

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Agatha's RC Primary School and Nursery Class**

Fife Council

17 March 2020

## Key contextual information

St Agatha's RC Primary School is a denominational school situated in the town of Leven. At the time of inspection, there are 233 children across nine classes on the school roll. There have been significant changes in staffing in recent years. The majority of the school roll lives in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones one to three. Approximately 30% of children in P4-P7 are registered for free school meals, which is above the national average.

### 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

- Taking up post in 2016, the headteacher brought much-needed stability after the school had a number of headteachers over a short period of time. She has prioritised building trust and relationships with staff, children and parents and established herself as a caring leader.
- Senior leaders, in consultation with staff, children and parents, developed the school vision, values and aims in 2017. The four values of resilience, morals, manners and respect are displayed, however, these are not regularly referred to in the daily life of the school. Senior leaders revisit the school motto 'Call on the living God' and make links to Gospel values to support the school community. The headteacher needs to revisit the school vision, values and aims with all staff, children and families to ensure these are relevant, aspirational and capture the unique aspects of the community.
- Using information from school self-evaluation and attainment data, senior leaders are beginning to plan more effectively for school improvement, making links with national and associated schools group priorities. While there are positive signs of impact in the development of a few areas of focus, overall, the pace of change across the school needs to increase. All staff, along with parents and partners, need to be involved in agreeing and evaluating school improvement priorities, which have clear focus on raising children's attainment and achievement.
- The school is in receipt of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), which is used for a number of targeted interventions. The headteacher's sound understanding of the local context and community should be used to develop a clear strategy with staff for closing the attainment gap and raising attainment across the school. Approaches to measure the impact of new resources and interventions supported by PEF to ensure maximum benefit for children are not yet robust.
- Senior leaders implement a range of planned appropriate activities across the year to quality assure the work of the school, however, these processes are not yet securing sufficient improvement in outcomes for children. Opportunities for staff to share practice with colleagues from other schools is beginning to support evaluation of their work. To ensure high quality learning and teaching, and improved outcomes for all children, senior leaders need to strengthen the school's quality assurance.

- Senior leaders encourage a collaborative ethos and this has increased staff confidence in leading aspects of change. All teachers reflect appropriately through annual professional review and development, linked to the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards and engage in relevant professional learning. Recently, almost all teachers have selected a particular area of interest to lead, for example, as Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) champion, and this is beginning to support colleagues and school improvement.
- Senior leaders value and are increasing children's participation in school improvement. A few children across the school work in committee groups, such as eco committee. This is supporting pupil consultation and leadership development. Groups share their work through displays, 'house huddles' and assemblies. Increasingly, children feel they are listened to and their opinions count. The pupil learning council are beginning to look at improving learning using 'How good is OUR school?' (2018) and a few children are developing a child-friendly version of the school improvement plan. Staff should continue to explore and support further opportunities for children to participate meaningfully in school improvement processes.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- There is a welcoming ethos across the school. Most children are happy at school and keen to learn. There are positive relationships between adults and children. When given suitable learning experiences, most children interact well with their peers, during learning and when working in pairs and small groups.
- In those lessons where staff deliver activities at the right level, children display greater engagement and participation in their learning. The majority of lessons are too teacher directed and the pace of children's learning does not always support them to make appropriate progress in their learning. Staff should ensure that children's tasks and activities are at the right level of difficulty to meet more effectively their learning needs.
- Support staff assist children's learning well in class and small group activities. Teachers should increase planned learning for open-ended tasks to enable children to consolidate and build on their learning across the curriculum. They should support children to lead their own learning and develop regularly their higher order thinking skills. Staff should review their use of learning and teaching time across the school day to increase children's engagement and interest. Currently, children spend too much time on learning activities which do not provide sufficient challenge.
- In most classes, staff use technology to support teaching via interactive screens. A few lessons include digital games, for example to practice mental agility. Across the school, staff need to involve children more in using a wider range of digital technologies to support and enhance their learning.
- In most classes, teachers have introduced learning walls to track children's progress in learning. A few children can talk well about how these demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Staff should continue to develop this approach and, working together, explore how to use the learning walls to increase children's participation in planning their learning.
- In the majority of lessons, children are aware of the purpose of their learning. In a few lessons, children can identify key features of how to be successful. Children receive helpful oral feedback during most lessons. In a few lessons, teachers conclude with an effective plenary which informs their planning and supports children to revisit key learning. Working together, teachers need to develop shared expectations and standards for written feedback across the curriculum. Currently, not all staff have high enough expectations for children's learning.

