

Summarised inspection findings

Ardrishaig Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

13 February 2018

Key contextual information

Ardrishaig Primary School and Early Learning Centre (ELC) serves the village of Ardrishaig and surrounding rural areas. A number of children attend the school as a result of a placing request. At the time of the inspection, there were 93 children in the school arranged over five classes. The nursery class accommodates 20 children at any one time. It is a morning only nursery. At the time of the inspection 14 children were attending. One child has a split placement with another local nursery.

The school and ELC had experienced some transition of staffing over the last few years. Staffing is now becoming more stable.

1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

very good

This indicator defines rigorous self-evaluation as a responsibility of all stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasizes the need for strong leadership and robust analysis of a range of intelligence and data as essential features of effective continuous self-improvement. A key factor in this indicator is demonstrating the impact of self-evaluation in relation to outcomes for all learners. Their active participation in self-evaluation is therefore essential. The themes are:

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
- Ensuring impact on learners' successes and achievements

- The headteacher is committed to ensuring that the school takes account of the views of all stakeholders as it seeks to continue to improve its work. Parents, community members and partners are well involved in the school's self-evaluation processes. Their views on the school's work and areas for further improvement are sought continuously through formal and informal ways including discussions and surveys. All stakeholders were recently involved in consultation about, and the development of, the school's new vision, values and aims statement.
- The school works well with partners to identify areas for development and improvement. There are positive links with Scottish Canals and with the local horticultural society. The current involvement with The Year of the Young Person means that children are having their voices heard directly and are able to influence local developments which will benefit them.
- Children have meaningful opportunities to share their views and they have genuine ownership of improvements which have taken place within the school. The Pupil Council has taken an active lead on canvassing children's and parents' views to identify areas for improvement. After seeking views, the Pupil Council identified that children and parents wished to improve the school's outdoor areas. The Pupil Council took a lead in designing a reading shed and approaching the Parent Council for funding to purchase this. The shed is now located in the school playground and children enjoy using it for a variety of reading activities. The Pupil Council regularly links with the Parent Council to make presentations

about their ideas for the school and to seek the support of the Parent Council in their endeavours.

- School staff work together and collaborate on school developments. For example, teachers recently worked together to evaluate their work and identify aspects of the curriculum which they felt they needed to improve. These aspects, which include the development of children's digital technology skills from nursery to P7, and progression pathways in expressive arts, specifically music, are being taken forward this school session.
- The school uses a wide range of appropriate approaches to gather information and data about the quality of classroom experiences and children's progress. These approaches include classroom observations, monitoring children's work and regular assessments of children's progress, including the use of standardised assessments. The regular tracking conversations between teachers and the headteacher have a clear focus on individual children and how they can be supported to achieve their next steps in learning. The children's learning logs provide a very useful way of capturing learning across the curriculum and communicating this to parents and children.
- Teachers have worked effectively with each other and with colleagues and across the authority to moderate standards in writing to continue to develop a shared understanding of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. They are using this deeper understanding to develop holistic approaches to assessing children's progress in literacy, numeracy and mathematics. Staff should continue to use national benchmarks to improve further their understanding of standards that children are expected to achieve.
- Teachers' Career-long Professional Learning (CLPL) is well planned and takes full account of Professional Review and Development arrangements linked to the GTCS Professional Standards and to the school improvement plan. The headteacher's personal engagement in Practitioner Enquiry through master's level learning has led to developments in the school and a focus on areas of the curriculum to develop.
- Children's experiences and their progress in learning have been improved by the school's collaborative approaches to self-evaluation and improvement. The school's involvement in the local authority's early acquisition of literacy pilot is helping children to make progress in literacy. Approaches to improving reading, using digital technology, across the school has engaged children's interest and is improving their reading skills. The school has introduced helpful programmes across all classes to help children develop resilience. These programmes are helping children to learn strategies about managing their emotions.

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.

3.2 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

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Attainment data provided by the school is based on teachers' professional judgements. This is supported by standardised assessments, moderation and on-going professional dialogue with promoted staff. From the data provided for sessions 2016 and 2017, overall most children achieved expected levels in literacy and numeracy across the school. The school's data shows variability across CfE attainment levels between end of session 2016 and 2017. The use of the benchmarks for literacy and numeracy will help support robust teacher judgements. The school should consider increasing the rigour and focus given to moderation activities to ensure a shared understanding of CfE levels and the timing of professional dialogue when planning for learning. The headteacher has accurately identified the need to develop an overview of children's progress on a tracking system. This will support dialogue about holistic assessment. Monitoring of how well children are building on prior learning in numeracy and mathematics will help ensure pace through the CfE levels is sufficiently brisk and avoid gaps in learning. The school is working towards raising attainment through its various strategies and initiatives. It is important to establish there is no pattern of underachievement in any one group of pupils and to minimise the school's identified attainment gap.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Children are making good progress from their previous levels of attainment. Staff identified the need to improve writing across the school in order to raise children's attainment further. Staff should continue to develop their understanding of national benchmarks to help children better understand how to improve their learning.

Listening and Talking

- At all stages, children are making very good progress in developing and applying skills in listening and talking across their learning. At the early level, children listen well to their teacher, follow instructions, and are making good progress in learning the skills of listening and talking together in class and in groups. At the first level, children are keen to contribute their ideas and listen to each other. A number of children working at the first level recently showed their communication skills when they successfully compered their fashion show event. Children in a sample group working within second level listened very well to each other, shared their ideas and built on each other's contributions.

