level. The headteacher and teachers need to ensure that planned assessments add value to a body of evidence that shows children's progress in their learning. Children need more opportunities to apply skills in unfamiliar situations to assess how secure their learning is. This will show the depth of their understanding and ability to apply learning in new contexts and across the curriculum. This would provide robust evidence to enrich the quality of assessment information which teachers use to make judgements about children's progress.
- Teachers have planned interdisciplinary themes with colleagues within the school partnership. They have observed each other's classroom practice and they take part in planned moderation activities together. The headteacher should provide regular, planned opportunities for partnership colleagues to work more closely together. This would support teachers to continue to develop their confidence in using National Benchmarks and strengthen further their understanding of achievement of a level.
- Teachers use literacy and numeracy progression pathways to plan children's learning over the medium and short term. They also use a structured framework to deliver a skills-based physical education programme. The headteacher monitors teachers' planning each term. She needs to ensure that teachers' planning provides children with sufficient breadth of experience and their entitlement across the curriculum. Teachers should provide children with opportunities to contribute to planning for learning. The headteacher should work with teachers to establish a clear, consistent approach to planning children's learning across all curriculum areas. She should pay particular attention to planning for transition and when there are staff changes. This will ensure that children across all stages learn progressively, building on prior learning.
- The headteacher has introduced an agenda for attainment meetings this session. These meetings need to focus rigorously on the progress children make. The headteacher and staff should develop a clearer understanding of how to use data to inform learning, teaching and assessment. The headteacher should use data more effectively to track the progress of individual children. This would help them to identify gaps in learning and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. It would also support teachers to plan appropriate next steps in learning and raise attainment. The headteacher should document clear actions resulting from these discussions with teachers. Together, they should check progress regularly against these actions to ensure positive impact on children's outcomes.

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

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

- The number of children at each stage is small and varies each session. There has been a number of changes to children on the school roll in the last year. Overall statements about attainment and progress, rather than for specific year groups or levels, are made to ensure that no child is identified.
- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. A significant minority of children is capable of achieving considerably more in their learning. These children are not yet making good enough progress in their learning. Overall, children with barriers to learning are making appropriate progress against their individual targets.
- School achievement of a level data for session 2021/22 shows that the majority of children achieved appropriate Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in listening and talking, reading, writing and numeracy and mathematics. Teachers expect most children to achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics by June 2023. School records show that a minority of children have attained appropriate levels in literacy and English earlier than expected. However, the headteacher and teachers are not able to evidence accurately progress children make from prior levels of attainment. They are not yet able to evidence where they are adding value to children's progress.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- Overall, most children are making good progress in listening and talking. Almost all children listen well and articulate their thoughts confidently, appropriate to their age and stage. They interact positively with staff, their peers and visitors. Most children contribute to discussions and are learning to take turns. As they progress through the school, children listen and talk effectively in pairs and small groups. A few children build successfully on one another's answers and ask relevant questions to clarify their understanding. Across the school, children would benefit from more frequent opportunities to take part in well-planned, progressive listening and talking activities.

Reading

- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in reading. The majority of children read well with fluency and expression, as appropriate to their age and stage. Children use successfully reading skills and strategies such as context clues and predicting. They show understanding of what they have read. Children develop reading skills appropriate to their individual targets. Across the school, children talk enthusiastically about their favourite books

and preferred authors. Children are beginning to develop their ability to respond to inferential and evaluative questions, as they progress through the school.

Writing

- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in writing. Younger children punctuate most sentences accurately using a capital letter and full stop. Older children use punctuation accurately most of the time, including using inverted commas well. They use their planning notes successfully to help them write imaginatively. Children need more experience of writing to persuade, explore issues and express their opinion. Real-life events would provide valuable contexts for this writing. Children are beginning to make progress against their individual targets.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Children need greater opportunities to develop and practise a range of numeracy and mathematics skills regularly. Teachers should ensure this happens across the school year to help them improve their recall and apply their skills and knowledge.

Number, money and measure

- Across the school, children develop well their understanding of number processes appropriate to their age and stage. Younger children read, write and order whole number to 1000. Older children's knowledge of number extends to one million. Children explain successfully the value of digits within these large numbers. Younger children identify accurately all coins to £2 and add and subtract effectively using 1p, 2p, 5p and 10p coins. In word problems, they identify correctly the most and least expensive items. Older children use all four number processes well in money problems. They identify the best value and the cheapest option. All children need to develop greater understanding of measure appropriate to their age and stage.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children identify successfully a range of familiar two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Older children use key words such as face, edge and vertices well to describe the features of these shapes. They identify accurately three-dimensional objects in everyday items. They understand the relationship between three-dimensional objects and their nets. Older children progress from drawing lines of symmetry within shapes accurately to completing and creating more complex symmetrical patterns and designs.

Information handling

- There was no evidence in children's work of information handling. This is a feature of the term four numeracy and mathematics plan. The headteacher and teachers should review the numeracy and mathematics pathway to ensure these skills are taught at appropriate points throughout the year and across different contexts for learning.

Attainment over time

- The small roll and the numbers of children at each stage mean that any trends in attainment data overtime, are unreliable. Year on year, attainment data fluctuates due to ongoing changes in the school roll.
- Despite the majority of children making good progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics, this is not consistent across the curriculum. This is a result of children not currently receiving their entitlement to breadth and depth of learning across the curriculum. The headteacher and teachers use the local authority tracking system to record children's progress in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher has started recording an overview of a range of assessment information. This information is not accurate enough or being used sufficiently well

to raise attainment over time. The headteacher should ensure the information is robust and that she interrogates it regularly and rigorously with teachers. The headteacher and teachers should develop approaches to evidence children's progress over time more effectively. This will help them identify gaps in learning, plan interventions to address gaps and monitor the impact these have on overall attainment.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- This session, staff have introduced more pupil groups. Children are beginning to influence the life of the school in meaningful ways. Children are members of the pupil council, rights respecting group, and are Junior Road Safety Officers. They recognise that by being involved, they are learning how to work with others and develop leadership and presentation skills. Children identify that these skills will help them in the workplace to relate to other people, listen and work well in teams.
- Children enjoy working with their local community. For example, supporting recently a fundraising coffee morning organised by the church, for the Turkey earthquake appeal. They discuss confidently the contribution they make to the wider community.
- The school celebrates children's achievements from school and from home on attractive wall displays and through an online platform. These achievements include taking part in local schools' cross country and curling competitions. Children record effectively their achievements in their personal learning journals. Their achievements include recent success in the Dumfries Burns' competition and the local music festival.
- Staff now need to develop a system to identify and track the skills children are developing. This should support children to make links between their achievements, learning and progress.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide universal support for children to achieve widely. The funding pays for transport to local authority events such as cross-country competitions. It gives children access to cultural musical activities such as African drumming and Scottish opera. Children grow in confidence, meeting and working with other children and adults. PEF also supports increased access to additional support for learning. This provides helpful, targeted support for a minority of children who require extra assistance. This is supporting children to make appropriate progress. The headteacher should now evaluate the impact of the support provided for children and consider the best use of resources.

Other relevant evidence

- The headteacher needs to develop more effective approaches to drive the strategic direction of school improvement, particularly in relation to raising attainment. She needs to monitor and evaluate children's outcomes more effectively.
- Teachers teach French throughout the school. They need to introduce a second language.

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.