- In most classes, teachers use a range of assessment strategies to check children's understanding. In a few examples, teachers provide quality written feedback and opportunity for self or peer assessment. This has helped children improve the quality of their work. Children should be involved more effectively and consistently in self and peer assessment. Staff are developing approaches to assess children's progress in learning. They should continue to develop a shared understanding of what high quality assessment looks like.
- Teachers' initial engagement in moderation activities is supporting them to develop their understanding of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels. They are supportive of each other and work in a collaborative manner. Staff are beginning to use National Benchmarks to support their professional judgements and assessment in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders and teachers should build on this work to support them to make robust and reliable professional judgements about children's progress and attainment.
- Senior leaders and teachers track children's progress through termly meetings, which include discussions on planning, attainment and any wellbeing concerns. Senior leaders should ensure that these discussions focus more effectively on children's progress, including those who face additional challenges. Teachers are beginning to analyse data from assessments to identify patterns. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to use information gathered to ensure interventions planned for specific children are the most appropriate and make a difference for children's attainment.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders and staff are developing the curriculum across the school. Teachers make appropriate use of progression pathways for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff have recently developed progressive plans for interdisciplinary learning and STEM. This development work is showing early positive signs of impact. Working together, staff should continue to develop remaining curricular areas to provide clear pathways to progress children's learning.
- Teachers make good use of a local authority outdoor learning programme to provide children with planned opportunities to develop their skills and understanding of learning for sustainability. For example, children making regular use of the school's grounds and local area, applying their knowledge from a range of curricular areas through enjoyable, challenging experiences.
- Staff are building on their approach to Developing the Young Workforce. Teachers are beginning to use progression pathways appropriately to help children to build on what they already know. Children need to be supported by staff to understand how the skills they are developing are relevant to learning, life and the world of work.
- At the upper stages, a few children benefit from participation in an outreach programme with the University of St Andrews. This project is developing their curriculum experiences and increasing awareness of university skills and accessibility. Building on this work for the benefit of the whole school, the headteacher has identified developing tracking further, in partnership with secondary schools, to categorise sustainable successful destinations reached by the children of St Agatha's. Senior leaders plan to use this information when developing the school curriculum further.
- At the early primary stages, staff are developing a play-based curriculum, which is encouraging children's independence and motivation. Staff need to work collaboratively with practitioners in the nursery, to ensure children experience greater continuity in their learning. It is important that senior leaders and staff evaluate regularly to monitor the impact of their play approaches, including on pace of learning and children's progress.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents are valued as partners at the school. Staff ensure parents and all visitors are welcomed in school. Parents feel confident to seek guidance and information from appropriate staff and personnel. Staff share helpful information about school life in a range of ways, including newsletters, social media and through 'sharing the learning' sessions. Increasing numbers of parents engage in these activities and appreciate finding out about their children's learning and school life.
- Parents of children, who need extra help in their lives and learning, feel very well supported by school staff and partners. Regular contact, activities and meetings support parents to help their children at home and in the community.
- Most parents support the school well at regular fundraising and social events. Musical events attract large audiences and parents are proud to watch their children perform. Senior leaders and Parent Council members are eager to work together to encourage more parents to be involved in their children's learning and school events. Recent Parent Council meetings have attracted growing numbers of parents who are keen to participate in school improvement. Parents and school staff are beginning to work together to consider the cost of the school day.

## 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

satisfactory

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

- Children's wellbeing is central to the work of all staff at the school. Staff know children, their families and the community well. They understand the challenges children and their families face, including financial and health issues. They work well with a range of partners from Fife Council and across the local community to identify children's needs and plan steps to improve outcomes for children. Staff have worked well together to establish warm and caring relationships with children. Children and their families are valued and respected. Staff strive to ensure all children are included in learning and the life of the school. The school's approach to wellbeing and inclusion offers children regular opportunities to talk to adults.
- Almost all children feel safe in school. They have regular opportunities to talk about life at school, in class and in 'house huddles' at assembly. Learning time is dedicated to ensuring children engage in discussion around personal safety. As a result, children can describe what to do if they feel bullied or see bullying happening. They talk with confidence about keeping safe on their way to school. They are alert to any risks when playing outdoors in the community and know what to do if they have concerns about internet safety. Staff recognise the need to review anti-bullying approaches to take account of up-to-date national guidance. Children are aware of the need to be active to ensure a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy two hours quality physical education each week and an increasing number participate in sports activities led by Active Schools. A majority of children also participate in activities out with school, including karate, football and dance. Children are less confident to articulate the importance of healthy eating to support their wellbeing and development. Senior leaders should develop the school dining experience to offer children learning opportunities, which develop social skills and promote healthy eating.
- The staff has invested considerable time and professional learning to the development of St Agatha's as a nurturing school. They have been well supported by the Fife Pedagogy Team. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the wellbeing and learning of children who have been targeted. Children enjoy spending time in 'The Hub', where they are well supported to express their feelings and views and develop strategies to cope well in class and in the playground. Staff's interventions have supported a few children who have been targeted to spend all of their time in class and engage well in learning. Staff note improvements in children's perseverance and resilience. Staff need to extend further their nurturing approaches to ensure this key school value is embedded in daily practice by all. Parents appreciate the support provided to children in class and by specialist staff and partners. This includes the Fife Family Support Service and Methilhill Community Children's Initiative where children and their parents develop a range of life skills and feel more confident in their school and family lives. The school has well-progressed plans to introduce interventions to support children experiencing anxiety in order to improve their wellbeing and capacity to learn.

