

Summarised inspection findings

Lochardil Primary School

The Highland Council

8 November 2022

Key contextual information

Lochardil Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision is situated within the Lochardil area of Inverness. There are 325 pupils on the school roll and 56 children are currently enrolled in the nursery class. This is set across 13 classes and 3 nursery rooms. The majority of pupils fall within the SIMD index range from decile 4 to 10, with 1% in decile 1 or 2.

The school roll has been capped for the past seven years to try to manage the increasing demand for places. This session the school is now able to welcome pupils from out with the catchment area.

The headteacher has responsibility for the school, ELC and an out of school provision. The out of school care provision is open from 8.00 am – 5.45 pm where children can access the breakfast club and after school provision. This childcare service has increased in capacity this session and can now provide for maximum of 40 children at any one time.

There have been significant changes to the leadership team in the school and ELC. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was leading the school without a deputy headteacher. The deputy headteacher position is due to be filled this term.

Leading up to and during the inspection the school has been dealing with a significant outbreak of COVID-19 which has resulted in high absences within the staff team and children.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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

- The headteacher and staff have developed a positive and inclusive ethos which permeates Lochardil Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). Staff have consulted with stakeholders to create a shared vision, values and aims which underpin the life and work of the school. Staff help to embed these as part of school assemblies, learning conversations and class discussions. Children are very proud of their school and can articulate well the school values. Staff have continued to use the school's vision and values to support children's wellbeing and continuity of learning throughout the pandemic.
- There is a strong sense of family across the school community. The school maintains a very high profile in the local community. Almost all parents are very satisfied with the work of the school. Parents report that the headteacher and staff provided very good support to children and families during periods of lockdown and when children returned to school. Parents appreciate how staff have continued to build successfully on the use of digital tools to support and share children's learning. They commend the school's effective use of digital platforms to minimise disruptions to children's learning as a result of COVID-19-related absences.
- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership. She is a strong and fair leader who sets a positive tone and leads by example. She has created a calm and nurturing school climate.

She is a visible leader who provides notable leadership across the ELC, primary school and out of school provision. The headteacher ensures each of these three provisions is included fully in all aspects of the work and life of the school. She pursues relentlessly new and different ways to improve learning outcomes for pupils. She is very forward thinking and strategically aligns different national and international programmes and frameworks. These include, Vision 2030, Learning for Sustainability, Schools of Sanctuary and The Rights of the Child. Along with staff, she takes a holistic approach to enable children to become active global citizens who make a positive difference in the world. The headteacher undertakes personal research to maintain an outward looking focus and fosters strong partnership working to maximise rich learning opportunities for children. The school community hold her in very high regard and appreciate her kind and supportive leadership style. The principal teachers and staff team support the headteacher very well.

- The headteacher has put robust processes in place to track learners' progress. She worked closely with a class teacher to develop a very effective tracking tool. Senior leaders engage regularly with staff to review relevant data. Staff are becoming more confident in using the data they gather. They use this to inform planning and to identify children who require more support with their learning. As planned, it will be important for staff to develop further their use of data to ensure all children achieve as highly as possible.
- Leadership at all levels is a strength of the school. Across the school, staff are keen to take forward school improvements to maximise the life chances for all children. Almost all staff, including support staff, undertake leadership roles which are resulting in improved outcomes for children. Staff feel very empowered, supported and encouraged to take forward new developments and initiatives as a team. The strategic approach to professional learning is purposeful, with an appropriate pace of change. The principal teachers have recently participated in Education Scotland's, Middle Leaders Leading Change course which is helping them to lead successfully aspects of school improvement. Staff value the support they have received from their colleagues throughout the pandemic. For example, staff report that they have benefited greatly from their colleagues' support in the use of digital tools for learning and teaching.
- Staff promote pupil voice and participation well in the school. Children have opportunities to contribute to school improvement as part of their representation on pupil leadership groups. A minority of children are unsure if staff consult them about school improvement. Staff should make the process of consultation and the subsequent actions more explicit to children. Children are also developing their leadership roles well in class and in the playground, for example, as 'Digital Dynamos'. They are also encouraged to participate in local and national forums to share their views and ideas. Staff now plan to explore ways for children to support school improvement, by making further use of How good is OUR school? Senior leaders could use this as an important tool to help achieve greater consistency in learning and teaching across the school.
- This session, staff have identified clear priorities to develop further approaches to learning and teaching and children's wellbeing. As recognised by senior leaders, it will be important to re-establish classroom observations to measure the impact of new approaches.
- The headteacher and staff have a very good understanding of the school's social, economic and cultural context. They are aware of the increased challenges families are facing as a result of the pandemic and the increasing cost of living crisis. The headteacher has a strategic plan for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to target support for individuals and groups of learners. Staff plan a range of interesting and real-life contexts which enable children to apply their learning. There is evidence that recent targeted interventions which promote children's understanding of number and money have been successful.

