

Summarised inspection findings

Papdale Primary School

Orkney Islands Council

27 June 2023

Key contextual information

Papdale Primary School is situated in Kirkwall, Orkney. The headteacher took up post shortly before the inspection in April 2023. She is supported by a senior leadership team comprising of a substantive depute headteacher, a part-time acting depute headteacher, two principal teachers, and a business manager. There has been significant change in the senior leadership team over the past few years.

At the time of the inspection, there were 447 children, organised into 17 classes. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones 7 to 9. A minority of children live in SIMD date zones 4 to 5. Nine percent of children were registered for free school meals, which is below the national average. At the time of the inspection, the school reported 31% of children had additional support needs.

Senior leaders described the challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic which continued into session 2021/22. This includes high levels of absence in both staff and children, and an increase in anxiety in some children. Attendance was generally in line with the national average but reduced during 2021/22.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- The very recently appointed headteacher has appropriately focused on building positive relationships across the school community. She has quickly developed a strong understanding of the school and is using this knowledge to identify school improvement priorities. The school has experienced challenges in recent years, relating to the pandemic and recovery from the pandemic. The staff team continued to work together well during periods of challenge. They managed to secure positive improvements in a few school improvement priority areas as a result. Senior leaders and staff recognise that they are now able to increase the pace of change to drive further improvements across the school.
- The current school values do not have a high profile, with children unable to talk about their importance or relevance. The headteacher has taken positive action by beginning a review of the school vision, values and aims, in consultation with the wider school community. This will ensure the vision, value and aims are shared and underpin all aspects of the life and work of the school. Senior leaders and staff appropriately focus on fostering and maintaining positive relationships with children across the school. This supports almost all children to have a strong sense of belonging to their school and wider community.
- The headteacher identifies that school improvement planning needs to have a sharper focus on improving outcomes for children. Senior leaders should ensure that action points in the school improvement plan are clear and measurable. This includes developing more rigorous approaches to reviewing and monitoring fully the impact of improvements. Senior leaders

should also continue to increase the involvement of parents, children and partners in planning and evaluating school improvement.

- Senior leaders support and encourage staff to engage in helpful and well-planned professional learning opportunities. These are provided by national organisations, the school and local authority. Teachers are very keen to improve their teaching practice and engage with research, and professional reading to improve their pedagogy. Senior leaders support teachers to engage meaningfully with annual staff professional reviews. Teachers link their development plans effectively to the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards and aspects of the school improvement plan. Almost all teachers are clear about how they would like to develop their professional learning to improve outcomes for children. They demonstrate a strong commitment to self-reflection.
- Staff take an effective, collegiate approach to improving children's learning and attainment. They lead on certain aspects of school improvement, such as writing and learning environments. Teachers feel empowered to lead change within their classrooms. They feel well supported by senior leaders to take forwards aspects of school improvement. Teachers take on a range of leadership roles enthusiastically when these opportunities are available. Senior leaders recognise there is scope to provide staff with further opportunities to lead on aspects of whole school improvement.
- Children are polite, respectful and very proud of their school. They offer their ideas eagerly to support their school to improve, such as through pupil surveys. However, a majority of children do not currently know how their ideas to improve the school are taken into consideration. Senior leaders should extend the use of 'you said, we did' displays to help children to understand how their views influence change. A minority of children have leadership opportunities across school life. For example, a few children serve on the 'Papdale Voices' group. The group seek to promote children's rights to the rest of the school, which they are doing enthusiastically through assemblies. Senior leaders and staff should explore and increase opportunities for more children to be involved in leadership roles across the school.
- The active Parent Council supports senior leaders by considering how parents can contribute to school improvement priorities. They reflected on how they could support the priority of improving children's reading skills, and children's enthusiasm for reading. They worked with teachers well to review and improve the range and stock of library books available. They also created a highly-successful 'Book Neuk' in the school foyer where children are encouraged to borrow books to read. The headteacher plans to increase the involvement of the Parent Council in identifying and evaluating school improvements moving forward.
- All staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context of the school. Senior leaders target Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) appropriately to support improvements in young people's literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. The headteacher should ensure funding is focused specifically on improving outcomes for children living in poverty.

