

Summarised inspection findings

Braco Primary School and Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

17 December 2019

Key contextual information

Braco Primary School is a non-denominational school, which serves the picturesque village of Braco and the surrounding area. The school's provision comprises three primary classes and a nursery class. In October 2019, the primary school roll was 51. The senior leadership team comprises an acting headteacher and acting principal teacher. The acting headteacher was appointed in August 2018, with the acting principal teacher taking up post in August 2019.

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

- The school's vision, values and aims are integrated clearly into the welcoming and caring ethos, where children are keen to engage in a positive environment for learning. Relationships between staff and children are respectful and nurturing. Staff work well as a team. They know children well, and plan appropriately to ensure that most children make appropriate progress in their learning.
- Children work frequently in pairs and small groups and collaborate well with each other. They benefit from accessing a local forest where they learn skills such as cooperation, teamwork, creativity and leadership through activities such as building dens. They use this environment well to develop their learning in a range of ways including for numeracy and mathematics.
- Children are supported effectively to contribute to school life through their involvement in a variety of groups including the pupil council, 'Braco Skills Groups' and the 'Braco School Events' programme. All children are represented on one of these groups, however, as yet they are unable to talk confidently about what they are learning as a result. Staff need to continue to develop children's understanding of the various skills for learning, life and work they are learning and help support children to apply these skills in other areas.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Across the school, staff share the purpose of lessons well and most children are becoming increasingly clear about how they can achieve success. Most children experience a range of differentiated and challenging tasks appropriate to their needs. The school should enable children to take greater responsibility for their learning and support them to apply and extend their literacy and numeracy skills in real and meaningful contexts.
- Teachers use a wide variety of useful approaches including active learning, whole class lessons, group and paired work, and independent learning which engage children. Staff ensure that learning environments are stimulating and displays in classrooms, and around the school, reflect children's current learning and achievements across the school community. Teachers use displays well to enhance their teaching and children's learning, including revisiting prior learning and showing how children are progressing.

- All teachers use interactive learning displays to help children discuss and evaluate their learning. However, children are not always clear about how their individual learning is represented. All teachers use class learning trees to share whole-class information about children's learning with parents, as well as with children. Teachers need to develop these further to support individual children's learning and progress, as well as enabling them to be more independent learners. At times, teachers are overly reliant on worksheets and workbooks which do little to further children's progress. They need to engage children in a more active manner, in order to support and improve further their attainment.
- In most lessons, teachers use effective questioning to check children's understanding. They should use higher-order thinking skills more consistently to scaffold and extend children's learning. Teachers give children a range of oral and written feedback on their learning. As already identified by the school, all teachers should develop further their skills in providing more evaluative high-quality feedback to help children understand further how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- Across the school, staff undertake class observations regularly, both within Braco Primary School and with other cluster schools, to help them identify effective learning and teaching approaches. A review of the teaching of mental mathematics is starting to have a positive impact on children's learning. Commendably, children have undertaken observations with the senior leadership team, which also added helpfully to staff's review of learning and teaching within mental mathematics across the school.
- The acting headteacher and staff use a wide variety of relevant assessments to support teachers' professional judgements. They should continue to deepen their understanding of National Benchmarks to moderate standards of children's work. As planned, teachers should use Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes more explicitly as an integral part of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle. The acting headteacher should take forward plans to continue to develop staff's awareness and confidence in analysing and interpreting all data to help inform their professional judgements and predictions about children's progress against national levels of attainment.
- The senior leadership team and class teachers have regular and helpful meetings to review individual children's progress and to identify interventions, particularly in literacy, which is supporting children with specific reading challenges. Teachers need to take forward appropriate interventions for other curricular areas, including numeracy and mathematics, to enable children to access support when required. Parents, as well as staff, indicate that the new digital reporting system is having a positive impact in supporting learning both at home and within school.
- Staff know children well and provide additional support for any challenges they face. Pupil support and learning assistants provide a good balance of direct support to individual pupils, and wider support for learning which is resulting in most children making good progress.

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

- It is important to note that the number of children in cohorts is variable and often fewer than ten, therefore, overall statements about progress have been made to ensure the anonymity of individuals.
- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy, including those with additional needs, is good. Data provided by the school indicates that most children across the school, achieve the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. Evidence gathered during the inspection concurs with the school's judgements in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy

- Attainment in literacy and English is good overall. Most are making good progress in listening and talking, reading and writing.