- The headteacher and staff regularly share their good practice with colleagues in their cluster, local authority and beyond. Partners report how the headteacher has supported them to implement new approaches in different schools.

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, a strong culture based on children's rights, supports very positive relationships. Children are welcoming, friendly and articulate. They support each other in the classroom and in the playground. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all children reported that the school helps them to understand and respect others. The school values of love, pride, respect, confidence and responsibility are embedded in the day to day life of the school.
- Through a wide range of pupil participation groups children have opportunities to lead, contribute and be responsible. In these groups, children's views are listened to and acted upon. Children make a positive contribution to the life of the school and wider community. Junior road safety officers are working well to improve road safety immediately outside the school grounds. A lost property project was instigated by one of the House teams to effectively redistribute items of lost property. Through participation in these groups, children are developing key skills for learning work and life.
- During the pandemic, staff developed their digital skills and were creative in adapting to providing learning online. As a result, children were able to access learning through a variety of digital platforms. This helped to ensure that children experienced continuity in their learning. Children continue to demonstrate confident use of laptops and use them well to support their learning.
- Children have increasing opportunities for choice, for example, in selecting their preferred group reading book. They are eager to be active participants in their learning and teachers should continue to build on these opportunities.
- Overall, teachers share the purpose of lessons and support children well to understand how to be successful in their learning. The majority of staff structure lessons well and are structured and explanations of learning are clear. In these lessons, staff provide opportunities for children to reflect on their progress. In most lessons, teachers plan learning to meet the different needs of learners. In a few lessons, teachers overly lead learning activities and the pace of learning is too slow. At times, children would benefit from having greater challenge in their learning. As identified by the headteacher, there is a need for staff to work together to achieve greater consistency in high quality learning and teaching. In doing so, all children should be able to experience appropriate support, challenge and pace in their learning. Planned development work in moderation and assessment will support this further. Teachers should continue to develop a shared understanding of high expectations and standards to consistently plan and deliver quality experiences.
- Teachers use a variety of successful assessment approaches within an assessment framework. These approaches support children to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

Teachers' planning is informed by a range of assessment information. This includes standardised assessment activity and teachers' professional judgements. Staff have developed key assessment tasks which are used by all teachers at identified times in the year. Teachers have opportunities to moderate the effectiveness of these tasks. Assessment is integral to the planning process and informs next steps in learning.

