

Summarised inspection findings

Saline Primary School and Nursery Class

Fife Council

16 June 2020

Key contextual information

Saline Primary School is located in North West Fife, serving the rural villages of Saline, Comrie, Steelend and Blairhall. It is part of the Queen Anne High School cluster. The school roll has increased considerably recently following the building of new houses in the village of Saline. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 122 children across five composite classes. In recent years, there have been a number of staffing changes, including changes in the leadership of the school. This included a period with an acting shared headship with Inzievar Primary School. The recently appointed acting headteacher has worked at Saline since August 2017.

1.3 Leadership of change

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

- Led effectively by the acting headteacher, all staff have a very good understanding of Saline Primary School and its central role in the local community. Together with the children and staff, senior leaders have led the development of a shared vision and values for their school. This clearly articulates the place of the school in its community and in the wider world. The acting headteacher models the values very well and, together with children and staff, they create a welcoming, inclusive school. The visual depiction of the vision and values, designed by children and staff, is displayed around the school, and teachers relate to this regularly. As a result, children have a very good understanding of the shared values of Determination, Kindness, Innovation and Resilience, known as '#DKIR'. They enjoy receiving recognition at assemblies when they demonstrate these values through their actions. The acting headteacher should now ensure that all stakeholders, including all parents, share an understanding of the vision and values and what they mean. The planned review of the policy on promoting positive relationships should build on the school's good work on developing its values.
- In recent years, senior leaders have managed the pace of change well. Almost all stakeholders are very positive about the school and the changes being made. The acting headteacher provides clear strategic leadership and uses a wide range of self-evaluation activities effectively to inform improvement priorities. This includes lesson observations, discussions with focus groups of children, questionnaires, consideration of attainment data, and use of self-evaluation exercises. As a result, there is a clear rationale for the improvement priorities, linked to the vision for the school. The three current priorities of curriculum and skills development, learner participation, and assessment and moderation are well considered and appropriate. There is a clear focus on these priorities in the work of the school. The acting headteacher shares the well-constructed improvement plan through the 'Journey to Improvement' display and in a helpful parent friendly version. As planned, senior leaders should involve all stakeholders more in the creation of future improvement plans for the school.
- The acting headteacher creates a culture of collaboration, and is developing shared leadership across the school, including a strong focus on learner participation. This provides opportunities

for children to share their views, and to be involved in decision making in the school and its community. Approaches are very well considered, based on research and good practice from other schools. Professional learning and self-evaluation about readiness for learner participation has helped to raise staff awareness of the benefits of these approaches. Children take on a range of leadership roles. For example, older children organise and lead school clubs, support the running of the lunch hall, and organise and run the library. Each house group has an area of responsibility. The school captains write the school entry for the community newsletter. The acting headteacher should involve children in the evaluation of learner participation developments and planning next steps.

- All staff work effectively as a team, and are supportive of one another. Together with senior leaders, they have worked hard to make key improvements to the school in recent years. They create a welcoming, inclusive learning environment in which children can experience success. They have developed a wide range of community partners to support approaches to learner participation and to enrich children's learning experiences. For example, working with the Community Council and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust to involve children in decision making about their local community. As planned, the acting headteacher should continue to develop links with organisations which provide opportunities for children to be involved in improving their local community. Teachers should also develop more business links to support children's learning about the world of work.
- Increasingly, teachers' professional learning links appropriately to improvement priorities. A few teachers are starting to use small tests of change, for example, to improve learner participation. Teachers should continue to engage in high quality professional learning activities to develop pedagogy and approaches to assessment and moderation. The acting headteacher should continue to encourage all staff to take on leadership roles to support the pace of change.
- The school has made effective use of its Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to develop conceptual mathematics and support children's wellbeing through outdoor education and cycling initiatives. Children and parents are very positive about the opportunities this provides to support children's learning and wellbeing. The acting headteacher should monitor and track interventions and supports more systematically to identify more clearly the impact on the progress of identified children.

