

Summarised inspection findings

Carrutherstown Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

8 November 2022

Key contextual information

Carrutherstown Primary School is located in a rural setting serving the local communities of Carrutherstown, Dalton and surrounding areas. The school is situated approximately 10 miles from Dumfries town centre and seven miles from Annan. All children on the school roll in September 2021 lived within SIMD deciles five to seven. The school roll at the time of the visit is 42 children. Carrutherstown Primary School operates in partnership with another primary school located six miles away on the outskirts of Annan. The headteacher assumed joint responsibility for both schools in November 2021. A principal teacher was appointed in March 2022 to form the school's senior leadership team. The pandemic did not have any significant adverse impact on the attendance of learners or staff outwith the national period of remote learning.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- Staff, children and stakeholders revisited the school's vision, values and aims last session. Recent staff appointments and the challenges of the pandemic influenced the timing of this consultation. The core values of diversity, achievement, resilience and empathy are expressed in the school's aspirational goal: 'DARE to succeed'. The headteacher and staff are beginning the process of helping children recognise the relevance of these values and the importance of modelling them. Children benefit from an inclusive and supportive learning environment that reflects the school's vision. Staff are beginning to embed the refreshed aspirational aims in the life of the school through assemblies and class activities. Developing this shared understanding is at an early stage. All staff now require to link the school values to the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child (UNCRC) through using the language of the wellbeing indicators. This should help to develop further children's understanding of their responsibilities and their place in the world.
- The headteacher is reviewing remits and responsibilities to reflect the new leadership team. Staff across the school are encouraged to assume a range of leadership roles. This is supporting further the school's capacity to promote initiative and manage effectively an improvement agenda. The headteacher and staff are now looking to increase pupil participation in shaping the life and work of the school. This includes developing roles within the school's house teams and whole school groups, as well as engaging children in evaluating aspects of school life. They also plan to provide greater opportunities for children to shape and lead their own learning.
- Staff are keen to engage in professional reflection and are receptive to new ideas. Within the school's programme of professional learning, staff have reviewed effectively the impact of visible learning. Staff liaise with colleagues in the partner school and with wider groups to improve outcomes for children. They join with colleagues in the partner school in moderation activities and in sharing practice. Staff collaborate closely with colleagues in the partner school in joint planning. There is evidence of a sharper focus developing in relation to refining the

quality of learning and teaching, supported by the in-house programme of learning observations.

- Staff engage in areas of personal professional enquiry that are beginning to inform school practice. Examples include skill development linked to the Developing Young Workforce agenda and, in collaboration with the partner school, the use of feedback to learners.
- Parents and other stakeholders express confidence in the leadership of the headteacher and their engagement with staff. Across the school, colleagues provide good support to the headteacher. He values and is alert to the views of children, parents and stakeholders. Parents feel that the school is managed well. Partners speak positively of the professional relationships and the strength of collaborative working.
- The headteacher displays a clear understanding of actions to take forward to improve the school. He works closely with colleagues to bring about change. The headteacher and staff recognise the merit of developing further approaches to self-evaluation. It is important now to build on existing practice. Increasing the role of children, parents and stakeholders is an important step in going forward. Staff aim to link children's participation in this regard with Article 12 of the UNCRC. This will encourage children to become more actively involved in the school's decision making processes and be more empowered as learners.
- Staff express a collective responsibility for school improvement. As the school community continues to take forward its improvement agenda, a more systematic process of evaluation is envisaged by staff. This will help to confirm that priorities identified are having the desired impact.
- The current improvement plan relates jointly to Carrutherstown Primary School and its partner school. The headteacher should ensure that details within the plan acknowledge the uniqueness of Carrutherstown Primary School as well as jointly shared priorities. This is important to make sure that the pace of change and identified priorities reflect accurately the school's local context. It is also important to establish how the success of actions planned will be evaluated for each school. Improvement planning should incorporate clear measurable outcomes for the priorities being taken forward. This will help staff to evaluate the impact of actions taken within Carrutherstown Primary School and inform next steps.
- The current priorities within the school improvement plan relate to refining approaches to learning and teaching. Staff should consider including a specific focus on health and wellbeing to address the challenges of the pandemic and the emerging issues affecting children and families. In planning support for learners, Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is being targeted effectively to the needs of identified children.
- There is a need now to build on recent developments and embed more robust approaches to self-evaluation. This will help stakeholders appreciate not only the need for change but also individual responsibilities in leading and supporting developments.