Reading

- At all stages, children enjoy reading and are making good progress. At the early level, children are enthusiastic about learning letter sounds and using their phonic skills to read

and build words. They benefit from receiving regular individual attention from their teacher. Children at first and second levels are particularly motivated by the school's reading programme which uses digital tools to engage children and help them make progress. They enjoy being challenged to read more difficult books and develop their skills. Children working at second level make good use of the library as a resource for research in their learning across the curriculum. They have an enthusiasm for reading which staff should continue to develop and encourage.

Writing

- Overall, children's attainment in writing is good. They are given regular opportunities at all stages and are developing skills in writing for a variety of purposes. At early level, children are making steady progress in learning to form letters and words and have many opportunities to develop writing skills across their learning. At first level, they are learning how to make their writing more interesting. At second level, children have produced a range of texts for different purposes. Most children at second level increasingly use appropriate punctuation and spelling and produce writing linked to their learning in different curricular areas. The presentation of written work across the school is variable.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- The emphasis on numeracy skills, problem solving and mental agility is developing very well and is a major strength across the school. Overall, children are making good progress.

Number, money and measurement

- Almost all children working at the early level are confident in handling coins to the value of 10 pence. They use coins confidently to pay for items in real life contexts. A few can accurately use coins for sums up to 20 pence. Most children working at first level make effective use of resources to support subtraction calculations of two digit numbers. They are developing a good range of strategies to help work out a variety of number challenges. Most children working at first level are making good progress in accurately calculating numbers. They are especially skilled in mental agility and their explanations when using problem solving strategies. They apply skills in addition and subtraction when using digital technology to challenge their learning. They are confident about units of measure and estimate lengths using centimetres with growing accuracy. They know how to count squares to work out the area of shapes on squared paper. They are confident in telling the time on an analogue clock and quarter to and quarter past hours. They are developing an understanding of mathematical language when measuring lengths and weights. Most children working at second level are confident in selecting strategies to solve challenging number problems. They use formal methods well to accurately set out and calculate addition and subtraction of up to five digit numbers. Most are confident about estimating and checking. They are confident in making calculations and handling money. They apply their learning well in enterprise and global citizenship contexts. They know how to measure areas in square centimetres. The school should consider how it can build on children's skills to apply their learning more regularly in real life contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children working at the early level match 3D objects in their environment. Most children working at first level are confident in naming 2D shapes. By second level, children describe the properties of 3D objects and draw their nets.

Information handling

- Almost all children at the early level are developing a clear understanding of ways they can use their reading for information skills to access active learning in numeracy and mathematics. Most children working at first level arrange information in tables and read for information when presented with challenges. They are not yet sufficiently skilled in drawing and interpreting bar or line graphs or charts. Those working at second level talk about graphs they have created in the past but do not use these skills regularly enough. They should use digital technology skills more often to create a variety of graphs.

Attainment over time in literacy and numeracy

- In literacy and numeracy children are making good progress overall. The positive start made at the early level and first level should be sustained to the end of second level for more children.
- The school systematically tracks individual children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff have gathered evidence over recent sessions from a range of assessments. They analyse and use this information to identify learners who are attaining well and those who are not attaining expected levels. The school has interventions in place to support these children.
- Attainment in numeracy is developing well. Staff have identified the numeracy progression pathways, holistic assessment and moderation as key to this success. In literacy, the school is developing approaches to the learning, teaching and assessment of literacy to support the delivery of high quality experiences for all children.
- Regular tracking meetings between teachers and the headteacher have an increasing focus on children's progress. Teachers engage in moderation of their professional judgements within the school and with cluster schools. They should continue to build on this experience and ensure a sustained focus on standards and consistency in expectations across the school.

Achievement

- Children speak enthusiastically about the range of opportunities they participate in to help them achieve at school. They are developing leadership skills through participation in school committees, including the pupil council and eco committee. They lead activities related to organising the recent fund raising craft fair and support one another as reading buddies. This is leading to children becoming aware of their responsibilities as global citizens. Children engage in a variety of clubs and activities, including juggling, and they participate in a range of sporting events in partnership with Active Schools. A few pupils received awards recently in the local authority numeracy challenge. The P3/4 class was overall winners of the Argyll and Bute numeracy competition. Children also contribute well to the wider life of their school, the local community and beyond. Their work with Eco Schools Scotland contributes significantly to their learning resulting in them leading and taking on additional responsibilities around the school grounds.

Equity

- This is a small rural school where 6.5% of P4-P7 pupils are registered for free school meals. The allocation of pupil equity funding (PEF) is below the national average and local authority average. Almost all children in attendance are from homes in deciles 5, 6 and 7. The headteacher is well informed about the Scottish Attainment Challenge and seeks ways to ensure equality of outcomes for all children.

- The headteacher understands the demographics of the school population and has worked closely with staff to identify the priority focus for the use of PEF and to raise attainment. The promising start to the emphasis placed on health and wellbeing is having an impact on how well children know themselves as learners and developing resilience. Staff should consider the methodology they will use in order to evaluate the impact of this initiative in ensuring there is no pattern to underachievement across the school. Staff should consider how they will further develop their overview of children’s progress to include participation and engagement.

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.

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