

Summarised inspection findings

Halyrude Primary School

Scottish Borders Council

18 June 2024

Key contextual information

Halyrude Primary School is a denominational school situated in the Tweeddale learning community in the Scottish Borders. At the time of inspection, the school roll is 79 pupils, organised across four classes. The headteacher has been in post for almost seven years. In September 2022, 16% of children lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 4 with the remainder living in deciles 6 to 10. Approximately 35% of children on the school roll are recorded as having an additional support need. 33% of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL).

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, there is a calm, nurturing and welcoming environment. Relationships are very positive between adults and children, and between children in the school. Children are confident, friendly, articulate and well-mannered. Almost all children are settled and attentive during lessons and engage very well in learning. Most children know the school values of 'achieving, included and respectful'. Staff should now ensure the school values are fully embedded to underpin the caring ethos of the school.
- Most older children have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the life and the work of the school. For example, children helped to improve the school library and recently worked with staff to organise the 'Halyreads' reading festival. This is helping to promote a culture of reading for enjoyment throughout the school.
- Teachers engage in regular professional learning, for example in relation to oracy, play and literacy. They use this to improve their practice. Teachers use well the school's learning, teaching and assessment framework to support a shared understanding of the features of high-quality teaching and learning. As a result, in all lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning well and how children can be successful. They provide clear instructions and explanations. Teachers should now ensure all learning activities are appropriately matched to children's levels of ability. This will help ensure all children make the best possible progress in their learning.
- Across the school, children enjoy opportunities to work independently, in pairs and groups. This supports well children's engagement in learning. Children would benefit from more opportunities to lead their own learning. In addition, staff should now work together to increase the use of motivating contexts for learning, for example through making better use of the local environment and real-life contexts.
- In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to check children's understanding. As planned, teachers should continue to develop their use of questioning to develop children's higher order thinking skills.

- All teachers use praise well and provide supportive verbal feedback in lessons. Written feedback is most effective in writing activities but does not always clearly identify children's next steps in learning. There is a need to continue to improve children's confidence in approaches to self and peer-assessment. This will help children to develop the language of meaningful reflection and evaluation.
- The school is at the early stages of introducing play experiences into younger children's daily routines and as part of learning. Younger children contribute to planning a few play experiences. For example, recently children's views were used responsively to shape learning related to a topic on castles. There is a need to continue to develop the balance of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-initiated opportunities in line with national practice guidance. This will help staff to support children to build progressively on their skills and experiences through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) early and first levels.
- Digital technology is used well across the school to support teaching and learning. Children regularly use a range of digital resources and applications to extend and share their learning, including programmable toys and coding. Very effective use of a digital platform is ensuring children have opportunities to share their learning with parents and complete tasks within school. Parents comment positively on the effectiveness of this system to enable them to share in their child's learning.
- Support staff assist children well with their learning, both in class and when working with small groups. They are sensitive to the needs and wellbeing of all children. Support staff provide a range of interventions which is helping children with barriers to their learning to make progress.
- Children complete a range of summative assessments, including, standardised assessments which supports teacher's professional judgements. Staff should continue to work together to ensure assessment is integral to the planning process and makes greater use of the national Benchmarks. This will support teachers to further strengthen their understanding of children's progress within and achievement of CfE levels.
- Teachers plan across the year using progression pathways for almost all curricular areas. This ensures that learning is being tracked each term, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Children have the opportunity to contribute to planning interdisciplinary topics. Children should continue to be involved in the planning of learning in other areas of the curriculum. This will help children to have a greater ownership of their learning.
- The headteacher meets with staff termly to discuss children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Tracking information is used to identify children who may require additional support. Staff should continue to monitor how well tracking information is used to support strategies to raise attainment for all children.
- Teachers have participated in cluster level moderation work to develop a shared understanding of expected standards, particularly in writing. Teachers should continue to engage in moderation activities with colleagues within the school and cluster. This will support them to develop their confidence in applying national standards accurately when assessing children's progress in 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

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

- Due to the small size of the school roll, attainment and progress will be expressed in overall statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.
- In session 2022/2023, overall most children achieved expected CfE levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Overall, the majority of children are on track to attain expected levels this session. A few children are working beyond their expected level in literacy and numeracy. A minority of children are capable of achieving more in their learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in listening and talking and reading. The majority are making good progress in writing. Most children who require support with their learning are making satisfactory progress towards their individual learning targets. Children who are new to English, are supported well and as a result, are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- At early level, children benefit from being explicitly taught listening and talking skills. This is helping most children make attempts to take turns and follow instructions. At first level, most children listen well and speak articulately when expressing their opinions. They recognise the difference between fact and opinion. At second level, most children listen respectfully to the opinions of others. They contribute effectively to group discussions and can give ideas and explain their views. They would benefit from continuing to apply their skills in listening and talking in different situations.