- Learning conversations between individual children and teachers take place termly and focus on numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing. Staff capture well the views of families, children and teachers as part of this process. Each child's learning conversation is recorded and collated within a personal folder. Children are supported and encouraged to select work they are proud of to reflect on their progress. They also have regular opportunities to peer assess.
- The headteacher and staff have developed a bespoke data dashboard. The dashboard provides the headteacher with a data-rich, whole-school overview of children's progress. This provides teachers with data at class and individual levels. It is supporting teachers to track the progress of individual children and groups more effectively. Continued use of the tool alongside professional dialogue will support increasingly effective analysis and use of the data available to teachers.
- A framework, providing Curriculum for Excellence level overviews, stage overviews and progression pathways has been developed to support teachers' planning. Planning is proportionate, avoiding unnecessary duplication. Formats are inclusive of skills development. Teachers plan experiences and assessments together, usually with a stage partner. Children have opportunities to contribute to the planning process. For example, they create 'big questions' at the beginning of a new learning theme or context. Planning structures provide a consistent framework. Teachers continue to use online platforms for planning purposes. This approach ensures planning and assessment information is easily accessible.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff have linked the learning pathways skilfully to the school vision. They based this on the four key areas of culture, curriculum, campus and community of Vision 2030 and entitlement to learning for sustainability. Curriculum pathways, through the Lochardil landscape overview, are meeting the needs and aspirations of learners well. Learning pathways utilise the full extent of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and design principles, within a clear overarching framework. Wellbeing and rights sit at the heart of the curriculum.
- Staff have clear planning overviews in place for progressive curriculum opportunities throughout the school. The headteacher and staff have identified very effectively which areas of the curriculum require updated and refreshed to support maintaining continued high standards and raising attainment further. Examples include addressing aspects of health and wellbeing and expressive arts, to ensure better progression. There is a clear focus on interdisciplinary learning through a global context, including with changing circumstances, to reflect the needs and aspirations of learners at Lochardil.
- Play pedagogy is an area of focus and development which staff are taking forward in a positive way. Staff are keen to develop play pedagogy at the early level. They are using national guidance, Realising the Ambition to support their understanding. Staff should continue, as planned, to research play pedagogy and embed into high-quality opportunities and experiences throughout the curriculum.
- Children experience learning both indoors and outdoors, throughout broad-ranging and effective curriculum opportunities. Children's learning experiences are enhanced through access to their local and wider community. Strong partnership working supports learning pathways throughout Lochardil effectively. Since the pandemic, staff and partners have worked creatively to offer a broad range of learning opportunities to children. Examples include Scottish Opera and National Choir of Scotland or use of digital technologies to link with celebrities to support learning. The headteacher and staff are very positive about re-engaging with all partners and the wider community. This includes nearby schools such as Drummond School, to support broad learning opportunities for all.
- Staff take responsibility for developing literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and digital literacy across the curriculum and in a variety of meaningful contexts. As has been evidenced throughout the pandemic and beyond, staff use digital tools very effectively to support collaboration, particularly at second level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Over the period of the pandemic, staff have significantly developed their digital capacity to support learning for children and families. Parents have been very appreciative of the provision of online parent contact evenings. The school reports an increase in parental engagement as a result of this provision. Staff intend to continue to develop a hybrid offer so that parents have the option of attending contact evenings in person or online. They are also continuing to develop the digital provision for home learning. Staff have provided support for parents in using digital technology, for example, specific applications and online safety. This includes 'How to' videos produced by children.
- Staff have used a variety of online platforms to share information about children's learning with parents and carers and seek their views. The use of interactive platforms is supporting staff to develop better links with the whole school website and blogs. This will allow increased facility in sharing information and seeking the views of parents and carers to support more effective self-evaluation.

