

Summarised inspection findings

Stepps Primary School and Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

30 May 2023

Key contextual information

Stepps Primary School and Nursery Class is situated in the village of Stepps in North Lanarkshire. The school serves the areas of Stepps, Cardowan and Millerston. There are currently 409 children in the primary school and 24 children in the nursery class. The school roll has risen significantly over the last few years. Almost 25% of children travel by school bus. Just over 1% of children live within Scottish Areas of Multiple Deprivation deciles one and two. Most children live within deciles seven to nine.

Over the last few years, there has been significant remedial building work taking place within the school and the school grounds. This has resulted in children being decanted from their classes to other parts of the school while building work was carried out in classrooms. To mitigate the impact of this, the school were able to use areas of the community wing.

The senior leadership team consists of a headteacher and a depute headteacher. A new principal teacher is due to start soon.

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

- Across the school, children benefit from a very calm, purposeful ethos. Children enjoy positive relationships with school staff and each other. They are very friendly, courteous and articulate. Children support each other well during lessons and in the playground. They proudly welcome visitors and are keen to share the positive work of Stepps Primary School. Children and staff embed the school's values of respect, kindness, trust, honesty, effort, fairness and confidence in the day-to-day life of the school. These values, along with staff's commitment to promoting children's rights, ensure all children feel valued and are supported well. Staff place children at the heart of everything they do. They clearly share a collective commitment to improving outcomes for all learners.
- There is a strong sense of community across the school. Children, staff and parents are very proud of Stepps Primary School and Nursery Class. Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school. They commend the headteacher, depute headteacher and staff team highly.
- In almost all lessons, children are engaged and motivated learners. They respond particularly well when given opportunities to work in pairs and groups. Children are respectful of each other and staff. In a minority of lessons, the pace of learning could be brisker. There is also scope to provide children with more ownership of their learning. Across the school, staff create attractive wall displays to celebrate the wide range of opportunities which children experience. Displays also provide helpful prompts for children which they use as part of their learning.

- Teachers have high expectations of their children. As a result, children are very well behaved and take great pride in their work. Children's written work across their learning is very well presented. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with a few examples of very good practice. Teachers share the purpose of lessons and, in most lessons, support children to understand how to be successful in their learning. In most lessons, staff structure lessons well. Their explanations are clear, and they use different ways to check children's understanding throughout lessons. For the most part, children access learning experiences which are matched well to their needs. However, a significant minority of children are now ready to experience greater challenge in their learning.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork across the whole staff team. Teaching staff and support staff work very well together to ensure identified children are supported to make the best possible progress. A few members of the support staff have undertaken professional learning which is enabling them to provide targeted support for individuals and groups of learners. These interventions are having a positive impact. Staff share ideas and good practice regularly with each other. They appreciate the well-considered support they receive from their senior leaders.
- Across the school, children use a range of digital devices to support and record their learning. Due to a refresh of current digital platforms, children are no longer able to use most of the school's tablet devices. There are plans to replace these obsolete tablets. Children continue to use the interactive whiteboard and laptop computers well as part of their learning.
- Staff are at the very early stages of implementing a play-based approach to learning. As planned, they should continue to engage with national practice guidance to develop their understanding of play pedagogy further. Staff are taking steps to review the school's approaches to outdoor learning.
- In almost all classes, teachers give oral and written feedback to children to identify success in their learning and how they can improve. For example, within writing, there are opportunities for self and peer assessment using a range of targets linked to various genres. This is supported by further teacher assessment. Staff recognise that further work to align targets with Curriculum for Excellence levels would allow children to be clearer on what they need to do to progress. This would also enable children to understand the level they are working at.
- Teachers use a range of standardised, diagnostic and summative assessments to gather detailed information on children in key aspects of their learning. The school's assessment pathway provides structure to ensure staff gather assessment information from a variety of learning opportunities within their class. This currently focuses on aspects of literacy and numeracy, which provides evidence of progress in their knowledge and understanding. Staff recognise that there now needs to be a clearer focus on skills progression across a range of learning. This would support planning for progression across the school.
- All teachers engage in moderation activities, both at school and cluster level. The most recent focus has allowed them to moderate samples of writing and develop a shared understanding of progression within a level. As identified by the school, opportunities should now be planned for this approach to be extended to include other aspects of literacy and other areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers plan learning across the curriculum using Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. They use a range of published resources and local authority frameworks for guidance. There is a strong focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across all classes. Staff have developed a clear structure to plan for progression across each stage of the school. They recognise that further opportunities should be developed to personalise

learning for the pupils at Stepps Primary School. This should include opportunities for developing creativity and exploring further contexts for learning, including outdoor learning and learning through play.

- Senior leaders meet regularly with staff to review progression in learning for all children. Teachers use a range of assessment information to support professional judgements, including the use of National Benchmarks in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff engage in regular tracking discussions to identify and evaluate planned interventions to support pupils who are not achieving as expected. Senior leaders track identified cohorts of pupils to ensure they are making appropriate progress in their learning.

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 numeracy is very good. Attainment data provided by the school shows that overall, most children achieved the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics for session 2021-2022.
- Inspection activities confirm that across the school, most children are achieving expected levels of attainment in literacy and English, and numeracy and mathematics. A significant minority of children are working beyond expected levels of attainment. Children with barriers to learning are making good progress towards their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, attainment in literacy and English is very good. Most children are making very good progress in reading, writing and listening and talking. Staff have planned effective interventions and strategies to close gaps in reading and writing.