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

- Staff have created a purposeful and engaging learning environment. Relationships between children and staff are positive and mutually respectful. The school values link explicitly to promoting positive attitudes to learning. Children know the values and understand how these impact on them as learners, for example, being resilient when finding work challenging. Staff model the values effectively in classes in a way that helps children focus on learning. Most children are kind and supportive of each other in classes and around the school. Most demonstrate a determination to succeed in their learning.
- The house system provides good opportunities for all children to contribute effectively to the life of the school and wider community. House captains and vice captains take responsibility to lead themes related to enterprise, sustainability, charity and health and wellbeing. The captains and vice captains describe how taking on these roles is helping them to grow in confidence. They feel that the house groups involve all children successfully in learning how their actions can make a difference. Children and staff should continue to develop further the house system. All children should have opportunities to develop leadership and to engage in learning related to all four house themes over time.
- Staff use a range of teaching strategies well to engage children in their learning. All teachers use the school's 'Four Part Model' to structure an effective lesson. As a result, most children across the school know the purpose of their learning. In almost all lessons, children and teachers work together effectively to decide what successful learning looks like. In the best examples, children engage in deeper discussions about how they will learn and how they will demonstrate success. Teachers should continue to develop consistency in the application of this model.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. There is a good balance of teacher led and active learning experiences. As a result, most children focus well on tasks and interact well with each other when working together. Children would benefit from more open ended, investigative tasks where they have more opportunities to lead their learning. Highly skilled pupil support assistants work closely with teachers to provide well-targeted and effective support to individuals and groups of children. Support provided is an integral and inclusive part of the learning and teaching process. In most lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to recap learning and clarify understanding when introducing new learning. Teachers should extend their use of open-ended questions to encourage children to think more deeply about their learning.

