

# Summarised inspection findings

**Townhill Primary School and Nursery Class**

Fife Council

17 September 2019

## Key contextual information

Townhill Primary School is situated a mile from Dunfermline town centre, serving the villages of Townhill and Kingseat and the surrounding area. The school has a purpose built nursery and access to local woods at the rear of the building. At the time of inspection, there were nine classes in the school. There is a well-established senior leadership team with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher having been in post for 15 years and 21 years respectively.

### 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

- There is a welcoming, inclusive ethos at Townhill Primary School, underpinned by a commitment to children's rights and strong, positive relationships between staff and children. Learners across all stages are very respectful of each other and encourage each other to do their best. All staff work hard to provide a supportive and caring environment which promotes high aspirations and levels of ambition. This is in line with the school's values and vision of 'climbing the hill to success', which promotes equity of opportunity for all.
- Children are very proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about their learning and achievements. Pupil voice is strong across the school with a range of mechanisms in place for children to contribute to decision making. The involvement of all children in pupil groups, including a community links group and a group working with 'How Good is OUR School?', contributes to improvement. Initiatives, such as the Townhill Culture Café, provide meaningful ways to contribute to the wider community, develop an awareness of the local economy and build confidence. Leadership opportunities for children are developed through the school house system, playground leaders and by supporting younger children.
- The senior leadership team have worked effectively with staff to develop a shared understanding of what high quality learning looks like. The 'Learning, Teaching and Assessment' policy supports teachers to plan for progression, ensuring assessment is integral to learning and teaching. The 'five part' lesson is evident in all classes and staff regularly discuss learning and standards of work with children. This is done at timely intervals throughout lessons when children reflect on the steps to success and their own learning. In most classes, children receive high quality feedback which helps them to identify their strengths and next steps in literacy and numeracy. In the best examples, children are developing a very good understanding of themselves as learners. Further work to ensure all children have clear, individualised and measurable learning targets should continue as planned.
- Well planned, differentiated activities linked to children's interests help to ensure that almost all children are motivated and fully involved in the learning taking place. Learner engagement is strong in almost all classes. In a few lessons, a few children demonstrate off task behaviour. Teachers know children very well and in most lessons, provide appropriate pace and challenge

for individuals and groups. In most lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear although in a few lessons these are too lengthy. There are good examples of children leading their own learning and steps should now be taken to share this practice more widely across the school. More opportunities to extend learning should be given in a few classes where children would benefit from greater depth and challenge.

- When planning, teachers make clear connections between aspects of science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) and entrepreneurship through world of work activities at each stage. A clear progression pathway is in place for art and children produce artwork of a very high standard. There is a whole school approach to Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and the school's 'Skills to Success' progression framework is embedded in daily learning and teaching. Almost all children are developing a strong awareness of employability, skills for learning, life and work and how their learning, both in and out of school, relates to this. This highly effective practice is an area of strength of the school.
- Interdisciplinary learning experiences make strong connections across learning, providing coherence and relevance for children. In almost all classes, opportunities to apply literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are well planned, for example through social studies. Pupils complete reports, write topical letters and produce fact files about their learning. As part of the 'farm to fork' study, children weigh ingredients to make smoothies and discuss the price of fruit and vegetables to sell in their class shop. Teachers regularly plan opportunities to assess the application of learning through these real life contexts.
- A range of formative assessment strategies are evident across the school, providing regular opportunities for children to discuss their learning. Most children are aware of the purpose of the learning and the progress they are making. An electronic platform, recently introduced for parental communication, has been very successful in supporting children to share their learning at home. Digital learning is evident in most classes with most children making good use of technology to record data, share successes and carry out research. Green screen technology is being explored in some classes. There is scope to extend further the use of digital technology to enhance learning across all classes.
- Senior leaders promote professional learning and a 'looking outwards' approach as integral to improving outcomes for every child. Commendably, all teachers engage in practitioner enquiry related to the needs of their learners and the school's improvement priorities. They can evidence the impact of their research on learners' experiences and outcomes. There are regular opportunities for teachers to share professional learning with each other. Staff have a very good understanding of potential barriers to children's learning and endeavour to overcome these. A whole school approach to building resilience and developing a can-do attitude is having a positive impact on children's readiness to learn.
- The collegiate approach to planning within Curriculum for Excellence levels results in rich professional dialogue about children's learning, assessment and standards. Staff share their strengths and expertise in the delivery of learning, with planned opportunities for classes to work with different teachers. This is improving consistency across the school whilst ensuring progression is built into the planning process. Alignment of the process to the moderation cycle has resulted in a shared understanding of standards across the curriculum and, particularly in literacy and numeracy, is key to success for learners. Senior leaders' participation in collegiate planning supports quality assurance and the moderation of the learning process. This streamlined approach to planning learning, teaching and assessment provides regular opportunities to discuss pedagogy, next steps and innovative practice.
- There is a clear focus on raising attainment and promoting high aspirations for all. The deputy headteacher's participation in national Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer

(QAMSO) events, supports teachers to make confident use of assessment data to inform further planning. Staff make effective use of the National Benchmarks for literacy and numeracy in reviewing a range of learner evidence, including data from standardised assessments. This informs their professional judgements of progress and achievement. Teachers are confident in the professional judgements they make as a result of moderation built into the processes of the school, as well as opportunities to moderate with cluster colleagues.

- A robust system is in place for tracking and monitoring progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher and depute headteacher have a very good understanding of the progress and pace of learning of each child. Planning for children who face additional barriers to learning is very effective. Support staff carry out their duties effectively, targeting individuals and groups who have been identified through robust tracking and monitoring. An early years officer (EYO) works across the nursery and P1 to support and extend learning through play throughout the early level. Stretch targets are set for all children and planned alongside appropriate interventions to close the attainment gap. These are regularly reviewed to evaluate their effectiveness and inform future deployment of staffing and resources. Tracking in art and science has recently been introduced. As planned, the school should now extend this system to other areas of the curriculum, with an initial focus on health and wellbeing.

## 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

excellent

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

- Overall, children are making excellent progress in literacy and English language and in numeracy and mathematics. Across Townhill Primary School, children's attainment and the quality of their work is sustained, enhanced and of a very high standard.
- Data for 2018-19 shows almost all children achieve early level across literacy and numeracy by the end of P1. By the end of P4, most children achieve first level across reading and listening and talking and almost all children achieve first level in writing and numeracy and mathematics. By the end of P7, almost all children achieve second level across literacy and numeracy. Data shows that almost all children across the school make very good progress from prior levels of attainment. A few children in most classes across the school exceed national expectations for their stage.
- Senior leaders and staff make highly effective use of a variety of assessment data to evaluate children's progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy. This includes data from formative, summative and holistic assessments as well as the results from the Scottish national standardised assessments. The local authority produces helpful data packs for each school which senior leaders use effectively in discussions with class teachers and in setting stretch aims for each child. As part of tracking, monitoring and self-evaluation processes, staff regularly reflect on attainment and achievement at Townhill Primary School against local comparator schools. Senior leaders plan to make further use of the national broad general education (BGE) toolkit to extend this approach beyond the local area.
- The school has embedded highly effective approaches to moderation which have a very positive impact on learners' attainment. The collegiate and collaborative approach to planning learning, teaching and assessment is resulting in children making very good progress across the school. Inspection activity supports the accuracy of teachers' professional judgement.
- Children with additional barriers to their learning have individualised plans which take account of the robust tracking and monitoring of progress. Targets are discussed thoroughly with learners and plans are carefully implemented and regularly reviewed. As a result, gaps in learning are effectively identified and addressed. Evidence provided by the school demonstrates that most children on individual plans are achieving expected levels. A few are attaining appropriate to their own milestones and all are making very good progress from prior levels of learning.

## **Attainment in literacy and English**

- Overall, attainment in literacy is very good. Almost all children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment and achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels.

### **Listening and talking**

- Almost all children are making very good progress in listening and talking. They are articulate and confident when speaking to each other and to visitors. During paired and group activities, they listen and respond to each other respectfully, making relevant comments. At early level, almost all children listen well and share ideas during play, talking enthusiastically together. At first level, most children speak confidently in pairs and groups, taking turns to express ideas or opinions. They are aware of the importance of eye contact when talking and listening to others and can ask relevant questions. They have opportunities to apply these skills in real life situations, for example, when interviewing the manager of 'The Big Kid Circus'. By the end of second level, almost all children contribute relevant ideas to discussions, can justify their opinions confidently and can respectfully offer alternative points of view.