Listening and talking

- Overall, children's progress in listening and talking is very good. At early level, most children can listen attentively to adults and follow directions very well. They talk confidently in a variety of contexts and take turns successfully to contribute their ideas in group activities. At first level, children ask and answer questions articulately. They listen well for information and show respect for others' opinions during discussion. At second level, most children express their views effectively and listen respectfully to the opinions of others. They confidently discuss the skills required to present or debate a topic in class.

Reading

- Overall, children are making very good progress in reading. Across the school, children articulate the reading skills they are developing well and express a preference for different authors. The school has developed a positive reading culture with most children enthusiastic about borrowing books to read at home. Children have a key role in the identification and selection of new reading texts.
- At early level, most children are building their knowledge of sounds, letter patterns and common words and recognise these in simple texts. Children who are on track to achieve, and potentially exceed, first level by the end of P4 read familiar texts with fluency and expression. They summarise the main ideas from a text and identify different features of the writer's use of language. Children who are on track to achieve, and potentially exceed, second level by the end of P7 answer inferential questions and provide accurate evidence to support answers. At both first and second level, most children discuss confidently how they use different skills to learn new vocabulary. At first level, a few children would benefit from more challenging texts.

Writing

- Overall, children are making very good progress in writing. Staff have introduced new approaches to the teaching of writing. This is motivating children to write successfully for a range of purposes and in different contexts. Most children at early level use capital letters and full stops accurately to punctuate sentences. They use their knowledge of single sounds and letter blends to spell familiar words correctly. At first level, children write reports and letters using the relevant features of these texts. For example, they wrote information reports on renewable energy and how we stay healthy. Children who are on track to achieve, and potentially exceed, second level by the end of P7 compare the style and tone required for different genres. For example, persuasive, personal, functional and imaginative writing. At first and second level, children have more opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum. This is supporting the development of their writing skills well.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is very good. Most children are achieving expected levels of attainment. A few children are working beyond expected levels of attainment. Overall, children would benefit from further opportunities to apply their mathematical skills across other areas of the curriculum and within new contexts

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children order and sequence numbers within 20. They add and subtract numbers within 10. They would benefit from developing their knowledge of money and time through play. At first level, most children round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They tell the time using 12-hour clocks and recognise and continue simple number sequences. They would benefit from more practice working with division facts. At second level, most children confidently round numbers to the nearest 1,000 and convert fractions into percentages and decimals. Most children who are on track to achieve, and potentially, exceed second level solve simple equations and complete two step number problems. They have a good understanding of budgeting and the advantages and disadvantages of credit and debit cards.

Shape, position and movement

- Children at early level enjoy exploring position and movement using programmable toys and digital technology. Most children identify and name common two-dimensional shapes. Children at first level identify right angles within shapes. They know and use points of a compass and identify lines of symmetry in two-dimensional shapes. Children who are on track to achieve, and potentially exceed, second level identify a range of angles and apply this knowledge to calculate missing angles. They calculate the perimeter and area of quadrilaterals confidently.

Information handling

- At early level, most children interpret simple charts. Children who are on track to achieve first level interpret information from bar graphs to extract key information and make comparisons. Children at second level create graphs to represent information and successfully interpret information, drawing accurate conclusions. They would benefit from more opportunities to use digital technologies to present and analyse a range of data.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders can provide attainment data for the last six years that shows a trend of consistently high levels of attainment across the school. Senior leaders use data effectively to monitor the progress of all children including targeted groups. As a result, most children are making very good progress from prior levels of attainment.
- Senior leaders and staff have planned and implemented approaches to raise attainment in

literacy, numeracy and improve outcomes in health and wellbeing for identified children. School data indicates these approaches are helping to reduce identified gaps in learning. As planned, senior leaders should now develop approaches to gathering information on children's progress across all areas of the curriculum. Staff should continue to use the National Benchmarks. This will ensure that all staff make confident professional judgements about how well children are learning and progressing.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children enjoy regular opportunities to celebrate personal achievements. Staff ensure that achievements are shared through attractive displays, at assemblies and on social media. Children are proud of sporting successes achieved through football and cross-country competitions. Their achievements out with school are recognised and celebrated through O.S.C.A.R. certificates (Out with School Certificate of Achievement and Recognition) which provide parents and carers with an opportunity to nominate their child for an achievement award.
- Across the school, children benefit from meaningful participation in a wide variety of leadership groups, for example, the Junior Leadership Team, the Diana Committee, Rights Respecting Schools, Respect Me and Eco Committee. As a result, children are provided with rich opportunities to work with others and make important decisions which influence the work of the school. For example, recently, children have contributed suggestions for the purchase of play equipment and new reading books.
- Children take a leading role promoting the school values and children's rights through their roles as buddies, diversity champions and anti-bullying ambassadors. Older children regularly lead clubs for younger children which supports the development of teamwork and leadership skills. As a next step, staff should support children to make a link between the wide range of achievements and development of their skills for learning, life and work.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the socio-economic circumstances of all children. They take very effective action to mitigate against any barriers children face and minimise school-associated costs. Senior leaders and staff work together effectively to track the progress of cohorts and groups of children. This is supporting a robust rationale for Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) spend. Senior leaders use a range of qualitative and quantitative data to identify the need for targeted support evaluate its impact. They should continue to carefully track the impact of funded interventions. This will support sustainability of approaches and help to evidence measurable progress for identified groups of children.

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.