

Summarised inspection findings

Murroes Primary School

Angus Council

30 April 2019

Key contextual information

Murroes Primary School is situated in the parish of Murroes and serves the two main areas of West Hall Terrace and Ballumbie Castle Estate. The building comprises two wings built in the late 1800s and a new connecting extension built in 2000. The classrooms and gym hall accommodate five classes (P1/2, P3/4, P4/5, P6 and P7) The school has a morning and afternoon nursery with ten places in each session. The current role is 102 P1 to P7 and 17 nursery children.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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 in all classes are very eager to learn. They are highly motivated by their learning experiences and are keen to discuss planned activities to develop their skills. They can readily share their learning with others and are able to discuss their next steps and targets. They respond well to the clear routines which teachers put in place which helps them to become more independent.
- There are extremely positive relationships between and amongst children, teachers and other staff in the school. These are evident in all classes and help to ensure that lessons can be undertaken without any time being wasted.
- Children are happy, independent learners, equally comfortable working as a whole class, a small group, as a pair or on their own. They interact well during activities and present as extremely confident and responsible. They are calm, engaged and well-motivated. They can concentrate well, even when there are many distractions. Teachers give children opportunities to lead learning by working with them to explain their learning to parents. There is scope to extend these leadership opportunities further.
- Children actively contribute to the school in a number of ways, including being participants in groups such as the 'Visible Learning Council', They also mentor and buddy younger children and lead discussions about their learning with parents and teachers. They generally agree that their views are listened to and have also done a survey on what could be done to help improve the school.
- Teachers and support staff give very clear instructions and have high expectations of children during lessons. These expectations are supported by the 'Murroes Mighties' set of characters developed to epitomise different qualities and aspects of learning in the school including 'Tough Tom', 'Cassie Communicator', 'Independent Imogen' and 'Curious Chloe'. These characters are used by staff with children from nursery the whole way through the school to Primary seven. Some teachers also use background music as a way to enable children to remain calm and focused on their learning.

- Teachers design extremely engaging and interesting lessons for their classes, sharing and discussing with children how to be successful. They skilfully design learning experiences which are differentiated to meet the needs in their classes and which also take into account children who are at different stages. Most teachers' lessons are appropriately challenging and proceed at a sufficiently brisk pace. Teachers, working closely with support staff, coordinate the learning experiences for different groups of children and individuals particularly effectively. Children experience a balance of teacher supported and independent learning experiences.
- Teachers and support staff use questioning very skilfully to encourage children to think more deeply about their learning, demonstrate what they have learned and to explore a wider range of options.
- There is effective use of information technology in classrooms across the school. Children use it to aid their learning, for example in mathematics and numeracy lessons to help their understanding of the concept of division, or to research topics they are studying.
- Teachers use a variety of assessment techniques to allow children to demonstrate their learning and achievements in a range of contexts. For example, they use pre teaching and post teaching assessments so that children can see how much they have learned and where they have improved their skills and performance.
- There are clear examples of formative assessment in children's jotters and workbooks. Teachers use assessment criteria to comment on children's work and make suggestions as to how they can improve it. Children also assess each other's work using these criteria, and this approach is used from P1 onwards. Children are very skilled in assessing their own work in a similar way. Overall, children are extremely capable and very experienced in many aspects of self-evaluation.
- Teachers collect a range of reliable evidence for assessment and reporting purposes. This includes observation, jotter work, pre teaching and post teaching assessments, and discussions with children. Assessment of children's learning is also used to inform which group children should join for particular activities. In some cases this includes children joining learners in a different class when they are studying a particular subject.
- Moderation of assessment standards happens on a regular informal basis across the school. Planned moderation events also take place with other schools who are part of the same cluster.
- Teachers plan particularly carefully for work in literacy and English, and numeracy and mathematics. They also plan for work which is undertaken as part of the Friday Club, which is generally interdisciplinary learning. This planning is carried out using the relevant experiences and outcomes. There are clear records of experiences covered by children in composite classes.
- Teachers track children's attainment across a number of different areas. They track 'I can' statements which are linked to the benchmarks for literacy and numeracy. These are used to set targets for children and to show when they have been achieved. The criterion-referenced outcomes of pre teaching and post teaching tests are also recorded. Children's performance linked to different themes of literacy and numeracy is also tracked, along with their success in using their skills out of context. Children's best work is recorded in their folio, and this is regularly shared with parents so that they can see the progress which is being made, discuss it with their child and share their thoughts with the school. This ensures that staff, parents and children have clear information about progress across the curriculum, particularly in literacy

and numeracy. Staff should ensure that planning and tracking now extends across the whole of the curriculum.

- Teachers have several formal meetings with the headteacher each session to discuss the progress of individual children in their class. Teachers, support staff and the headteacher have a very good knowledge and understanding of all children and the socio-economic context of the school.

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

very 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 very good. The school data shows that almost all children at early level are achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. At first level and second level, most children are achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels. Through inspection activities, we agree that the data provided by the school is accurate.
- Teachers track children's progress well in literacy and numeracy to ensure that they have maximum opportunity to improve their attainment. The use of 'pupil folios' gives children clear guidance of what they have achieved and what they need to work on next. Where there are identified barriers to learning, the headteacher and staff take appropriate and prompt action. As identified, teachers now need to ensure that tracking of children's progress provides a clear overview across all areas of the curriculum.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, across the school, children are making very good progress in literacy. The school's attainment data correctly identifies that most children are making very good progress towards achieving first level. Most older children are on track to achieve the second level by the end of P7 or before.

