

Summarised inspection findings

Fisherton Primary School and Early Years Centre

South Ayrshire Council

11 June 2019

Key contextual information

Fisherton Primary School serves the coastal villages of Fisherton and Dunure, and the surrounding rural area to the south of Ayr. At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 23. Children are taught in two multi-stage composite classes. The headteacher took up post two months prior to the inspection. She is also the new, shared headteacher of Maidens Primary School. The school's principal teacher was appointed in August 2018. This follows a period of significant change in the leadership and staffing of the school in recent years.

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

- Fisherton Primary School is a small, welcoming school with family feel. The school plays a central role in local community. The headteacher and staff are very knowledgeable about the rural context of the area that the school serves and the opportunities and challenges that this can bring for families. The very positive and caring approach taken by all staff ensures an inclusive ethos for all children. The school's vision, aims and values have been in place for a number of years. The values are explored and reinforced by staff and children in classes. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had begun a process to review and refresh the vision, values and aims for the school, in collaboration with staff, parents, children and the wide range of partners. This will help to ensure that the new set of values are relevant and meaningful to the current school community.
- The dynamic and enthusiastic headteacher has had a significant and positive impact in a very short space of time. She is highly regarded by the whole school community. She places high priority on supporting and nurturing all children. She actively promotes an ethos of high standards and ambition for children, staff, parents and partners. In her two months in post, she has successfully built on the existing strong culture of teamwork. She has accurately identified the strengths of the school and key priorities for further improvement. The headteacher is very well supported by the principal teacher, who assists in managing the day-to-day life of the school in an energetic and purposeful way. Together, they motivate and support staff to take forward and lead developments, and to engage together in self-evaluation and high-quality professional learning.
- All staff contribute willingly to school improvement. Teachers and support staff each have responsibility for leading aspects of the curriculum and of school life. Teachers appreciate opportunities to collaborate and share practice with colleagues in other local schools. The headteacher has a clear vision to make the most of the new partnership between Fisherton and Maidens primary schools. Plans are in place for teachers, staff and children across both schools to collaborate and share learning, in order to capitalise on the skills and talents in both settings. Staff appreciate the many and relevant opportunities to engage in training and professional learning, with a few staff undertaking additional leadership training.

- The headteacher has made improvements to the way that staff use their collective knowledge of children, alongside the range of available data they have, to pinpoint priorities for future improvement. The priorities within the current improvement plan focus appropriately on continuing to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy and in introducing new approaches to developing children's thinking skills. Staff have also identified the need to focus on developing children's resilience. The headteacher and staff ensure that all available resources are used purposefully and to the very best effect for children. As a result, the school can demonstrate success in how approaches to teaching numeracy and mathematics have improved. In addition, older children use their thinking skills very well across their learning. Staff have themselves identified the need to develop further the approaches to teaching literacy and to develop all other curricular areas in a systematic way.
- Since taking up post, the headteacher has introduced a new, rigorous approach to tracking children's attainment and achievement. As a result, staff are increasingly able to make accurate judgements about the standards of children's learning and about the overall quality of provision and outcomes for learners. Teachers use How Good is Our School? (4th edition) to reflect on their work. The headteacher carries out a range of activities, including observations of classroom practice and sampling children's work, to monitor the quality of children's experiences. This includes using all available data about each child's progress to inform where intervention is required in order to raise attainment. As the school moves forward, staff should continue to develop ways to monitor and track children's progress across the wider curriculum.
- Teachers have regular, planned opportunities to identify and take forward improvements. All children have regular opportunities to make decisions about and influence aspects of their school experiences, for example through the pupil council and various committees. There is scope to involve children more in evaluative activities, such as reviewing learning experiences and new teaching approaches. As planned, the school to continue to explore creative ways to ensure all staff, parents and partners can contribute to the agenda for change.

