

Summarised inspection findings

Caerlaverock Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

17 September 2019

Key contextual information

Caerlaverock Primary School serves the local community in the villages of Glencaple and Bankend and nearby surrounding area. In addition, there are a few placing requests annually. The current school roll is 24. The headteacher has been in post since 2012. She is supported well by a principal teacher.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Led by the head teacher, very positive relationships are a key feature of the school community. These underpin a very strong, positive ethos which is evident throughout. There is a warm and caring environment in Caerlaverock Primary School where all children are valued as individuals. They show kindness and empathy towards each other and are enthusiastic to learn. All staff have an inclusive approach to supporting children.
- Overall, the quality of learning and teaching across the school is very good. Teachers successfully ensure that children's learning is motivating and meaningful. This includes using the outdoor environment well to deliver a variety of learning activities. Children have an increasing number of opportunities to learn and apply new skills in a variety of real life contexts, including growing their own vegetables. They work individually, in pairs and collaborate well in groups.
- Teachers make effective use of digital technologies to support and enrich children's learning. Children have a wide range opportunities to learn using digital approaches. These include using tablet computers to take photographs, contributing to the community website, using programmable toys and coding.
- All children contribute very effectively to the life of the school and the community. They participate enthusiastically in a range of well-planned learning activities. For example, through their provision of soup lunches for local residents. All children have opportunities to express their views through their contributions to the eco group, the health and wellbeing group and the pupil council. Children have a good understanding of their responsibilities as responsible citizens and effective contributors as a result. They are confident that their views are sought, valued and acted upon.
- Staff know children's strengths and needs very well. They use this knowledge very effectively to plan appropriate learning experiences. They meet children's needs well through suitably differentiated tasks and activities. A few children are capable of being challenged further. In all lessons, teachers explanations and instructions are clear. They share what is to be learned and in almost all lessons children are able to review how successful they have been. Teachers use questioning effectively to check understanding and build on prior learning. In examples of highly effective practice, teachers use questioning very well to promote higher order thinking.

Teachers involve the children in effective plenary sessions at the end of each lesson. Teachers should now consider providing the children with more opportunities to self and peer assess in all curricular areas. Teachers and children should now focus on using agreed success criteria to improve the quality of feedback.

- Teachers work well collaboratively with partner school colleagues to develop planning approaches which identify clearly what is to be learned and assessed. They ensure that assessment is integral to their planning. Teachers have a clear understanding of the relationship between planned learning and teaching and ongoing assessment. They make very effective use of a variety of assessment approaches including standardised assessments. Teachers make very good use of national benchmarks when reviewing a range of assessment evidence which is valid and reliable. This includes evidence of children's ability to demonstrate their skills in different contexts across the curriculum. Teachers are becoming increasingly confident about the accuracy of their judgements regarding achievement of a level.
- Teachers participate enthusiastically in a range of moderation activities with one another and with teachers from cluster schools. Together they engage frequently in professional dialogue and value opportunities to work collaboratively and learn from each other. The level of professional trust that exists is enhancing the quality of moderation activity. There is scope to strengthen approaches to moderation further across key points of transition.
- Each term, teachers have well-focused meetings with the headteacher and additional support staff to discuss children's progress. Approaches to tracking and monitoring the progress of individual children are systematic and very thorough. These meetings are effective in identifying appropriate interventions for children who require support. Teachers have a detailed understanding of the needs of all children. Any factors which present barriers to learning are identified, monitored and addressed to improve outcomes for specific children.