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

- Children benefit from a welcoming and caring ethos across the school. Staff have created a strong sense of community and know children and their families very well. There are mutually respectful and nurturing relationships between children and staff which support a positive atmosphere for learning. Children are articulate, well-mannered and enthusiastic. Staff are rightly proud of the progress made in improving relationships and creating a calm learning environment, despite the challenges of recent years.
- Most teachers have established well-organised classrooms that provide a purposeful atmosphere for learning. Staff create attractive wall displays across the school to celebrate the range of opportunities which children experience. These displays are also used effectively by staff to prompt children as part of their learning. Almost all children are attentive in class and listen well to instructions. Almost all children work together effectively when in pairs and groups and support each other well. They take part in learning activities with enthusiasm.
- In a majority of lessons, teachers use a range of well-planned and interesting tasks and activities. Teachers should continue to develop their use of creative and relevant contexts for learning which are well-matched to the needs and interests of children. They should increase their use of differentiated learning to better meet the needs of all learners. In a majority of lessons, the pace of learning could be brisker.
- Almost all teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. In a majority of lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning well with children. This supports children to understand what they are learning and to make links to prior knowledge. In a minority of lessons, teachers share with children how to be successful in their learning. In a few classes, teachers involve children in creating measures of success. Teachers should share and extend the use of this effective practice across the school. This should help teachers develop a consistent approach to support children to identify their strengths and next steps in learning.
- Almost all teachers use praise and encouragement to support children's learning. Most teachers use questioning effectively to check for understanding. They should use a wider range of questions to extend learning and develop children's higher order thinking skills. Almost all teachers frequently enrich children's experiences by making effective use of the local environment and community partnerships.
- Children are confident in using a range of digital technology, including laptops and tablets. They use digital platforms successfully to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Most children requiring additional support use digital technologies effectively to support their learning across the curriculum. Children in P7 use an online portfolio well to track their skills for learning, life and work. Parents access this information through the school's digital platform. They find it helpful to review their child's development of important skills. Teachers should now

consider how all children can develop their digital literacy skills further in a planned and progressive way across the curriculum.

- Staff at the early stages work collaboratively to incorporate play-based learning opportunities into daily routines. They have created well-resourced, engaging play environments which children access regularly. Staff should support children to understand better the purpose of their play. Senior leaders and staff should review their use of the shared play area to ensure play is consistently purposeful and meaningful. Staff should continue with their plans to develop their shared understanding of play pedagogy in line with the principles of Realising the Ambition (RTA).
- Children in P1 experience regular high-quality outdoor learning experiences. Teachers' well-planned activities and challenges deepen children's learning from the classroom. Children use materials from the outdoor environment to enhance their learning. They also use free-play experiences in the playground and local woodland to promote curiosity and problem-solving skills. Senior leaders and teachers should now consider how to extend these opportunities to offer progressive outdoor learning opportunities to children at all stages.
- Senior leaders continue to provide regular opportunities for teachers to discuss and develop learning and teaching together. Senior leaders, staff and children should continue to develop an agreed school learning, teaching and assessment standard. This will help develop further a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching and improve the consistency of learners' experiences across the school.
- Teachers work together with stage partners well to plan assessments as part of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle. Most teachers use a range of summative assessments successfully to plan children's next steps in learning. They use standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy to inform their planning and to support their professional judgements. Most teachers provide effective written and oral feedback to children to help them progress in their learning. Children complete well-considered self and peer assessments in a minority of classes to help them reflect on their learning. This practice should be developed further across the school.
- Teachers work collaboratively to plan appropriate learning experiences across the school. They make effective use of progression pathways in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers engage in positive moderation activities in school and across the local authority. These opportunities have improved the accuracy of teacher judgements in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders and teachers recognise the need to plan progressive experiences across all curricular areas. This will ensure children can make progress across all aspects of their learning.
- Senior leaders have established robust monitoring and tracking arrangements. They meet with teachers regularly to purposefully review assessments and discuss children's progress in learning. Senior leaders and staff agree helpful interventions and support strategies based on the information recorded.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Specialist staff deliver high-quality expressive arts discretely in art, music and physical education (PE). Children benefit from these experiences. Senior leaders should ensure all children receive their curriculum entitlement of two hours of this high-quality physical education.
- Teachers have developed comprehensive learning pathways, based on the local authority progression frameworks. They use these pathways well to support planning for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers bundle experiences and outcomes for the remaining curriculum areas. Senior leaders and teachers recognise the need to plan progressive experiences across all curricular areas. This will ensure children can make progress across all aspects of their learning.
- Children in P7 systematically develop their knowledge of the world of work as part of their pupil profile. Teachers need to consider how children at all stages have similar opportunities. Teachers should consider how they incorporate skills for learning, life and work, learning for sustainability, and career management further across the curriculum.
- Children are receiving their curriculum entitlement to 1+2 languages. Children at all stages learn French. Older children also learn Spanish. Young people from a local secondary school visit the school to deliver aspects of Spanish. Children have a real enthusiasm for learning languages, partly as a result of the support from older peers.
- Senior leaders and teachers should ensure all children receive their full curriculum entitlement to religious and moral education. This curriculum area would help children to explore important aspects of equality and diversity.
- Teachers work effectively with colleagues to support children as they come to school from early years settings or move on to secondary school. Children requiring additional support benefit from enhanced engagement programmes with secondary schools.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Almost all parents recognise that staff know their children very well as individuals. They appreciate how this helps promote their child's sense of belonging. They value the positive and caring relationships between staff and children.
- Staff use a variety of helpful ways to communicate with parents, including digital platforms, newsletters and emails. Staff should work with parents to develop a communication strategy. This will ensure parents understand how they receive different information from the school. A few teachers use the school's digital platform effectively to help parents understand what their child learns in school. Parents would welcome this approach being used more consistently across the school.
- Parents would also appreciate more opportunities to regularly visit the school. This will allow them to be more involved in their children's learning. Parents are eager to have more regular updates on how well their child is progressing in their learning.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- Children benefit from positive and mutually respectful relationships with staff. Most children recognise that staff treat them fairly and with respect. This is leading to most children having the confidence to speak to a trusted adult if they need help. Staff create a nurturing environment which helps almost all children to learn successfully. Children feel valued, known as individuals, and cared for by staff.
- Staff use effective approaches to ensure a calm, orderly learning environment. They use school rules connected to 'ready, respectful and safe' to ensure children know what is expected of them. Staff use effective strategies to support children to regulate their emotions, for example, daily emotion check-ins. Staff also use soft starts and clear and consistent language well to help children understand changes in how they, and others, are feeling. This is helping most children to discuss changes in emotions with confidence.
- Children do not yet demonstrate a clear understanding of the wellbeing indicators. As a result, children do not understand their relevance to their lives, in and beyond school. Senior leaders and staff are considering how to explore the indicators through learning and assemblies in a meaningful way. Senior leaders recently introduced approaches to track children's wellbeing. They continue to explore how to use data gathered to support improved outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders have reintroduced pupil groups to allow children to begin to lead on aspects of wellbeing. These include junior road safety officers, children in P7 acting as playground buddies, and a few children serving in the health and wellbeing group. The headteacher recognises the need to develop further opportunities for children to lead on aspects of wellbeing and to contribute their views on the school. This will support all children to feel included, responsible, and allow them to act as peer role models.
- Staff are developing their understanding of statutory duties relating to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Staff are confident in meeting their child protection and safeguarding responsibilities. Senior leaders should ensure children who are care-experienced are considered for a coordinated support plan. Staff should continue to consider how they achieve improved outcomes for this group of children.
- A minority of children and parents feel the school does not deal well with bullying issues between children. They suggest staff do not respond to issues in a consistent way. Staff should continue to embed restorative practice across the school and consider how to involve children further in decisions on actions to address and resolve incidents. Staff should review arrangements for recording and monitoring incidents to ensure they align with national guidance. This will help ensure all children feel respected and valued.