- Led by the headteacher, all staff are developing approaches to help ensure that all children participate appropriately in learning in class. A team of skilled support staff is well deployed around the school to help children keep on task and join in class activities. As staff continue to improve their approaches to planning and assessment, they need to ensure that the learning needs of all children in class are met. Staff should reflect on themes emerging in children's needs as they move through school, and consider early intervention strategies and universal support for children at early level. For example, speech and language. A few children are on the periphery of learning and activity in class. Although they are invited to join in class activities, they are not always active participants. The school should continue to work with local authority officers to ensure all children are in receipt of their full entitlement to education. Staff should review how learning spaces are utilised across the school to meet the needs of all children more effectively and make best use of teacher and support staff time.
- As they move through the school, children take on leadership roles. This includes being young leaders, house captains, and as participants in a range of school committees and groups. Children are experiencing responsibility, and developing a range of organisational and communication skills. Children note that they feel confident to take on jobs in school.
- Staff ensure that children have regular opportunity in class to reach an understanding of their rights. Children in the middle and upper stages talk with confidence about their discussions around the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They link this understanding with how they feel they should behave and treat others in school. The school is at an early stage in supporting children to understand the wellbeing indicators, and children are not able to talk about any progress they are making across the health and wellbeing curriculum.
- The school has systems in place to support staff identify the learning needs for those who face barriers to learning or who may need additional support with their learning. Where appropriate, children have individual plans and targets. The headteacher and support for learning staff keep these under regular review. They take steps to include children and their parents in meetings and discussions. Staff should continue to monitor individual children's progress to ensure all achieve their best. A few children across the school need more support to engage in learning across the school day.
- The headteacher is aware of and complies with a range of statutory requirements and guidance. She needs to ensure all staff, new and more experienced, keep abreast of current legislation through regular professional learning sessions, which includes a focus on equality. Children would benefit from a broader range of opportunities to learn about diversity in 21st century Scotland.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

- Teachers are beginning to engage in moderation activities to help them assess children's progress. Their professional judgement of children's achievement of CfE levels is not yet reliable and robust.
- Children with additional barriers to their learning, including those with additional support needs, are not making enough progress in their learning in literacy and numeracy.

### Literacy and English

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English language is satisfactory. The majority of children are making satisfactory progress at early and second level. Senior leaders have identified the need to improve attainment at first level in reading and writing.

### Listening and talking

- Across the school, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in listening and talking. By the end of early level, most children talk about simple stories and share aspects of their life. Most children hear and say the different letter sounds made in words. A few children become disengaged when listening in groups and class. Across first and second level, the majority of children are confident sharing their own experiences and expressing ideas. Most children require practice turn taking in group discussions. At second level, a few children answer higher order questions well. Across the school, children need to develop progressively their talking and listening skills, including presenting to class and larger audiences across the school.

### Reading

- Overall, most children are making good progress in reading. By the end of early level, most children use knowledge of sounds and letters to read simple words. Most children use knowledge of sight vocabulary and read aloud familiar texts with attention to simple punctuation. By the end of first level, most children explain preferences for particular novels and authors. The majority of children read a familiar piece of text and demonstrate understanding at a literal level. Children are less confident answering inferential and evaluative questions about texts. At second level, most children understand the purpose of text and can explain main ideas. A few read well with fluency, understanding and expression, using appropriate pace. Across the school, children need to develop further their progress in reading aloud with fluency and discussing inferential and evaluative questions about texts.

### Writing

- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in writing. Across the school, the quality of children's writing and presentation varies. In a few classes, children produce high quality pieces of writing for a range of purposes. By the end of early level, the majority of

children recognise letters and capitals and use these to create words and short, simple sentences. By the end of first level, the majority of children use simple punctuation accurately. They use their knowledge of phonics to help when spelling. A few name types and features of writing genre. Children at this level need to create extended pieces of writing. At second level, the majority of children are able to write extended pieces of text. Most children use a range of punctuation appropriately and the majority of children use paragraphs when writing. Children are not yet confident in recognising or applying elements writers use in different genres. Children across the school need to develop their writing skills progressively across different genre.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children are not attaining in line with their potential. Within aspects of numeracy, a few children across stages of the school are working beyond expected levels.