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

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

- There are two multi-stage classes in the school. Because each cohort in this school has fewer than ten children, only general statements about progress have been used to ensure individual anonymity. Data presented by the school in 2017-2018 indicates that, overall, most children are achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. Classroom observation, evidence in jotters, pupil profiles, conversations with children and results from senior leader analysis, support present teacher judgements. The headteacher is confident that the school's attainment figures are accurate over the last three years as a result of the very individualised tracking in place.
- Staff use a wide range of assessments. This includes Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) data annually and various formative and summative assessments to assess children's skills in literacy and numeracy. Support for learning staff use baseline reading assessments to ascertain children's starting point and then from there individualised interventions are put in place to support and help develop children's skills. Pupil profile folders are used by staff and pupils, four times a year, to demonstrate a record of best work completed. Staff use Curriculum for Excellence assessment tracking data well to log present skills levels. They also use Curriculum for Excellence benchmarks well to break down the skills being overtaken within a level. Evidence presented from all assessment data shows that almost all pupils, including learners with additional challenges, are making progress. Support for learning staff are very effective with staff providing guidance and support for school practitioners and specific learners. This includes advice offered in relation to planning and tracking meetings, suggestions for the development of resources for particular pupils and personalised and focused input for learners, both individually and in small groups. Overall, staff report that most children are making good progress in English language and literacy.

Listening and talking

- At all levels, listening and talking targets are set out clearly. At the early stages, children demonstrate that they can talk about simple stories and real life events. They can listen well to instructions and wait until a person has finished before offering their own viewpoint. They are very enthusiastic learners who can retell examples of the information they are learning, for example, during their work on festivals. Children are encouraged to be reflective. They express their views clearly and can follow instructions, offering their own opinions on the quality of their learning. At first level, children are developing their ability to share their opinions and can justify their own views. In small group work, children are very keen to contribute their ideas and opinions. They listen carefully, for example, to teacher instructions, recounting their experiences and using gestures and expression. At second level, children can make informed decisions and explain their thinking with increasing use of vocabulary confidence on a variety of topics. Most children listen actively when other children are speaking.

Reading

- At early level, most children read a variety of simple texts including digital texts, non-fiction and fiction rhyming texts. They continue their access to digital texts and other reading texts at home thus increasing their exposure to reading. Children can describe their likes and dislikes about events well. They enjoy using phonics and phonic readers to help them read and talk about characters within simple stories with enthusiasm. At first level, children are reading novels independently and aloud to each other. A few demonstrate very well their use of expression. Children are developing their use of vocabulary well and can read common words with accuracy. They enjoy experimenting with words to extend their vocabulary. Children use Scottish texts, including learning and performing the poetry of Robert Burns. At second level, children select and read more complex reading texts, skimming and scanning to identify particular information. Children use texts for a range of purposes and can answer inferential questions related to a text. They can discuss how the writer uses language to convey meaning in the novels which they are reading. Almost all children, at every level, enjoy using digital packages to support their literacy outcomes, including improving their reading skills. Staff recognise that a few learners need further support improve to their reading further.

Writing

- At the early stages, most children use common words well, hold their pencil properly, write sentences using capital letters and can use full stops to create simple sentences. Children enjoy talking about their writing. By the end of first level, most children write well for a variety of purposes including use of rhyming poetry, note taking and report writing after interviews. They can use punctuation and connectives well to link their ideas. They enjoy using their developing writing skills across the curriculum, for example through their religious and moral education work or in how they report on their learning on countries across the world. At second level, most children write regularly using a variety of genres. This includes advanced note taking, writing up research and personal and imaginative writing, including through writing poetry. They can use similes, adverbs and adjectives to provide additional interest for the reader. Teacher feedback in writing tasks, at all levels, needs to be developed further and become more evaluative. Feedback should be linked to Curriculum for Excellence levels and should also ensure that children are clear about the level they are working at, the particular skills to be overtaken within any task, and the collation of those skills already overtaken.

French

- Children demonstrated the acquisition of strong skills in spoken French. They can ask for help confidently using learned phrases and enjoyed collaborating together to role play with support from the use of symbols and pictures. They can express their learning in French well through writing simple French phrases.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics as they move through the school. Data shared by the school demonstrates that, at key points, most children will achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels. A few children have attained beyond the expected levels. Numeracy has been identified as a priority for improvement, with an initial focus on the development of mental maths skills.