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 of all ages enjoy coming to school and are very willing participants in their learning. They are often motivated by the tasks and activities offered to them, and this is demonstrated in their positive attitudes to learning. They appreciate the many opportunities they have to make choices in their learning. At all stages of the school, children demonstrate great independence and responsibility as they quickly organise their own resources for completing tasks and activities. Older children often act as role models to, and share their learning with younger ones. Increasingly, children are becoming aware of their strengths as learners, as they help to negotiate and review personal targets. In recent years, the school has experimented with different formats for children to document their own learning journeys. As planned, the school should continue to develop the best way for children across the school to take responsibility for identifying their own strengths and next steps in learning.
- Children have regular opportunities to use digital technology. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively as a teaching tool to enhance learning and teaching. Laptops and tablets are used well by children for varied learning activities, accessing a wide range of software. Through participation in class and whole-school 'masterclass' activities, children have worthwhile opportunities to apply and extend their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, as they contribute to the life of the school and the wider community.
- Outdoor learning is an important feature of children's experiences. Staff make good use of the school grounds, local community and nearby beach to provide children with exciting contexts to learn across the curriculum. Very well planned and relevant activities outdoors result in all children being motivated and fully engaged in their learning. They demonstrate creativity and imagination as they develop their own playground games and create special areas in their garden.
- Staff share the purpose of lessons well, and overall, children are clear about how they can achieve success. Across the school, children can describe the tasks they are engaged in, and for some aspects, the skills they are developing. Overall, learning tasks are carefully differentiated to ensure all children are challenged and supported in their learning. Staff should continue to share best practice in learning and teaching to further develop children's thinking skills; and to allow sufficient time for depth in learning, for example in developing children's writing skills.

- The quality of teaching observed across the school during the inspection was very good overall. Staff make very effective use of questioning to encourage children to think and to explain their learning. This is particularly evident in numeracy lessons where children participate enthusiastically in 'number talks', sharing and comparing their strategies for solving mathematical problems. At P6 and P7, children engage in rich, philosophical discussions with one another, including on topical and complex social issues. Through such challenging and relevant activities, children are developing high-order thinking skills, as well as skills for learning, life and work.
- As a new team, staff are in the process of working together to develop shared and agreed expectations for learning and teaching across the school, for example for the use of formative assessment. This is helping to ensure that all children can experience activities that are varied and differentiated to provide appropriate levels of support and challenge. It also ensures that all children are involved in evaluating and assessing their own work, as well as the work of their peers. In both classes, teachers provide verbal and written feedback to children on their learning. Where written feedback is most effective, it focuses on the strengths of children's learning and what they need to do next to improve.
- The headteacher is successfully leading a new, whole-school approach to assessment that is rigorous and based on accurate professional judgement. Staff are making good progress in developing their approaches to assessment, to align more closely to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) standards and expectations. They are developing confidence in scrutinising and analysing assessment and attainment information, for example, in using National Benchmarks for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The headteacher has introduced opportunities to meet with teachers to regularly discuss tracking information, individually and as a whole staff team. This is helping staff to gain confidence in interpreting and responding to the assessment information available to them.
- Teachers meet regularly with colleagues in local schools to moderate standards, for example in numeracy and literacy, and they report that they find this very helpful. Teachers are positive about their engagement to date with National Benchmarks for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They should continue with their plans to deepen their understanding of the benchmarks across all curricular areas. This will help to support planning for progression in learning and in making more robust assessments of children's progress and achievement of a CfE level. Over time, the principal teacher has successfully created meaningful contexts for assessing aspects of children's learning in a holistic and dynamic way. This is often linked to the calendar of school events, such as the pupil-led Christmas show. This good practice in holistic assessment of learning is worthy of sharing across the staff team.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Children at all stages experience opportunities for personalisation, choice, enjoyment and challenge in their day-to-day learning. Staff use the experiences and outcomes of CfE to ensure children receive a broad curriculum across the school year. Teachers' approach to planning is flexible and very responsive to children's interests, ideas and suggestions. Aply led by the headteacher, the school has embarked on a process to creatively capture and articulate its unique curriculum rationale. Teachers are skilled in incorporating the four contexts for learning within planning the curriculum. They ensure that their plans for learning reflect and celebrate the rich heritage and context of the local area.
- The school is making good progress in implementing the progression pathways, which have been provided by South Ayrshire Council, for each curricular area. Staff should continue, as planned, to develop and embed these planning frameworks to assist them to raise attainment further across literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and all curricular areas. A whole school, holistic approach to teaching literacy would now be beneficial for children, in order that they can make meaningful links in learning.
- The school has embraced the national '1+2' initiative, to promote children's appreciation and skills in learning different languages. In Fisherton Primary School, children from P1 to P7 enjoy, and are making good progress in learning French and Mandarin. Commendably, children across the school learn British Sign Language. They also have the opportunity to learn Spanish as part of mixed-age 'masterclass' sessions.
- Children have a range of worthwhile opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work as they progress through the school. Through class topics, enterprise activities and their participation in 'masterclass' sessions, children learn about industry, careers and local businesses in a motivating way. Staff should continue to ensure they make explicit to children the skills they develop and apply through these activities, so they understand the importance of developing and using these skills now and in the future.
- An extensive range of community partners and organisations play a significant role in enhancing children's experiences. This ensures that children of all ages learn about the history, geography and culture of their local area in a highly relevant and motivating way.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