### **Reading**

- Most children are making very good progress in reading and, across the school, a few children are making excellent progress and exceeding national expectations. All children have regular opportunities to read for enjoyment. At the early level, almost all children can identify blends made by a combination of letters. They enjoy sharing books together, can recall simple events from stories and most can successfully retell stories through drawings. By the end of first level, most children read familiar texts aloud with increasing fluency. They identify their favourite authors and confidently discuss genres and reading preferences. At second level, most children read fluently with expression and talk in increasing detail about characters, setting and plot. They are becoming adept at using a range of reading skills such as skimming, scanning and summarising to support their understanding of more complex texts. As planned, the school should continue to extend children's higher order skills in reading.

### **Writing**

- Attainment in writing across the school is very good with almost all children making excellent progress. The depute headteacher models effective writing lessons in every class and staff use consistent, well-structured strategies to support children's writing. This is having a sustained, highly positive impact on children's attainment. The quality of children's writing and presentation is of a very high standard across the school. By the end of early level, most children are confident in forming simply punctuated sentences. They apply their knowledge of phonics when attempting to spell. Children benefit from increasingly independent writing opportunities for a variety of purposes. By the end of first level, almost all children create texts in different genres across a range of contexts. They explore different ways to begin sentences in order to make their writing more interesting. Children working at second level write in a range of genres for a variety of purposes and in different contexts across the curriculum. For example, children write scientific reports, including hypotheses, as part of experiments on friction and forces and create leaflets and fact files about other countries in the world. Most children engage the reader with their use of interesting vocabulary and accurately use complex punctuation. All children benefit from regular opportunities to review and assess their own and others' writing. Almost all can discuss their progress and articulate clear next steps in writing.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall attainment in numeracy and mathematics is excellent. Almost all children across the school make very good progress from prior levels of attainment. Almost all children at P1, P4 and P7 achieve expected Curriculum for Excellence levels. As a result of a focus on pedagogy in numeracy, learning experiences are increasingly consistent and children benefit from



improved differentiation within numeracy and mathematics. Learners have a greater conceptual understanding and almost all children talk confidently about their thinking and the processes they use when making calculations. All children are developing a range of strategies for problem solving. They regularly apply their learning and skills in other contexts across the curriculum.

### **Number, money and measure**

- At the early level, almost all children count confidently up to and back from 20. They can describe a number of strategies to find a missing number in a given sum. Children can apply their learning in money to pay for items in the role play shop. They use correct mathematical language when comparing height and size. By the end of first level, almost all children can read and write whole numbers up to 1000, demonstrating an understanding of place value. They can round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100 and use this to estimate answers. Almost all children are confident in multiplication tables appropriate to their age and stage. They use strategies such as repeated addition and arrays to calculate other multiplication facts. Across second level, children carry out money calculations in real life contexts, for example to determine profit or loss linked to their Culture Café. They can use the link between speed, distance and time to carry out related calculations for planned journeys. The school has identified the need to develop greater mental agility, particularly in relation to multiplication tables, to support the accuracy and speed of calculations.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- At the early level, almost all children recognise and can name simple 2D shapes and identify these in the environment. By the end of first level, children can describe, follow and record directions using appropriate vocabulary such as right turn, quarter turn, clockwise and half turn. They know and can use the four main compass points to describe routes and give directions. Across second level, almost all children can interpret plans with simple scales, for example 1cm:4m, applying this accurately to real-life contexts. They can accurately measure angles, using their knowledge of supplementary and complementary angles to complete calculations.

### **Information handling**

- At the early level, almost all children can sort and organise items according to colour, size and shape. They gather information related to personal preferences and display this on a simple pictogram. At first level, almost all children can use data analysis skills in the real life context of Café Fresh. They ask and answer questions to extract information, use tally marks and display their results using bar graphs. By the end of second level, children can create and interpret line graphs and simple pie charts. They can comment on the reliability of data depending on the sample size or source of information. Across the school, children would benefit from further opportunities to use digital technology to display information in a variety of forms.