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

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

- The school has a thorough and well-planned approach to ensuring children's wellbeing. Staff have embedded the wellbeing indicators to identify the needs of children and plan how best to meet them. Children demonstrate a good understanding of the wellbeing indicators and use them in daily check-ins and termly self-assessment. Staff are developing well-considered approaches to track children's progress to ensure that they progressively develop the skills to improve their wellbeing as they go through school.
- The school has developed a clear identity which is explicitly international and outward-looking. Staff provide all children with learning experiences in a wide range of programmes relating to their wellbeing. These include, for example, a strong focus on children's rights, global citizenship and emotional literacy. As a result, children can readily express their feelings and understand ways in which they can deal with negative emotions or seek help when needed. Teachers take account of experiences and outcomes when planning progressive programmes of children's learning in wellbeing. All staff promote an ethos and culture of inclusion, participation and positive relationships. Children across the school benefit from opportunities to participate in a wide range of groups. These support children well to develop their awareness of rights and local and global issues. Through these groups, children are developing a strong sense of their own voice and ability to make a difference through collective action.
- The school has robust systems in place to identify and address the needs of children. Staff make effective use of personalised planning, which includes appropriate learning targets to support individual children to raise their attainment. Children are increasingly engaged in identifying their own needs and agreeing on strategies to address them. Staff regularly review children's progress and take account of the views of children and parents appropriately. All staff understand their statutory duties and plan effectively to ensure that all children are included and well-supported to do their best in school. Pupil school assistants (PSAs) work effectively as part of the staff team to support children individually and in groups where specific needs have been identified. They lead a range of nurture groups and are clear and confident about the specific ways they provide care and support for children. Staff participate well in opportunities for professional learning and reflection to support children's wellbeing.
- Senior leaders and staff monitor children's attendance closely and address any issues affecting attendance successfully. The school has ambitious targets for attendance and maintains good levels of attendance, with no exclusions in the past five years.
- Senior leaders work with local churches to plan time and space for reflection during assemblies and at other times, such as during transition times. These are regularly aligned with school values and allow opportunities for staff and children to reflect on the things that matter to them most. They link well with work across the local community to support families. Teachers plan Religious and Moral Education (RME) taking account of the resources available to them in the

local community. Staff align children's learning well in RME with the wide range of work undertaken in the school around global awareness and citizenship. Teachers should continue to explore how RME can help support children's development of critical thinking skills.

- Teachers ensure that planned learning for children takes account of a wide range of issues and contexts relating to inclusion and equality. School partners engage effectively in providing a variety of contexts for learning to meet the needs of different groups of children and individuals. The significant provision for learning about children's rights is supporting children across the school to understand and discuss their own rights. They would benefit from further opportunities to engage in dialogue with peers about how they can apply their learning about rights to their own real-life experiences and contexts in the classroom and areas where they play and interact across the school.
- A range of partners contribute effectively to offer a variety of contexts for learning for identified groups and individuals. Working with partners, staff have developed a range of successful projects which are supporting children's wellbeing. Commendably, partners have shared this successful work with other schools in the local area. Partners welcome the openness, support and enthusiasm shown by the headteacher and are keen to develop their engagement with the school further. This could include, for example, staff working with partners to evaluate the skills children are developing to improve their wellbeing. The school should continue to develop ways to evaluate the extent to which its approaches are having a positive impact on the wellbeing of children and young people most affected by poverty.
- The headteacher promotes collaborative team working and this is a strength of the school. She is supporting this through a continuing focus on staff wellbeing. The headteacher and staff have taken particular care to ensure they have regular opportunities to offer and receive support as well as celebrate their work and enjoy time together socially. Along with well-targeted professional learning, this has supported staff well in recent months. Staff continue to demonstrate a strong collective commitment to the headteacher's vision for school improvement to ensure the best possible outcomes for children.

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, children's progress in literacy and numeracy is good at the first level and very good at the early and second Curriculum for Excellence levels. Across the school, a few children have exceeded these levels. As the headteacher has identified, there is scope for a minority of children to progress further, at a greater rate, in order to achieve more. The headteacher and staff have identified accurately features of attainment which have been impacted by the pandemic. For example, in writing and numeracy. Children's attainment at the first level has been particularly affected. We agree with senior leaders the need to raise attainment in writing and aspects of numeracy to maintain and exceed current levels of attainment. Across the school, children's attainment in reading and listening and talking are strong. Most children with additional support needs are making good progress towards their targets in learning.

Literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and English. At early level, children enjoy regularly listening to stories. Staff use themes from shared books to support children to share and describe their feelings. At first level, children take turns and contribute appropriately to discussion about texts. Children at second level talk with confidence and clarity. They contribute relevant ideas and opinions when engaging with others. Overall, children are respectful in their responses to each other. Most children contribute willingly and are keen to answer questions in class.
- At early level, most children recognise the names of characters from a familiar book. At first level, children have access to a variety of texts. They can identify features of both fiction and non-fiction texts. At second level, children talk very confidently about their reading preferences. They can articulate what they enjoy most about particular authors. Children can articulate strategies which support meaning and understanding of texts. At the start of first level, most children use their knowledge of sounds to spell common words. As children progress through first level, they describe spelling strategies which support the spelling of both familiar and unfamiliar words. At second level, children regularly write for a range of purposes. They use a range of punctuation. Children make appropriate decisions about layout and presentation. They consider the needs of the audience they are writing for. Children use feedback from teachers and peers to improve their writing skills.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Through play contexts, most children at the early level can work confidently with numbers to 20 and beyond. The majority of children at first level have a good understanding of place value, and measure, using different means. Children are confident in two and three-digit addition and subtraction challenges, but are less confident in division and multiplication. At second level, most children show a good awareness of the link between fractions, decimals and percentages and can

identify with confidence ways to calculate distance and time. The headteacher and staff have identified, children across the school are not yet confident in word problems.

- Overall, most children use mathematical language confidently and appropriately to describe properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At the first and second level, children understand and confidently use angles, directions and co-ordinates. They use practical and active mathematical and numeracy games to apply their skills.
- Across the school, children undertake surveys and interpret and display information in a range of ways. This includes through very confident use of digital technology. At the second level, display and analyse data, including in real life contexts.

Attainment over time

- Overall, school data indicates high levels of attainment over a sustained period. The headteacher tracks children's attainment and is able to demonstrate the good progress children have made. The headteacher monitors and tracks attainment in a very effective way. Monitoring and tracking of attainment is particularly robust at a strategic level, including with trends studied. Staff make effective use of assessments and National Benchmarks. They are increasing in confidence in professional judgements using a wide variety of data, to ensure good progress for learners. Staff are continuing to gain skills and confidence in use of the school's comprehensive data dashboard to support improvements. They use a range of appropriate interventions in order to address gaps in aspects of learning. As planned, staff should continue to develop further staff's confidence in professional judgements, assessments and analysis of data. The headteacher and staff track literacy, numeracy and health and well-being, with plans to extend this to other areas of the curriculum. As identified, extending tracking of all areas of the curriculum would enhance monitoring of children's progress and attainment, in order to support very good progress of learners.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are personally and socially adept and show a confidence and understanding of their rights, responsibilities and their place as global citizens. Staff acknowledge that partnership work to support achievements has diminished through the pandemic. As such, they have taken creative approaches to ensure that children access a variety of opportunities to achieve. Staff celebrate children's achievements in classes, at assemblies and throughout the school community with newsletters and social media. They use class blogs and online platforms effectively to share successes and support access remotely for parents and partners to school life. The headteacher and staff have effective systems in place to record achievements and track development of skills through planned opportunities in the curriculum. The school should continue to this tracking and linking of skills children are developing both within and out with the school, to support progression in learning.

Equity for all learners

- Through development and use of the comprehensive school data dashboard, the headteacher has sound systems in place to monitor attainment and target interventions. This is reducing attainment gaps and accelerating progress. This includes detailed and thorough strategic tracking of different needs throughout the school. Key areas include attainment over time of children affected by challenges such as poverty, aspects of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis or particular needs. The headteacher and staff are proactive in ensuring equity of opportunity for all children, for example, utilising additional funding through the Scottish Attainment Challenge and PEF, to support individuals and groups of children and families. Through compassionate leadership of the headteacher, this is all undertaken in very sensitive and appropriate ways with children, families and wider school partners. As planned, the headteacher and staff should continue to monitor interventions thoroughly, including working

with partners, amending interventions as appropriate. This will be important to ensure maximum effectiveness and to improve outcomes for all.

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.