Number, money and measurement

- At early level, children are able to order all numbers from 0 – 20 forwards and backwards. They can identify the number before, the number after and the missing numbers in a sequence within 20. They add and subtract mentally within ten. They link daily routines to the school day and read analogue and digital o'clock times. Children need greater exposure to using coins to pay the exact value for items up to ten pence. At first level, children recognise a four digit number written in words, when one of the digits is zero. They use the correct notation for

common fractions up to tenths. Children working at second level can order numbers less than zero and locate them on a number line. They are able to calculate the perimeter and area of rooms in their school using an architect's scale drawing. They read and record time in both 12 hour and 24 hour notation. Children use their knowledge to convert times between the two. They can calculate durations of activities using either notation. They are less confident using their knowledge of equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages to solve problems.

Shape, position and movement

- At early and first level, children can identify symmetry in aspects of the outdoor environment and in patterns. At early level they are able to identify, describe and create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. They recognise and describe common 2D shapes and 3D objects according to various criteria, for example, straight, round, flat and curved. Children at first level complete symmetrical patterns given one line of symmetry. Those children working at second level identify and describe 3D objects and 2D shapes within their environment. They use mathematical terms such faces, edges, radius, diameter and circumference well as they learn.

Information handling

- At early level, the children contribute to pictorial displays using their knowledge of numbers, shapes and colours to match and sort items. They ask simple questions to collect data. At first level, children ask and answer questions to extract key information from bar graphs and tables. They are less confident in identifying the probability of an event using words. Children at second level collect, organise, interpret and display data accurately in a variety of ways, including through the use of digital technology. They can, for example, create surveys, tables, bar graphs, simple pie charts and spreadsheets.

Attainment over time

- Over the last three years, school tracking data demonstrates an improving picture in children's progress over time. The headteacher reports that teachers have moderated their assessment standards with each other and through cluster work. The headteacher is confident that staff are developing a very systematic overview of attainment. Partnering with another nearby school is providing additional value in the improvement of staff moderation standards. From the wide variety of assessment data, staff are able to measure the added value for all children in their learning as move through the stages. Differentiation of tasks is demonstrated well across the levels, within carousel tasks and from the use of personalised, individual success criteria.

Achievement

- Children are developing a broad range of skills which support them to achieve well. For example, through raising substantial amounts for various charities, developing performance and sports skills and through the acquisition of strong citizenship skills. They demonstrate teamwork in health and wellbeing from participation in out-of-school activities such as hockey, rugby and swimming. These skills also enable children to improve their fitness levels. Children gain skills in citizenship through their participation in a variety of local community events. They raise funds for a variety of charities, including Children in Need and Comic Relief. Children develop their performance skills and gain confidence singing and performing in the very impressive whole school show. Staff work well to ensure that children are offered a very wide range of opportunities to develop their skills. They now need to put in place a systematic, analytical and evaluative overview of achievement, including clarity on the skills achieved and the level of skill development. This will support staff to identify more fully the needs of any child at risk of missing out and to deepen skills for those learners. Staff celebrate achievement well through, for example, pupil of the week certificates and through monthly achievement assemblies. There is an ongoing focus on the continued development

of the school's vision and values. This enables children to embrace the school's very positive ethos where they demonstrate friendship, self-belief, teamwork, independence and achievement consistently. Staff understand that they now need to place further emphasis on developing links with parents and other local partners to enhance children's skills for life and work. To support developments in this area, staff are already developing a useful progression framework outlining the skills needed to prepare for learning, life and work.

Equity for all learners

- Staff, including support staff, know the children who are facing barriers in their learning well, and provide them with appropriately individualised pathways of support to help them develop their skills. Senior leaders and staff are using the small amount of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to enhance their staffing complement. Additional digital learning resources were bought and the headteacher also offered support for practitioners to receive additional training to enhance learning in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher has monitored and evaluated the impact of PEF on individual learners and there have been small improvements in their attainment. The enhanced use of digital resources is helping children to extend their reading, writing and numeracy skills. The headteacher understands that strong attendance supports improvement for those who face additional challenges. Staff monitor attendance carefully. In 2017-2018 attendance was 97.1%, which is above the national average. In addition there have been no exclusions over the previous seven years.

Other relevant evidence

- The headteacher provides very strong, highly effective and supportive leadership. She leads and manages change well in collaboration with staff. The headteacher is very well regarded by learners, parents and staff. All stakeholders are rightly proud of the highly positive ethos demonstrated across the school.

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.