Listening and talking

- Children at early level listen and respond appropriately when following instructions about their learning. They listen and talk with increasing confidence in a range of contexts, and follow readily simple instructions. At first level, children contribute ideas and opinions well and respond increasingly well to non-verbal cues. They are respectful of different views and are developing effective skills to build on ideas and opinions. Children at second level communicate clearly, audibly and with increasing expression during structured talking activities. They ask and respond well to literal, inferential and evaluative questions. The school should now ensure that there is a robust approach to the further development of listening and talking skills across the school. Children are eager to contribute but would benefit from a wider range of challenging, higher order questioning.

Reading

- At early level, children are developing their use of sounds. They are developing well their skills to read unfamiliar words with confidence. At first level, children read with fluency and expression and discuss with increasing confidence authors, characters in books and their preferred genre in reading for enjoyment. By second level, children are fluent and expressive in their reading. They show increasing confidence in their ability to analyse texts, and apply a range of reading skills to show their understanding of texts. At all stages, children need to develop further their higher-order reading skills.

Writing

- At early level, children are developing well their skills in early writing. By the end of first level, children write independently for a range of purposes. They link sentences well and use appropriate punctuation. They are beginning to use persuasive language to engage the

reader. At second level, children create texts for a range of purposes and audiences selecting appropriate genre, form, structure and style. They are using more ambitious language and write increasingly well to influence, explore issues and express opinions. They use paragraphs and appropriate complex punctuation accurately. Children at all stages should develop further, apply and celebrate their writing skills in real-life and other meaningful contexts.

Attainment in numeracy

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Across the school, most children read, write and order numbers with accuracy. They discuss numbers within their appropriate levels of understanding from simple number sequencing of whole numbers to ordering decimal fractions. At first and second level, children need to extend their understanding of fractions and apply these effectively in their learning. All children know the value of money, including different coins and notes. Older children are aware that there are many ways to pay for goods, and spoke positively about profit and loss when planning their enterprise activity. At early level, children are confident when measuring non-standard units. By the end of the first level, they discuss metres and centimetres with confidence. Children working within second level need to consolidate further their understanding of how to use and apply standard measurements.

Shape position and movement

- Across the school, children have good understanding of the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects. Across all stages, they use relevant mathematical language to describe accurately the properties of different shapes. At first and second level, children are developing well their knowledge of angles.

Information handling

- Across the school, children gather information confidently, present it in graphs accurately and analyse information well. The majority have a good understanding of bar graphs and how to interpret data.

Mental agility

- Across the school, children have good skills in mental agility. They are aware of number facts and use strategies effectively when undertaking mental maths activities.

Problem solving

- At early and first level, children are able to solve simple number problems, verbalise, and share their thought processes using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. At second level, most children are able to solve a range of problem-solving challenges and can select and justify their choice of strategy. These challenges should continue to be developed to ensure children require to draw on the full range of problem-solving strategies.

Attainment over time

- Due to the small numbers of children at each stage within the school, data cannot accurately define trends over time in attainment. However, based on teachers' judgements, data from standardised assessments, and tracking, there is evidence that most children, including those with additional needs have made good progress over time in literacy and numeracy. This is more evident in recent years.
- Staff do not yet have a clear picture of children's progress across the curriculum, in areas other than literacy and numeracy. They should develop further existing systems, including

recently introduced digital approaches, to enable them to track further children's attainment over time across all areas of the curriculum to help ensure they make appropriate progress.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children at Braco Primary School demonstrate with increasing confidence skills as successful learners. They contribute effectively to school life and the wider community through, for example, the 'Braco School Events' programme, the local flower show, and the community Christmas lights switch-on. Children speak enthusiastically about their wider achievements, both in and out of school, which are helping to develop their skills as responsible citizens and effective contributors. Children work well together to raise funds for local, national and international charities, and are developing their skills in teamwork and in global citizenship.
- The acting headteacher and staff should track children's wider achievements in a more cohesive and progressive way to ensure that all children, including those who require extra support and encouragement, are achieving a range of skills and attributes as successfully as possible.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a good awareness of ensuring equity for all children in the school, and take positive steps to support children whose social or economic circumstances might adversely affect their experience or attainment. Pupil Equity Funding has been used to address factors relating to the cost of the school day and secure additional support for targeted children. The rationale for the allocated use of this funding has been shared with both staff and parents. It will be important to continue to monitor carefully the impact of this funding in closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- The acting headteacher and staff are aware of the need to continue to gather robust evidence on interventions and measure the impact on outcomes for all children. Senior leaders recognise the importance of working with teachers to analyse data rigorously to demonstrate effectively whether interventions are closing the identified attainment gap and supporting children to make appropriate progress in their learning.

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