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

- All children benefit from warm and mutually respectful relationships with staff and each other. Children are becoming more aware of their rights through the school assembly programme. Older children are beginning to recognise how children's rights apply to their own learning and lives. A few children are able to link their learning to their rights successfully. Almost all children say that staff encourage them to do the best they can.
- Almost all children are enthusiastic in their learning. They engage successfully with a range of motivating learning activities as individuals, in small groups or as a whole class. All children have regular opportunities across the week to enjoy outdoor learning in the extensive and varied outdoor area. Children adapt well to the range of learning experiences and environments. Most children say they enjoy learning in school. They demonstrate responsibility and independence effectively while they are learning. A few children choose to develop further their outdoor learning activities in play when they are outdoors at break times.
- Teachers' instructions and explanations are clear and effective in most learning activities. As a result almost all children settle quickly to engage in purposeful learning. Teachers use a range of questioning techniques to help children to extend their thinking and justify their answers. There is an over-reliance on whole class lessons. However, teachers follow these up by providing a range of group, pair and individual activities, well-matched to children's needs. Teachers should develop further their skills in organising learning and teaching. This will help to ensure appropriate pace and challenge to meet the needs of all learners.
- Younger children have a few opportunities to learn through play activities. All teaching staff would benefit from professional learning to support children at the early level to learn through play. This should help them create learning environments that support effective learning and teaching through play to meet the needs of all learners.
- Children and teachers use effectively a range of digital resources such as whiteboards, computers and tablets to enhance learning and teaching in all classes. The majority of children use digital resources confidently to support their learning. Most older children are beginning to use digital technology to record aspects of their learning. They are beginning to link this evidence of learning and achievement with skills for learning, life and work.
- All teaching staff have benefitted from professional enquiry surrounding supporting children to understand their learning and progress. Teachers are beginning to share the purpose of learning activities effectively with all children. They now need to support children to identify what they need to do to be successful in their learning. This should help children to know if they have been successful and what next steps they need to take to improve. Teachers are beginning to develop their oral and written feedback skills to support children to know what they have done well and to identify their next steps for learning.