See school's chosen QI.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very 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

- Very positive relationships throughout the school create a nurturing ethos in which children feel safe and well cared for. The wellbeing of all children and families underpins the life of the school. The calm, welcoming and purposeful environment in classes, play areas and around the school helps to ensure that children enjoy learning and socialising together in a family atmosphere. All children who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that they felt safe and almost all felt they were treated fairly and with respect; were being helped to become more confident and enjoyed being at school.
- Children have a very good awareness of the wellbeing indicators. Staff provide children with regular opportunities to reflect on and to evaluate their own wellbeing, including how well they feel they are doing at home and at school. This embedded and supportive culture is helping children to gain confidence to talk about issues affecting them and, with the support of staff and partners, to take action to address any concerns they have.
- Staff work together very well to provide an inclusive environment for learning in which children, parents and partners feel that their opinions and views are valued. Children recognise that their contributions matter and that they can bring about change, for example through improving their playground and through their eco work. Children and staff have worked very well together to achieve accreditation as a 'dyslexia friendly' school. Children have been instrumental in creating dyslexia toolkits for each class, and have ensured that their new library area is accessible for all.
- Children's learning in health and wellbeing is developing very well. Older children recently won an inter-schools competition, which highlighted their impressive knowledge about internet safety. Across the school, children have a very good understanding of the importance of regular physical exercise. They take part in 'daily mile' activities that are varied and enjoyable. They practice meditation and relaxation techniques in class to ensure they are calm, alert and ready to learn. Children can describe the five food groups and why we should eat more of some foods and less of others. They demonstrate an understanding of basic food hygiene principles when taking part in practical food work. Children benefit from valuable inputs from other professionals, such as the school nurse and campus police officer, as part of the health and wellbeing curriculum. As a result, children have a good understanding of the risks associated with substance misuse.
- Partners support the school's arrangements for children at points of transition very well. Tailored and enhanced approaches ensure that all children who require some additional help feel very well supported in making a smooth start in the early years centre, making the transition to P1, and for older children, moving on to secondary school.

- Staff know children and families very well, and are alert to any challenging circumstances or changing needs. The headteacher is aware of her roles and responsibilities related to statutory duties. She has developed a helpful overview of the range of children's needs across the school. She monitors carefully the support and interventions that are put in place to support children. As a result, children with additional support needs, or other barriers to learning, are well included and engaged in their learning. Children who may have emotional needs are very well supported. The school works with a range of partners to ensure that the needs of children requiring additional support and their families are met. The school reports that accessing the input of an educational psychologist can at times be challenging due to staff shortages. Children who require a Child's Plan or individual learning plan have one in place. These plans are appropriate, and reviewed regularly with parents and partners. The headteacher monitors attendance and punctuality regularly and is proactive in dealing with and monitoring any issues that may arise.
- All children are included, engaged and fully involved in the life of their school. By P7, almost all children can talk confidently about their feelings and can empathise with others. Through participation in the Rights Respecting School and gaining a silver award, children at all stages are learning about equality, inclusion and fairness. Overall, across the school, teachers make meaningful links in the course of learning to children's rights and aspects of equality. Staff are taking creative steps to continue to build on this positive approach. For example, the school's recent twinning with a school in Palestine is providing dynamic and relevant opportunities for children to explore global equality and diversity issues in a real-life way.

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

- At the time of the inspection, the school roll comprised children at P2, P3, P4, P6 and P7, with no children at the P1 or P5 stages. Numbers of children in each cohort are fewer than ten. As a result, attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.
- Overall, children are making good progress in English and literacy and in numeracy and mathematics. Most children are on track to achieve or exceed appropriate CfE levels by the end of the current session.
- As a new team, staff are working together willingly to develop and share their approaches and confidence in assessing children's progress. The headteacher has very recently introduced the use of some diagnostic assessments to enhance the existing formative and summative assessments. This is supporting teachers' professional judgements in assessing children's progress. The principal teacher is skilled in planning holistic assessment tasks for children, which allow children to demonstrate that they can apply their knowledge skills in a real-life context. As planned, this effective practice should be shared across the staff team.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children are making good progress in literacy. Resources and programmes are helping to ensure that, at the early and first level, children are developing their phonological skills in a progressive and effective way. Staff have plans in place to review and refresh their approaches to teaching reading skills in order to raise attainment. We have asked staff to consider this within a holistic approach to teaching literacy, in order that children can make meaningful links across their literacy learning.