Listening and talking

- At the early level, children are becoming skilled at listening to each other and being able to share their views. Children who have achieved first level are very keen to discuss their thoughts about their learning with each other and with adults, and can express themselves clearly. Occasionally they can become so enthusiastic that they talk over each other. At second level, children express themselves very clearly, listen carefully to each other and share ideas fluently with others.

Reading

- At early level, children are developing their reading skills appropriately and can sound out words confidently. At first level, children are becoming more fluent in reading and will attempt unfamiliar words, sounding them out if necessary. They are able to read with a degree of expression. They understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction and are beginning to understand about different writing genres. They can convey the main meaning behind a text and can discuss plot and characters. At second level, children are extremely fluent readers, reading with expression and understanding. They can discuss their favourite authors and books at length. They have a very good understanding of plot, form, structure and character in novels and can discuss these in some depth.

Writing

- Attainment in writing is very good. Most children at early level can write independently in sentences, using basic punctuation. They can write about personal experiences and can describe in writing what they see in a picture. They can also identify and write words which rhyme with each other. At first level, children are able to write at length in a number of different styles including letters and newspaper articles. They can use punctuation appropriately and can understand and use parts of speech, such as synonyms and similes. They are able to understand and use inverted commas to signify direct speech and they can summarise longer pieces of writing and re-tell stories in their own words. Children at second level are able to structure extended writing appropriately using paragraphs. They can parse sentences, edit their work for punctuation and demonstrate understanding of parts of speech such as homophones and alliteration. They can produce pieces of personal writing, construct reviews in an appropriate format and write dialogue in response to a literary stimulus. They are very skilled at assessing their own work and that of others.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is very good. Children are making very good progress from their previous levels of attainment. A few children at second level are exceeding the expected levels.

Number Money Measurement

- At early level, almost all children identify the number before and after and missing numbers in a sequence within 20. They count on and back in ones to confidently add and subtract within ten and identify odd and even numbers. Almost all children link daily routines and personal events to time sequences and use appropriate language to describe halves.
- At first level, most children round whole number to the nearest ten and 100 and use this to estimate and check the reasonableness of a solution. They identify the value of each digit in a whole number with three digits. Most children use a number of strategies to support their mental calculations. There is scope for children to increase the range of strategies they understand to ensure that they can select the most appropriate. Most children use their knowledge of multiplication and division facts to find a half and a quarter of a whole number. They record units of measurement relating to capacity to the nearest standard unit.
- At second level, most children carry out money calculations well involving the four operations. They partition a wide range of whole numbers and decimal fractions to three decimal places. Most children apply the correct order of operations when solving multi step problems. They would benefit from increased opportunities to develop and discuss a range of strategies to support mental calculations. Most children discuss equivalent forms of common fractions, decimals and percentages and use this knowledge to calculate simple fractions and percentages of a quantity. They calculate durations of activities and events including situations bridging across several hours and parts of hours. Across the school, children should continue to benefit from the increased opportunities to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Shape position and movement

- At early level, almost all children recognise and describe features of common 2D shapes. They use appropriately the language of position and direction. At first level, most children know that a right angle is 90 degrees and identify areas in the classroom using the compass points. At second level, most children use appropriate language to describe the properties of a range of 2D shapes and 3D objects. They apply this knowledge to demonstrate an understanding of 3D objects and their nets.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children collect and organise objects for a specific purpose and use their knowledge of different properties well to match and sort items. At first level, most children answer questions to extract key information from various data sources. They can use the most appropriate way to gather and sort data for a given purpose. At second level, most children organise and display data accurately choosing the most appropriate method. There is scope to increase the use of digital technologies in this area.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher appropriately tracks children's progress over time. Attainment of cohorts of learners in literacy and numeracy shows an improving trend. Regular tracking meetings have a focus on individual children's progress. Teachers use a range of evidence including teachers' professional judgements, pre and post teaching assessments and standardised assessments to inform children's next steps in learning. Teachers share these targets with parents to ensure they are fully informed and can support their child to achieve their next steps. The headteacher and teachers meet regularly to plan appropriate interventions to support children where necessary. Children who have additional support needs have their progress reviewed regularly.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff provide a range of opportunities within the school for children to develop the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. This includes a residential experience for P7 children with other rural schools in the cluster; various cluster events and a range of opportunities to become involved in extracurricular activities. Teachers plan collaboratively a range of experiences focusing on relevant groups of experiences and outcomes. The 'Friday Club' gives relevance to learning across key areas and allows children to display talents across different curriculum subjects. Staff currently recognise children's wider achievements and interests. There is a need to ensure children are aware of the skills they are developing from wider achievement experiences. This should include achievements both within and out with school and link closely to children's folios in order to make the links explicit.
- Most children engage in a variety of opportunities to voice their opinions relating to change and improvement in the school. The headteacher works with children in P7 to create their own self-evaluation tool, focuses on agreeing key characteristics of an excellent school. Children use the evidence gathered to identify areas for improvement which suggested that teachers implement an active start to classes across the school to support children's readiness to learn. Children in this group spoke confidently about their work and the changes they are making as a result.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a clear understanding of the context of the school and know the needs of children and their families well. The headteacher identifies the need to ensure children have a wealth of experiences to support their learning for life and work. She has used her pupil equity funding to develop a classroom kitchen. This ensures that every child has the opportunity to learn about cooking and healthy eating.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The use of pupil folios to support children's understanding of progression in their learning and increasing engagement of parents. Teacher work closely with children to identify current achievements across all aspects of literacy and numeracy and to identify clear next steps for children. Children gather evidence to support their progress and continue to have dialogue with teachers to ensure they remain on track. Teachers review targets with children formally three times during the school session. Children formally share their targets with parents through three-way consultations twice a year.

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.