- Across the school, teachers use a range of assessment approaches to assess children`s progress. They plan assessment of children`s progress in literacy and numeracy within meaningful contexts and use the National Benchmarks to support this. For example, teachers planned and used assessments of mathematics in context with stage partners in the partner school effectively. The majority of children have a few opportunities to self and peer assess their work. It is important children are clearer about how they will know if they have been successful in their learning to help them peer and self-assess effectively. All teachers participated in moderation activities across the learning community cluster primary schools, despite the restrictions of the pandemic. This is supporting teachers across the learning community to develop a shared understanding of expectations for achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers make good use of long, medium and short-term approaches to planning learning. There are clear plans for children who require additional support with their learning. Older children identify targets for their learning in literacy and numeracy successfully. All children discuss what they already know and what they would like to learn more about at the start of a block of interdisciplinary learning. They would benefit from being more involved in the planning process for all curriculum areas. Staff use progression pathways well for the majority of curriculum areas. This helps them to gather clear information on the progression of children in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics.
- All teaching staff regularly use robust processes effectively to check children`s progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. They use this information very well to identify appropriate interventions to help all children make progress in their learning. The headteacher gathers information effectively to monitor the progress and attainment of children with additional challenges, such as, children with English as an additional language.
- All teaching staff use effectively their knowledge of individual children to support fully those most affected by poverty. Learning activities are well-matched to children`s individual needs with targeted interventions or provision of specific resources.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- All teaching staff need to ensure learning pathways are set within a clear curriculum rationale. This rationale should reflect accurately the school's unique context and the principles and entitlements of Scotland's curriculum. This should help staff, children and parents to identify fully what they want for their children and how they will work together to achieve this.
- Teachers use progression pathways for the majority of the curriculum areas. These take account of CfE experiences and outcomes and the National Benchmarks. All teaching staff need to develop progression pathways for all curriculum areas. This will help teachers to ensure planned experiences build on children's prior learning and skills, and support progression for all children. Senior leaders and teachers should identify opportunities for children to re-engage with the community, following the restrictions of the pandemic. Such engagement would help them to provide breadth and depth to their learning within the school's unique context.
- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours high quality physical education (PE) each week. Teachers use a long term plan and progression pathways to plan for continuity in children's learning across all aspects of PE. Most children experience skill progression during PE activities. All teachers provide opportunities for children to develop leadership and mentoring skills successfully during PE activities.
- All teaching staff have developed a three year rolling programme to plan coverage of the curriculum. They should develop this further to ensure there is breadth, depth and progression to children's learning across all curriculum areas. Teachers should take steps to revisit learning throughout the year to help children consolidate and develop their skills and knowledge.
- Planned arrangements support children coming to school from early years settings or moving on to secondary school. Children in P1 come to the school from a wide range of early education and childcare settings across the local area. Teaching staff should consider the information they need to gather about children's progress at early level as they come into P1. This should support teachers to build on children's prior learning and help them to progress and achieve early level. Children with additional support needs benefit from enhanced engagement programmes with secondary schools to support them as they move from P 7 to secondary school. Parents report that staff support children who are new to the school well.
- Children at all stages are beginning to talk about the world of work. The school is at the very early stages of developing an approach to ensuring children develop skills for learning, life and work. Senior leaders and teachers should make use of local and national guidance, including the Career Education Standard (3-18) to access a progression skills framework.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents identify strongly with the school as integral to their local community. They feel that their views are valued by school staff. Parents have confidence in the school. They indicate that they are fully consulted when an issue will impact on their child.
- Almost all parents describe their child as enjoying school, feeling safe and being treated with respect. They feel that staff know the children as individuals and display a strong commitment to support their learning and wellbeing. Parents appreciate their one-to-one conversations about their child's progress. They welcome the opportunities they have to share in their child's learning through open afternoons and the use of a digital app. The app is improving communication in relation to homework and more general information. Most parents feel that they receive helpful, regular feedback about how their child is learning and developing.
- All parents agree that the Parent Council keeps them fully informed. Parents share an active role in the life of the school including helping to organise social events. Fund raising activities provide additional resources to enhance learning opportunities. Parents have also contributed to the school's Developing Young Workforce programme through sharing personal career experiences. Social media is used effectively to celebrate children's achievements, experiences and school 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

- A strong sense of community supports children in their learning. Teachers and non-teaching staff know children well as individuals. They work closely with parents to secure positive outcomes for them. Children identify strongly with their school. They speak well about what it means to be a pupil in Carrutherstown Primary School. Children are encouraged to consider how they can demonstrate the school values.
- Most children confirm that they feel safe in school and that almost all feel staff treat them fairly and with respect. Most children confirm that there is someone to whom they can talk should they have a concern. They relate well to each other and mix well in social settings. Older children provide additional support as buddies to younger children. Lunch seating arrangements further forge these links. Children are welcoming and keen to engage with visitors.
- Parents appreciate the assistance given by school staff during the pandemic to support their children's wellbeing and learning. Parents and staff recognise that for a number of children the pandemic has affected their confidence and ability to show resilience in their learning. Parents value the personal interest being taken by school staff and the support and encouragement they give. Staff feel that the learner conversations which involve children and parents help to provide a more holistic view of children's progress and wellbeing.
- Children have yet to develop an understanding of the wellbeing indicators. They now need support in acquiring the language of wellbeing. This will enable them to express clearly how they feel and discuss if there is a need for support. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to reflect on and scale their personal sense of wellbeing. This will support children to understand themselves better and develop important life skills.
- Children feel well supported in their learning. Teachers and support staff identify clearly children's learning needs and plan together how they can be supported in class. This includes advice from colleagues in partner agencies in some instances. Children are benefitting from small group and individual support. The learning assistant effectively takes forward a range of support strategies to build children's confidence and skills.
- A staged intervention approach effectively identifies children requiring more focused support. Children benefit from in-class and one-to-one support to address early barriers to learning. They respond very positively to this additional help. Additional needs assessments and referrals to partner agencies provide children with specialised support. Staff, teaching and non-teaching, develop further their personal learning in key areas of support. This is having a positive impact on learners. Children who require additional support for learning are making good progress.