- Teachers make effective use of digital technology to enhance children's experiences. This includes using devices to develop coding skills, create music and research information. Younger children enjoy developing skills in animation and using tablets to practise numeracy and literacy skills.
- All children benefit from regular, well-planned and structured outdoor learning experiences. Teachers use the local outdoor environment well to provide children with relevant and engaging contexts. These motivate children to be creative, imaginative and to take measured risks.
- Younger children need opportunities to build on the positive experiences of learning through play. The acting headteacher recognises the need for staff across the early level to work together to develop their understanding of play-based learning pedagogy. This should help to ensure continuity and progression in learning across the early level.
- Teachers share learning targets with parents through children's learning logs. However, children are not yet involved enough in deciding their individual targets and reviewing their progress. Children receive helpful feedback in their writing, and most engage in beneficial self and peer assessment activities during writing. The majority of children are not clear about what they need to do to improve in other areas of learning. Teachers recognise the need to continue to develop approaches to support children to reflect on progress and next steps in learning. This should help all children to know themselves better as learners.
- Senior leaders have introduced a range of diagnostic assessments over the past two years. This is supporting teachers to identify progress and next steps in a more rigorous way. Teachers are now more confident in using a range of data and assessments to identify children's progress. They are extending the range of quality evidence they use to judge progress. Teachers should now develop high quality assessment activities to support their judgements on children's application of learning in new and unfamiliar contexts. Teachers' planning should have a clearer focus on how learning is assessed.
- Teachers work well with each other in planning aspects of learning to ensure consistency and continuity. They share their expertise and interests regularly with each other. Together with strong partnership working in the community, this is having a positive impact on the breadth of children's experiences. Planning is becoming more flexible due to the combining of experiences and outcomes from different curricular areas. Teachers have identified that this approach is helping children to have more personalisation and choice within interdisciplinary learning. When planning learning, teachers should continue to ensure the right balance of support and challenge for different groups of children. This should result in learning experiences that meet the needs of all children.
- Teachers meet regularly with the acting headteacher to discuss their planning and track children's progress. The needs of all learners are placed at the centre of these discussions. They use information from these meetings effectively to plan targeted interventions for children who require additional support. Teachers now need to track more rigorously progress across all areas of the curriculum and children's achievements. They should ensure more regular coverage of all organisers in literacy and numeracy over the course of the school year.
- Teachers take part in regular moderation activities within the school, and participate in cluster moderation activities. Moderation has largely focused on standards in writing. As planned, teachers should widen their moderation activities by continuing to work with other schools across all curricular areas. This should develop further their understanding of national standards and continue to improve their use of the moderation cycle.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use local authority progression guides to plan learning in numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing. They track experiences and outcomes across other areas of the curriculum. As planned, teachers should develop progression pathways to ensure breadth and balance across all curricular areas. These should align to the National Benchmarks and build on the strong links with individuals and organisations in the local community.
- Children take part in a range of activities that help them to develop skills for learning, life and work. This includes an increasing focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities. Through their house groups, children learn about enterprise, sustainability, charity and wellbeing. Working together and building on strong community links, senior leaders and teachers should develop a structured approach to developing children's skills. This should link to the 'Career Education Standard 3-18' and result in progression in skills development relating to the world of work.
- Outdoor learning is becoming a prominent feature of the school's curriculum. The school's outdoor learning progression pathway is based on accredited local and national outdoor learning programmes. This provides a strong framework for the progression of a range of skills for learning and life.
- Children are developing their digital skills well through a range of experiences. A digital literacy progression plan, linked to the National Benchmarks, ensures that as they move through the school, children make good progress.
- The school is working towards meeting national guidance for the teaching of modern languages. Teachers should develop a pathway that provides progression in learning across all stages.
- Teachers provide two hours of physical education, which they plan in line with the school's progression guide for health and wellbeing.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- There are strong links between the school and the Parent Council. The Parent Council is very supportive of the school and meetings are increasingly well attended. The acting headteacher involves the Parent Council in discussions about improvement planning. The Parent Council provides financial support for whole school excursions and has supported the development of the school library. Parental engagement at school events is very strong. Termly newsletters provide information for parents about their child's learning, as well as diary dates and information about Parent Council meetings. The recently introduced shared learning on Friday mornings provides opportunities for parents to learn more about how and what their child is learning in the classroom. As planned, teachers should continue to develop approaches to parental engagement and family learning. For example, developing more intergenerational activities linked with the Community Council action plan, and family outdoor learning activities.

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

good

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 wellbeing of children and their families is central to the work of Saline Primary School. All teachers and support staff know their children and families well, and understand that wellbeing underpins learners' ability to achieve success. Positive relationships are evident throughout the school, creating a caring environment which supports most children to engage well in their learning.
- The focus on creating a welcoming, inclusive environment is leading to most children feeling that the school is helping them to understand and respect others. In all classes, teachers and children create class charters, based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is supporting children to become more aware of their rights. Most children feel that staff treat them with respect and that they have someone to speak to if they are upset. The majority of children feel safe in school. Children are very polite towards visitors. Teachers are aware that further work is now needed to support a few children to feel respected by their peers, particularly in the playground. A few children need support to manage conflict better. As planned, staff should continue to develop nurturing approaches, and review the policy on promoting positive relationships, linked to the school values.
- Most children are aware of the wellbeing indicators and feel that the school is teaching them about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Older children can talk about making decisions in relation to the risks of smoking and alcohol, and of managing peer pressure. Children across the school are able to talk about making healthy food choices. They enjoy learning to cook during outdoor learning. Across the school, children enjoy regular physical education and they understand the importance of regular exercise. Most say they have good opportunities to be active, including through a range of clubs. The acting headteacher should work with stakeholders to develop the playground so that children have more variety of activities, including quiet spaces. Children are developing their ability to keep themselves safe through regular cycling and outdoor activities, and learning about online safety. Staff now need to support children to understand the relevance of the wellbeing indicators.
- Children are developing their emotional wellbeing through a range of well-considered approaches. They are learning to talk about their feelings, and are developing ways to manage difficult emotions, including recognising the physical responses in the body. Older children are able to speak confidently about strategies to support their mental health. A few are trained to support others with their feelings. Children make effective use of the school's quiet sensory room to support them to re-engage in learning or to repair relationships with others. As planned, teachers should continue to develop this valuable work in helping children to talk about their feelings.
- Children are developing a sense of responsibility in a range of ways. In all classes, children take on various roles and responsibilities. Within house groups, they lead on aspects of school