Reading

- Almost all children at the first level can select texts for enjoyment and can explain why they prefer certain authors. Most children at the second level can read with fluency and understanding, and with some expression. Older children benefit by developing their questioning, thinking and creativity skills through the well-planned 'book club' activities.
- Most children at the first level can identify the main ideas of texts and make appropriate suggestions about the purpose of a text. Most children at the second level can make notes using their own words and organise them under suitable headings. Children at all stages have opportunities to read for information as part of topics and personal projects. By P7, children are skilled in using digital technology to research information and to note key sources of evidence.

Writing

- Across the school, children have the opportunity to write in a variety of genres, often linked to other areas of their learning or for real-life purposes. At first level, most children can write independently, punctuating most sentences accurately. They can link sentences using common conjunctions and start sentences in a variety of ways to engage the reader. At second level, most children can use a range of punctuation and use sentences of different lengths. They create digital texts for their class blog. They particularly enjoy working together to write the scripts for their school shows. As a next step, children across the school would benefit from a holistic approach to developing their reading and writing skills, including increased opportunities to write at length.

Listening and talking

- Most children are making very good progress in listening and talking. At first level, almost all children are able to speak confidently, whether in small groups, pairs or class situations. They interact positively and enthusiastically with each other and most are able to express their views and opinions confidently. By the end of first level and into second level, almost all are skilled at taking turns and responding appropriately to prompts and information. As they progress through the stages, children are developing their ability to listen during class discussions. Almost all can offer their opinions and views succinctly and ask pertinent questions. Teachers provide regular opportunities for children to provide critical feedback to their peers. As children progress through the school, they develop their skills in talking to an audience and presenting information. From P1 onwards, children give class talks and presentations in order to develop further their confidence in presenting to peers and a variety of audiences. At the second level, many children are skilled in debating. They deliberate topical contexts in class, and recently won an inter-schools debating contest.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.
- Staff have worked together to recently introduce new approaches for teaching numeracy and mathematics. This is having a positive impact on how children, at all stages, can identify and use different strategies to complete calculations and solve problems. Children in both classes have access to a range of helpful resources, including learning wall displays and toolkits that support their learning in numeracy well. Teachers are skilled in creating meaningful contexts for children to develop, consolidate and apply their numeracy and mathematical skills. At the upper stages, teachers proactively link with colleagues in the secondary school to ensure that children who are working within third level are appropriately supported and challenged in their learning.

Number

- Across the school, most children are developing their skills well in number. Most children at first level are confident in rounding numbers to the nearest ten and 100. Most can add and subtract with accuracy. At second level, most children confidently work on partitioning of numbers to three decimal places, and solve problems involving four digit calculations. By P7, most children have a firm grasp of place value and number concepts. Most are confident when multiplying and dividing, and can add and subtract decimals.
- Most children are developing their skills well in mental agility. Across the stages, most children have developed their knowledge and application of various strategies to aid mental calculations. Most children at second level can confidently describe the strategies they use for mental calculations and solving increasingly complex problems, and can identify their preferred method to use.

Time

- Overall, children know dates, days and the months of the year in sequence. At first level, almost all children know there are 60 seconds in a minute, and 60 minutes in an hour. Most can tell the time accurately on digital and analogue clocks. By the second level, most children can record time in both 12 hour and 24-hour notation. They apply their skills in using online bus and train timetables accurately to plan travel routes.

Money

- Most children know the value of money and can identify different coins and denominations of money. Most can calculate the total value of purchases and change required. At first level, the majority can confidently work out the cost of buying multiple items. At second level, children apply their money handling, budgeting and accounting skills daily in running all aspects of the pupil-led healthy tuck shop.

Shape, position and movement

- At first and at second levels, children can identify a wide range of 2D shapes and 3D objects using specific vocabulary to describe the different properties. At second level, most children demonstrate a good knowledge of compass points and coordinates. There are plans in place for children to now extend their skills through developing coding skills and exploring programmable toys.

Measure

- At first level, most children use rulers well to draw shapes and take measurements in centimetres. Most can accurately estimate the length of common objects, using centimetres, metres and kilometres appropriately. At second level, children in P7 articulate how they applied their skills and knowledge in measure to plan the seating capacity in the local village hall for their school show.