- A range of partners support children in their wellbeing and development. Staff liaise effectively with partner agencies to support individual children and families, and address identified issues. This partnership is securing positive outcomes for children.
- Planned wellbeing programmes support children at different stages of their development. Children reflect on health related issues as part of a structured health and wellbeing (HWB) programme. For example, children talk confidently about the importance of personal hygiene, substance misuse and internet safety. There is scope to involve children in the planning of the HWB programme to ensure it remains relevant for individual pupils. This is particularly important as classes include children at different stages. Children are developing an awareness of the importance of exercise. Out of class activities and the opportunities for outdoor learning as part of their daily learning routine are increasing this understanding. Children have access to a range of opportunities to develop new interests in partnership with, for example, local authority instrumental tuition, active schools and volunteer groups.
- Colleagues gather and share information to support children at the different points of transition. A well-structured programme including visits to settings provide school staff with information on children's prior learning and needs. Staff share key information with colleagues to support children as they move through the school. This allows teachers and support staff to gauge and plan the meeting of learners' needs. A jointly planned programme with secondary colleagues prepares children for their move to secondary school. Enhanced arrangements are in place to meet the needs of children who are likely to require additional support.
- The headteacher recognises the merit in maintaining an ongoing record of instances of complaints and bullying. This will support staff in retaining an overview of issues raised over time and the effectiveness of actions taken.
- The headteacher should ensure that the information contained in the school handbook reflects fully national guidance in relation to religious and moral education.
- The local authority submitted self-evaluation information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties, as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff. The HNI also examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school health promotion duties as far as they relate to food and nutrition. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and school meals provider.
- Across the school, there is a strong sense of inclusion. This is evident in the interaction of between staff and children, and in peer relationships. The importance of mutual respect is emphasised.
- Children are developing their understanding of equality and diversity through the school's HWB and religious and moral education (RME) programmes. The RME programme and wider class learning help children develop their understanding and appreciation of different faith beliefs and cultural events. School assemblies and corridor displays reinforce the messages of respect and personal responsibility. The school is outward looking and engages with its local community including supporting charity projects. As the school moves forward, the intention is to consolidate and build on earlier work in securing Rights Respecting School status. This will include helping children to understand the school's core values and promote children's understanding of the articles of UNCRC as reference points.
- There is a clear rationale for the allocation of PEF. The allocated funding is successfully targeting the educational and wellbeing needs of identified children. The areas include reinforcing the acquisition of language, promoting wider engagement in learning and in

addressing emotional barriers. All children have equal access to resources and activities within the school day. Financial arrangements are in place to allow children to engage fully in all aspects of school activities.

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

- The number of children at each stage within Carrutherstown Primary School is small. Taking individual needs into account, most children are making good progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Most children with additional support needs are making progress towards meeting their individual targets.

Literacy and English

Listening and talking

- Almost all children are making good progress in listening and talking. Across the school, most children listen very well to staff and each other in teacher-led activities and cooperative group tasks. They take turns to talk and listen to each other, appropriate to their age and stage, during learning activities and while at play. Older children enjoy participating in "show and tell" with their class. They would like more opportunities to present their work to a variety of audiences. Children recognise this would help to develop further their talking and listening skills. Almost all children follow instructions well. They can organise themselves quietly and sensibly into groups for learning activities. Older children negotiate group roles effectively when learning outdoors. Across the school, most children respond well to a range of questions that require them to explain their thinking.

Reading

- Almost all children are making good progress in reading. Across the school, children are enthusiastic about reading. They are proud of their library and welcome opportunities to extend their reading skills while reading for enjoyment. Younger children describe characters in stories successfully. They identify correctly the title and author of books. They are less sure of the role of the illustrator. In a group of children working at first and second level, children read aloud fluently and with expression. They use a range of appropriate strategies to help them read new and unfamiliar words. Older children explain clearly how the author, cover or title influences their choice of books when reading for enjoyment. They are less confident explaining techniques authors use to influence the reader or explain key features of an authors' use of language to engage the reader.