- Staff monitor children’s attendance regularly. Staff are proactive in addressing barriers and work closely with families to improve attendance when concerns arise. These approaches are supporting improvements in the school’s attendance levels which dropped during the pandemic. Senior leaders should review the use of part-time timetables to ensure they adhere to national guidance.
- Support for Learning (SfL) staff are improving the approaches used to identify, record and monitor the progress of children requiring additional support. All children with barriers to their learning who require a child’s plan now have a plan in place. SfL staff should continue to develop the role of teachers in profiling, setting specific, relevant and measurable targets, and evaluating the progress of children requiring additional support. SfL staff should ensure the wellbeing indicators are used effectively and that they systematically seek the views of children and parents. This will help staff develop a holistic view of the child and their strengths and development needs.
- Support for Learning assistants (SLAs) are skilled in supporting the needs of children requiring targeted support. They confidently help children who may become distressed and use their knowledge of the child and nurturing approaches to provide appropriate support. SLAs use ‘The Workshop’ room effectively to encourage children to engage in positive social interaction and develop necessary skills. These include turn-taking, resilience and showing care for others.
- A few teachers make effective use of classroom charters to establish an agreed set of rights-based principles which support a positive atmosphere for learning. A majority of children can identify examples of rights. There is scope for teachers across the school to consider how children’s rights can be put into practice more readily in daily classroom and school activities. Children would benefit from more opportunities to learn about children’s rights in real-life and relevant contexts.
- Senior leaders and staff have developed effective partnership working with other agencies and specialists, resulting in positive outcomes for children. Children’s wellbeing needs are met well as a result of well-planned school and community-based interventions. This includes an impactful partnership with the neighbouring secondary school’s home link worker. She offers enhanced support to help children transition to secondary school successfully.
- A few teachers have introduced activities to develop children’s understanding of equality and diversity. Teachers reviewed library books to ensure children have opportunities to read stories that reflect different cultures and communities. Children are not yet able to demonstrate an understanding of the importance of celebrating diversity and difference, and challenging discrimination. They need more chances to learn about equal opportunities and the protected characteristics across the curriculum and in a progressive way. This should help children develop their appreciation of the importance of equality and fairness in society.
- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to compliance with the Nutritional Regulations and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007(the Act). Health and Nutrition Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, inspectors examined evidence relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the catering provider.