Reading

- Children who are on track to achieve early level, use their knowledge of sounds and letter patterns to read unfamiliar words. At first level, most children read with fluency and expression. They describe the genres of books that they enjoy. Children discuss authors and make predictions about texts with confidence. At second level, most children discuss well their choices of books to read for pleasure, linked to genre and characterisation. They apply a range of reading skills and strategies such as skimming and scanning with confidence. Children at second level would benefit from more practice answering a broader range of inferential and evaluative questions on texts.

Writing

- Children who are on track to achieve early level, write sentences using capital letters and full stops. At first level, the majority of children write to convey information, describe events and persuade the reader. They spell commonly used words with confidence. At second level, the

majority of children write across a variety of genres for different purposes. They make use of success criteria to apply key features of different genres in their writing. At second level, children would benefit from writing extended pieces for a wider range of purposes.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Children who are on track to achieve early level, count up to and back from 20. They use the correct mathematical language when comparing height and size. At first level, the majority of children round numbers to 100 successfully. The majority accurately add and subtract three-digit numbers. They are less confident in applying their skills in multiplication and division to solve problems. At second level, most children confidently carry out money calculations. They are confident at comparing fractions, percentages and decimals.

Shape, position and movement

- Children who are on track to achieve early level, recognise and name simple two-dimensional (2D) shapes. They confidently identify a symmetrical shape. At first level, the majority of children know the main points of the compass and use them to provide directions. They identify right angles and describe the properties of 2D shapes. At second level, most children confidently identify 2D shapes and three-dimensional objects and explain their properties using the correct mathematical language. They are confident describing and classifying a variety of angles.

Information handling

- Children who are on track to achieve early level, use knowledge of colour, shape and size correctly to match and sort items. At first level, the majority of children create bar graphs and extract information accurately. At second level, most children interpret information and draw conclusions from graphs with accuracy.

Attainment over time

- The small numbers of children at each stage mean that any trends in attainment data over time are unreliable. The headteacher has created an overview of individual children's and groups of children's attainment over time in literacy and numeracy. This shows children make good progress as they proceed through the school. The headteacher should now ensure that information on attainment of children over time is interrogated with teachers. This will help teachers ensure all children make the best possible progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Attendance levels have in the past few years been lower than national and local authority averages but are now improving. The headteacher is aware of reasons for children's absences, including the impact of parents taking children on holiday. The introduction of a free breakfast club is helping to improve levels of attendance and late-coming. The headteacher promotes well the importance of children attending school every day through newsletters and communications with parents. As planned, the headteacher should continue to monitor the attendance of all children and ensure appropriate follow-up action for children whose attendance is decreasing.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements are celebrated in class, on social media, in newsletters and at assemblies. Children select work they are proud of for their profile on a digital platform to record and share their learning and achievements.

- Children attend a range of clubs led by school staff, parents and partners, such as the chess club, netball and running. These activities support children to learn skills such as teamwork. Most older children have leadership roles, for example as Junior Road Safety Officers, digital leaders and through the pupil council. Older children talk confidently about how these roles have improved their sense of responsibility and confidence. Staff should now work with children to identify and track the skills they are developing through these activities.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a very good understanding of the socioeconomic factors which affect families, including the cost of living and the cost of the school day. The headteacher effectively signposts relevant partners to support families' wellbeing. This is having a positive impact on children's attendance, wellbeing and readiness to learn.
- The headteacher uses data effectively to identify attainment gaps in literacy and numeracy between children who are most disadvantaged and their peers. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Fund money well to employ additional staff who provide effective support through targeted interventions for identified children. Evaluations show the positive impact of interventions on improving children's confidence, engagement with learning and, for some, attainment. The headteacher should continue to work with staff to accelerate progress in raising attainment for children in identified groups. This will help to continue to narrow identified attainment gaps.

Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- Children across the school learn French. Children are not yet receiving their full entitlement to a 1+2 approach to modern languages.
- Children benefit from a well-resourced school library. This is supporting a culture of reading for pleasure.

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.