Writing

- Across stages, most children are making good progress in writing. Younger children are beginning to write legibly and leave a space between words. They write regularly about their own experiences and are beginning to use appropriately full stops and capital letters. Younger children would benefit from more opportunities to write for enjoyment in a range of play, imaginative and real life contexts. Children across stages write for a variety of purposes often

linked to interdisciplinary learning. They use paragraphs in their writing effectively. Older children produced fact files about the rainforest successfully. Senior leaders and teachers identified a dip in children's progress in spelling. Most children are not successfully using learned spelling rules when writing. Children's spelling is a priority for improvement across stages this academic session.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making expected progress. Teachers use the rolling annual plan to plan blocks of mathematics. It is important that children have different opportunities to revisit mathematical concepts across the year. This should support them to develop and use their skills in new and relevant contexts.

Number money and measure

- Younger children are making good progress with their number knowledge appropriate to their age and stage. They can identify coins to the value of £2 successfully. They are less sure of using coins to pay for the exact value of an item. Most children use the language of measure well to compare items. Most children working at first and second level are developing accuracy and confidence in number well. They can add, subtract and multiply accurately and confidently. They do not transfer these skills well when using money. Children are less sure of division. They can identify and write common fractions, however, they do not know the terms numerator and denominator but can explain their purpose. Most children are developing their knowledge of time using the analogue clock well. They are less sure of representing or telling the time on a digital clock.

Shape, position and movement

- Across the school children are unsure of the names and properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects appropriate to their age and stage. Younger children demonstrate and use the language of position and direction well. Children at first and second level can identify right angles in the environment but are unsure of the range of angles and their properties.

Information handling

- Most children at early level collect objects and organise them into specific groups effectively. They are beginning to gather and share information from simple bar graphs made with concrete materials well. Older children display data they have gathered on a range of types of chart and graphs. They use digital technology effectively to display their charts and graphs.

Attainment over time

- School data shows that most children's progress slowed down during and immediately following periods of national lockdown. The headteacher and teachers effectively check the progress of children in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. This helps staff identify appropriate interventions to support all children to make progress. Most children are now making good progress in literacy and English and Numeracy and mathematics.
- Teachers use a range of assessments to inform their understanding of children's progress. This helps to identify children who require support with their learning in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. They ensure interventions are focused on specific aspects of literacy and numeracy. The headteacher recognises the need now to gather specific data to measure the impact interventions are having on children's attainment.

- The headteacher and teachers now need to develop processes to assess children's attainment across the curriculum areas. This will help them to check how well children are progressing in their learning.

Overall quality of learners' achievement.

- Senior leaders track children's participation in school clubs and activities, and groups outside school hours. They identify effectively individuals who do not participate, and provide interventions to encourage children to attend. For example, this includes providing kit or transport. Almost all children participate now in more than one out-of-school club or in-school wider achievement activity. Teachers recognise the need to provide more than sports clubs and are taking positive steps in addressing this. For example, younger children are able to attend an art club.
- Older children demonstrate leadership skills effectively when given the opportunity through pupil leadership groups. For example, the 'Garden Gang' identified a need to improve the outdoor reading hut to make it more attractive and encourage a love of reading outdoors. They presented their ideas successfully to the Parent Council who are providing funding to help them make their chosen improvements. Teachers consulted older children recently to identify areas of interest for leadership roles this session. Staff should now work towards including all children in opportunities to develop their leadership skills across the wider community.
- All staff and children celebrate children's achievements in class and at assemblies. Children feel that the celebration of their personal achievements reinforces their sense of worth and self-esteem. Older children are beginning to make links between their achievements and skills for learning, life and work. They are at the early stages of using digital technology to record this.
- All children were recently involved in an audit of books within the school library. They recycled books which did not interest them and purchased new books that they were keen to read. Staff supported children to grade a range of fiction and non-fiction texts by level of challenge. Older children access the library regularly and select books to read for enjoyment. Children are proud of the improvements they have made to the library. A few younger children say they now want more opportunities to visit the library and select books to read. Teachers should develop strategies to track children's use of the library and the impact this is having on raising attainment in reading.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher is able to identify effectively the progress of children in individual cohorts. Children most affected by poverty are making good progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics in line with their peers. This is the first session the school has received PEF. The headteacher has used attainment data and staff's knowledge of individual children's needs successfully to identify interventions to support children's learning. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these interventions on children's attainment.

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.