Attainment over time

- In recent years, data on children's attainment has been gathered on a class-by-class basis. Analysis of this data suggests that, overall, the school is making good progress in closing the gap in attainment between different groups of children. Staff in the school appreciate that small numbers of pupils in individual year groups make it difficult to continuously evidence improvements over time. Since her appointment, the headteacher has introduced a thorough system to track individual children's progress in learning. This includes regular monitoring of children's classwork to pinpoint their strengths and where they may need some extra practice or help. Where intervention is required, children benefit from focused support from teachers and classroom assistants. Staff are benefitting from increased opportunities for professional dialogue around children's progress in learning. Staff appreciate opportunities to engage in moderation work within and out with the school. Together, they are developing confidence in using National Benchmarks to verify their professional judgements.

Overall quality of achievement

- Overall, children benefit from an impressive range of worthwhile opportunities that are helping them to develop confidence and self-esteem; learn new skills; experience competition and to develop their personal interests further. The school recognises the need to continue to build children's confidence and belief in themselves and their abilities, focusing on the skills they are developing and the transferrable nature of many of these. Residential experiences for older children supports them well in making choices and decisions for themselves.
- Children at all stages contribute very well to the life of the school and to their wider community. They take on considerable responsibility for one another. Older children care for younger ones. Children at P6 develop leadership skills by organising lunchtime clubs for others. Children are

rightly very proud of their commendable efforts in raising funds for local and national charities. Their high-quality work on learning about sustainability has earned them a green flag award from Eco Schools Scotland. Children's personal achievements are recognised and celebrated in school. Children are beginning to identify the skills for learning, life and work that they are developing. There is scope to develop this further to ensure that children are aware of the skills they are gaining from wider achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know all children and families very well. They are vigilant in identifying any children who may be affected by disadvantage and who are not yet achieving their full potential. In response, staff have identified key interventions to address any barriers faced by children and swiftly implement these. For example, staff have used their allocation of the Pupil Equity Fund thoughtfully to provide targeted support for children who require extra help in literacy. This has been achieved by employing an early years practitioner to provide valuable support for younger children in class time. The headteacher has identified the need to now fully evaluate the impact of such interventions, in order to demonstrate success in beginning to close any attainment gaps, and in continuing to raise the attainment of all.

School choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

- The development and promotion of partnerships
- Collaborative learning and improvement
- Impact on learners

- Partnership working is a clear strength of the school and early years centre. School leaders and staff are outward-looking, proactive and creative in their approaches to establishing and nurturing valuable links. They make the most of all available opportunities to broaden children's horizons. As a result, an extensive range of community and business partners provide valued expertise, support and assistance to the school and early years centre. Their input and commitment is clearly enhancing the curriculum on offer to children of all ages.
- The commendable range of partners that met with inspectors were each very supportive and positive about their work with the school. They understood the school's aim to ensure that children's experiences are enriched and widened through partnership working. They were clear about their roles and contributions. All partners felt welcomed into school and part of the team approach within Fisherton Primary School and Early Years Centre. Staff should continue to involve partners in self-evaluation activities and school improvement in meaningful and creative ways.
- Teachers, early years practitioners and the wide range of partners collaborate particularly well to plan and deliver joint work. Children across the school and early years centre are clearly benefiting from this high quality and very well considered approach to planning motivating and relevant learning. The school's health and inclusion partners provide high-quality support for individual children and families.
- Parents are valued as genuine partners in their child's learning. Partnership with parents is strong feature of the school's work. The inclusive, family ethos provides a nurturing environment, not only for the children, but also for families. Parents find that primary and early years staff are always approachable, non-judgemental and willing to listen to their concerns.
- There is a variety of ways for parents to engage in their children's learning. Staff and children's use of social media and blogs provides timely feedback to families on what their children are learning, in and out-of-class. Curriculum workshops, open days and showcases provide very good opportunities for parents to find out more about how the school delivers learning. Parents are also welcome to work and learn alongside their child in open afternoons and sessions. Many current and former parents and grandparents assist in the school with a wide range of activities including the school garden and a variety clubs and activities.
- The Parent Council is highly supportive of the work of the school. Parents raises significant funds to enhance children's experiences and ensure equity of access for all. The Parent Council is consulted about the improvement priorities and other important decisions. Commendably, parents are involved in the recruitment process for all leadership and staff permanent appointments within the school and early years centre.

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.