### **Number, money and measurement**

- By the end of early level, most children count and sequence numbers to 20 and double numbers to 10 mentally and with accuracy. Most use appropriate mathematical symbols correctly to record addition and confidently use everyday language to discuss capacity. Children are not yet confident with subtraction and need to develop their estimation skills. By the end of first level, the majority of children identify the value of each digit in a whole number with three digits and confidently round to the nearest ten and hundred. The majority of children answer addition and subtraction calculations with accuracy and explain their strategies. Most children record amounts of money accurately using the correct notation. Children need to develop their understanding of fractions and need to practice further simple word problems. At second level, most children round to the nearest 1000 and 10 000 and demonstrate understanding of place value. Most carry out calculations involving the four operations with increasing accuracy. The majority of children are beginning to understand relationships between speed, time and distance. Children need to develop further their understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. At first and second level, children need to improve their skills in mental agility, including recall of multiplication facts.

### **Shape position and movement**

- At early level, almost all children identify simple two-dimensional shapes and show understanding of the language of position and direction. Across first level, most children recognise and name two-dimensional shapes and simple three-dimensional objects using appropriate mathematical language. Children need to develop their knowledge of right angles. At second level, most children identify a range of angles and use their knowledge of coordinates to plot and record the location of a point. They are not yet confident in their understanding of circles and their properties.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, most children sort correctly, according to shape colour and size. By the end of first level, most children record amounts accurately using tally marks and understand information displayed within bar charts. Children are not yet confident in their understanding of Venn diagrams. Across second level, children collect, interpret and display data in different ways, including when using digital technology. Across first and second levels, children need to develop their understanding of probability, including vocabulary.

## Attainment over time

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and reading is improving. In particular, children's attainment at early level is increasing across all aspects of literacy and numeracy. The school does not gather information on children's progress systematically on areas of the curriculum. Senior leaders need to develop further their approaches to do this in order for them to have an overall view of children's progress in their learning across the broad general education.

## Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children's achievements in and out with school are recognised and celebrated in class, on wall displays and at assemblies. Children and their parents record their achievements through the St Andrew's Cluster, Community of Faith and Learning Junior Praxis Awards. Children strive to achieve gold awards in the three areas of 'Me and the Community', 'Talented Me' and 'Me and My Faith'. This promotes and celebrates skills developed as a citizen, in their hobbies and pursuits, and as a learner in a Roman Catholic School. Children develop their skills and confidence as caring citizens, regularly supporting others in need through fundraising events, for example for Scottish charities. They develop their knowledge of the environment through local beach cleaning, recycling projects and working towards Eco awards. Children have increased their knowledge of emergency first aid through participating in 'Heart Start'. A 'school fest' offered children the chance to demonstrate their skills achieved outwith school in sporting and cultural activities. Older children are developing a range of skills working towards the Pope Francis Faith Award. Their performance skills have been developed in school shows and sharing events with parents. For example, children recently shared their learning of African drumming, supported by Youth Music Initiative. Moving forward, children would benefit from linking their achievements to skills for learning, life and work and engaging with the Career Education Standard.

## Equity for all learners

- Teachers across the school strive to promote equity across learning for all children in an inclusive ethos. In the early stages of school, there are an increasing amount of children, facing barriers to their learning, achieving in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. This is as a result of targeted interventions, such as phonics and mental agility support. A number of interventions are too early in their development to be able to demonstrate impact on children's attainment. School leaders need to continue to monitor closely the impact of all targeted interventions to ensure they are positively impacting children's attainment and achievement.

## School Empowerment

### ■ Empowerment of the learning community

- A recent local authority in-service session has supported teachers' awareness and understanding of school empowerment. The headteacher recognises that this is an important priority to develop across the establishment. As a result, senior leaders are beginning to implement a range of strategies and approaches to begin to develop an empowered school community.
- Through building trust and working collaboratively, school staff are beginning to develop a supportive and empowering culture within the school. Teachers feel they are supported well by senior leaders. They are encouraged to take up leadership opportunities across the school or to try out new approaches in their classrooms, supported by new principal teachers. Practitioners in the nursery are becoming more confident to initiate change. For example, they have been developing the outdoor area in the early years setting.
- Senior leaders invite and encourage parent involvement in school life. Working together with the Parent Council, the headteacher is exploring ways to empower the wider parental body. For example, the headteacher is working with a group of parents on the school's relationships and anti-bullying policy.
- A number of children are beginning to grow in confidence through leadership committees to participate in decisions about the school community. A few involved feel that they are able to make a difference to school life.

## 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.