and community life. For example, children are helping to develop a community orchard and a garden area in the village. This is developing children's understanding of citizenship, and of how they can contribute to society. It also develops their confidence, sense of self-worth and ownership of the school and local community. Children at all stages of the school should continue to develop as responsible citizens and effective contributors through taking on positions of responsibility. They need further support to understand how their opinions are being taken into account and leading to changes in their school and its community.

- The acting headteacher and support for learning teacher have a good understanding of statutory duties. There is a high focus on inclusion and children who have barriers to their learning are well supported to be in the classroom with their peers. This includes a few children who are on shared placements with other schools, who are included well at Saline. The acting headteacher monitors closely all care experienced children and those who require additional support for their learning to ensure they are making good progress. Attendance is very good and commendably, there have been no exclusions for almost three years. School food provision complies with the required nutritional requirements and duties of The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007.
- Effective systems are in place to identify children who require additional support, and staff are proactive at identifying any concerns. This includes good transfer of key information during transition from nursery which helps children to settle into school. Pupil support assistants work closely with teachers to provide sensitive support for children. Visual timetables help children to manage transitions throughout the day. The acting headteacher and support for learning teacher ensure that appropriate plans are in place. The views of children are considered at review meetings. Wording of the additional support needs (ASN) of children in ASN pupil profiles, should be more specific to help teachers' planning. In particular, children with social and emotional barriers to their learning need better planned support to meet their needs.
- Protected characteristics are depicted in the visual display of the school's aims. This helps children to be aware of diversity across the world. Children are also developing their understanding of different religions. A few children are learning sign language to help them to communicate with others. Children are raising their awareness of those who face adverse life experiences, including poverty, by collecting donations for a local foodbank. Teachers should support children to learn about wider equality and diversity issues in 21st Century Scotland.

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

- Across all levels, most children achieve expected attainment in literacy and numeracy. Most children experiencing barriers to their learning are making good progress towards their learning targets.

Literacy and English

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

Listening and talking

- Children's attainment in listening and talking is good. Across all levels, most children listen and respond to others well and show respect for the views of others. Almost all listen to their teachers very attentively. They are articulate and share ideas well during class discussions, appropriate to their stage. Across all levels, all children need to develop confidence in applying their skills in a wider range of situations including beyond the classroom. This should include independently debating issues and presenting their own choice of talk.

Reading

- Most children across the school are enthusiastic about reading and read a variety of texts for enjoyment. They enjoy borrowing books from the library. Most children nearing the completion of first level read with fluency and expression. They discuss their preferences for authors and texts confidently. As they move through first and second levels, children discuss with increasing complexity aspects of the writer's use of language, structure and setting. They can identify main ideas in texts with supporting detail.