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

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Attainment in listening and talking is very good. At early, first and second levels most children attain expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in reading, writing and numeracy. Almost all children at early, first and second level attain expected levels for listening and talking.
- Most children who require additional support in their learning make appropriate progress in their engagement and participation in learning. A few children requiring additional support make satisfactory progress towards appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children's progress and attainment in literacy and English is good. Most children make good progress against prior levels of attainment.

Listening and talking

- Across the school almost all children communicate confidently with each other and adults. Almost all children listen to and follow instructions well.
- Almost all children at early level listen well and retell parts of a story. Most children at first level talk and listen in a group to share information and ask questions appropriately. Almost all children at second level understand and use techniques such as eye contact, voice projection and emphasis to present information successfully. Children at all stages need more regular opportunities to present to an audience, in order to extend their confidence and skills further.

Reading

- Almost all children at early level use known sounds and blends to read simple words and sentences. A few confidently sound out longer words, using decoding skills. Most children at first level read fluently with expression. They develop a wide vocabulary from regular reading. They need further opportunities to identify key information from a text. Most children at second level can answer increasingly complex questions about a text and demonstrate their thinking. They need more opportunities to discuss the writer's style and use of language when reading.
- Teachers have developed reading approaches successfully across the school. They make use of a new phonics programme, author visits, and a greater range of reading books to foster children's enjoyment in reading.

Writing

- Most children at early level write simple words and begin to write simple sentences. They now need to add connectives to extend their writing further. Most children at first and second level write confidently for a range of purposes and use appropriate punctuation. Children at first and

second level have opportunities to self-assess their writing against helpful checklists. They would benefit from increased feedback to improve their writing and specific targets.

- Teachers' refreshed approach to teaching writing across the school is helping children to develop their writing skills. This is leading to improved outcomes for most children in writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's progress and attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children make good progress against prior levels of attainment.

Number, money and measure

- Most children at early level confidently double and order numbers. Children at first level solve addition and subtraction problems with three-digit whole numbers. Children at second level can round fractions to the nearest whole number and one decimal place. Children at all stages would benefit from further opportunities to develop their mental maths strategies.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children at early level recognise compass points and use appropriate language to give directions. Children at first level identify the area of a shape by counting squares. Most children at second level can describe and classify a range of angles. Children at all levels would benefit from further opportunities to apply their learning in real-life contexts.

Information handling

- Children at early level create simple bar graphs to share information. Children at first level select and use appropriate methods to gather and sort data for a given purpose. Children at second level justify the use of particular types of graph. All children would benefit from more opportunities to develop their information handling skills using digital platforms.

Attainment over time

- Staff effectively track children's progress over time in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They should now consider how to track children's progress in other curricular areas. Senior leaders collect and analyse a range of data in literacy and numeracy. They consider trends and use data to inform improvement priorities, such as the recent work on writing. The headteacher should develop a strategic overview of approaches used to raise attainment. This should include a clear strategy to measure the impact of new learning and teaching approaches and evaluate the effectiveness of universal and targeted interventions.
- Children's attainment over time decreased due to the pandemic and challenges faced on the return to school. Senior leaders and teachers appropriately prioritised raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. This has led to attainment returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children's achievements are celebrated regularly, through postcards, newsletters, and posts on digital platforms. Children in P7 create positive profiles which help them to reflect on the skills for learning, life and work which they develop in and outwith school. These include problem-solving, using their initiative and taking on responsibility. Teachers should consider how they develop and track children's skills further as they move through the school.
- Teachers' successful links with a range of community partners help children understand and contribute to their local community. Children develop their interpersonal and communication skills through a successful intergenerational project and writing for a local newspaper. A few children receive accreditation through national award schemes. This is helping them to develop important life skills, such as organisation and meeting deadlines.

Equity for all learners

- Staff and partners organised a successful wellbeing and learning event. This helped families to have a greater awareness of local partners and support available. Staff's positive links with partners is helping support improved outcomes for a few children and families. A pupil engagement team were recently appointed using PEF to offer targeted support to children and families. Staff are clear about how this intervention is being targeted to improve children's attendance and engagement at school, and to support improved wellbeing outcomes. It is too early to measure the impact of this intervention.
- The Parent Council provide a well-considered participation fund. This offers funding to ensure all children can access learning experiences and opportunities without families incurring additional financial costs.
- Senior leaders use PEF appropriately to support raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff provide effective targeted interventions which are addressing and reducing gaps in children's literacy and numeracy skills. The headteacher recognises the need to develop further measures and approaches to monitoring the progress of children with identified barriers to their learning more closely. This will help staff to ensure targeted supports are accelerating progress and improving outcomes for children affected by poverty.

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.