Writing

- Children at early level enjoy using their knowledge of sounds to form words and simple sentences. By the end of first level, most children structure sentences accurately and spell common words correctly. Most children at first level create texts in a range of formats appropriate to the audience. They use an increasing range of vocabulary, including similes to engage the reader effectively. At second level, most children use notes to develop their thinking before creating a range of extended texts. Most children use headings and paragraphs well to separate ideas. Whilst the majority of children write in a clear and legible way, a focus on handwriting skills would improve the presentation of their work.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school, children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. The focus on professional development in numeracy has had a positive impact on children's progress in number and number processes. However, children need to develop a wider range of skills across all numeracy and mathematics organisers. Across the school, children need to apply their numeracy and mathematics skills across the curriculum more frequently.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children count, create sequences and describe order to 20. They add and subtract accurately within 10. As they move through first level, most children display their skills in number processes with confidence. At first level, children can describe the construction of numbers beyond 10,000. This includes their understanding of zero as a placeholder. They add and subtract three digit numbers accurately. By the end of second level, most children are confident in determining an approach to solving word problems. They carry out calculations accurately using all four operations. Across second level, most children describe well aspects of financial management, for example, the benefits and risks of using bankcards. Across the school, children's progress in acquiring skills in fractions, decimals and percentages, and measurement need to be developed more fully.

Shape, position and movement

- Across early and into first level, most children accurately name, describe and sort common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They can identify examples of these shapes in the environment. At first level, most children identify right angles correctly in the environment. Children at second level use basic mathematical language to describe an increased range of angles. Across first and second levels, children need to develop more fully their skills across the full range of concepts in shape, position and movement.

Information gathering

- At early level, most children interpret simple pictorial graphs. They use tally marks accurately to collect information and, supported by the teacher, present this on carefully drawn bar graphs. As they move through first and second levels, children collect, display and interpret data by engaging in a few relevant contexts. Children at first and second level need to consolidate their information handling skills and to apply these across the curriculum. This should include developing skills in using digital technology to organise and display data.

Attainment over time

- Over the last three years, trends demonstrate that most children are achieving appropriate levels and that attainment is improving. Individual children and groups of children who face additional challenges are also making good progress.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children are developing the skills encapsulated in the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence through good experiences for personal achievement. This includes developing their citizenship skills well through strong links with the local community. Children are learning enterprise skills by designing and selling cards to raise money for charity, or taking part in the school's 'One Pound Challenge'. Children who take part in the 'Goblin Car Initiative' are developing their skills in design and engineering. Children are learning about sustainability through their work on leading the provision of a recycling centre in school. They are developing creativity skills through designing community mosaics, and pictures for inclusion in Saline and District Heritage Society leaflets. Overall, children need support to understand the skills they are developing as a result of these experiences, and how they relate to the world of work.

Equity for all learners

- All staff at Saline have a very good understanding of the individual circumstances of each child. They are very aware of the cost of the school day and the impact of rural poverty at the school. They work closely with families and partners to ensure that no child misses out. Fundraising by the Parent Council and donations from the local church ensure that all children are able to take part in any planned activities which incur a cost. As a result, children are improving their wellbeing through being active and outdoors, and their resilience is improving.

School Empowerment

■ Learner participation

- The acting headteacher has a very strong understanding of learner participation and a clear strategic vision about how it can improve the school ethos and children's confidence. Positive relationships across the school and values based approaches are supporting learner participation well. Teachers should support children to understand how learner participation relates to their rights in the UNCRC.
- Professional learning and self-evaluation activities have helped staff to understand learner participation better, and the benefits it can bring. This includes use of a mapping tool to look at the 'four arenas of learner participation'. A working group is leading this work with a focus on five themes: our relationships, our learning and teaching, our school and community, our health and wellbeing, and our achievements and successes. The group has made a very positive start to this work. For example, the focus on the 'four part model' in lessons is supporting children to be able to talk about what they are learning in class. Children are also learning how to give feedback to their peers. Teachers should continue to help all children to understand their next steps in learning better.
- Opportunities to be involved in decision making at the school are improving and staff should continue to develop this, particularly at the early stages. As approaches continue to develop, the acting headteacher should involve children more in improvement planning at the school.
- Children are also involved in a good range of activities in the wider community, through the school's very effective links with partners. At present, community activities are adult led. Teachers should monitor and track children's achievements, including out of school activities and wider community involvement, more closely.

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.