### **Attainment over time**

- The school's highly effective approaches to raising attainment in literacy and numeracy result in consistently high attainment overall and demonstrate significant improvement over time. Senior leaders have a clear overview of attainment over time which takes account of children's progress across early level to P7 and through to the senior phase. This informs whole school improvement priorities. For example, in response to attainment in writing not being in line with authority comparator schools, plans to improve the consistency and quality of teaching writing were implemented. As a result, attainment in writing has increased significantly across the school over the last two years. The headteacher maintains high expectations and ambitious stretch aims are set for all children. There is a constant drive to ensure all children maximise their potential and make the greatest progress possible. Robust dialogue with class teachers ensures a relentless focus on achieving the best outcomes for all learners. Where predictions



indicate that individuals or groups are not on track to achieve, staff work together to identify appropriate interventions to address this. Solutions are tailored to individuals and include creative approaches to working with partners in order that children achieve success. As a result, the school has raised attainment in literacy and numeracy over time and continues to sustain these gains.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- Across the school there is a very positive culture of recognising and valuing children's achievements and the development of their skills within the four capacities. Children have various opportunities for leadership and pupil voice is strong across the school. All children can contribute ideas and opinions through their participation in one of the pupil groups. These include the Eco Group, The Rights of the Child Group, the Community Links Group, the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) group and the 'How Good is OUR School' Group. Through these groups, children discuss important topical, real-life issues and consider how they can make a positive contribution to school improvement and their local community. For example, the Eco Group discuss litter and pollution and show an awareness of the global problems created by plastic pollution in the world's oceans. They devise plans for how they can play a part in reducing plastic waste. At times, the groups have opportunities to collaborate on joint ventures, for example the DYW group and the Community Links Group had a shared interest in the work towards establishing the Culture Cafés within the school.
- Whole school successes include a Silver SportScotland Award and a Green Trees Award. Individual achievements are celebrated through class and school displays, at assemblies, through newsletters and with the use of Townhill 'Skills to Success' awards. Where appropriate, outside accreditation is sought to recognise individuals, for example, the John Muir Award for outdoor and environmental achievements. Across the school, children take ownership of their profiles using an online platform and are proud to share their successes with parents. Pupil learning journeys are added to throughout the session and demonstrate effectively children's progress across the curriculum. These are used to support children in talking about themselves as learners, their strengths, the progress they are making and their next steps. They provide a valuable means of sharing learning with parents and families.
- The school has developed a robust tracking system to record achievements for all children. The online tracker follows children from P1-P7 recording participation and achievement. Senior leaders and staff make effective use of this data to ensure equity of opportunity for all children. Staff signpost options and target those at risk of missing out on opportunities for wider achievement. Notably, all staff offer extra-curricular clubs to ensure a wide range of experiences are available to all children. Staff have developed a progressive, whole-school skills framework. Commendably, all children can identify the skills they develop through their learning experiences as well as through their participation in clubs and other activities. They talk confidently about 'climbing the hill to success' and recognise how the skills they are developing support them to achieve this. Each class has a focused 'skill of the week' which children relate to the world of work whilst gaining an understanding of local employability.
- As a result of the variety of opportunities for success and achievement, all children are developing as responsible citizens who are well placed to make valuable contributions to their school and wider community. From the earliest stages, they are developing a range of skills and attributes which they recognise will support them in their future learning and career aspirations.

### **Equity for all learners**

- The school has a clear strategy for raising attainment, whilst ensuring equity. As a result, all staff promote equity across learning for all children in an inclusive and nurturing ethos. They know and understand children, families and the socio-economic context of the community very well. Using the school's allocation of Pupil Equity Funding, interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are targeted to reduce potential barriers to learning and improve outcomes for learners. These interventions are monitored carefully and rigorously reviewed. Where outcomes are not in line with expectation, plans are amended accordingly. The school's highly effective approaches to tracking and monitoring children's attainment and achievement evidences the very positive impact of interventions.

## Other relevant evidence

- The school has very strong links with parents, a range of partners and community groups. These enhance the work of the school across the curriculum and in supporting health and wellbeing and overcoming barriers to learning. These links are particularly strong around supporting the DYW agenda.
- The school makes very good use of classroom displays and the learning environment to showcase the learning journey for each class. Children's thinking is also displayed on working walls alongside a range of supportive prompts and clear, consistent strategies to support the learning process.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

- Approach to moderation which is embedded in the school's processes. The collegiate approach to planning learning, teaching and assessment as well as the collaborative delivery of lessons is leading to a shared understanding of standards and progression within and across Curriculum for Excellence Levels.
- Approaches to assessment across the school, including regular, well-planned opportunities for learners to apply their learning and skills in real life and unfamiliar contexts.
- The highly effective, embedded approach to developing skills for learning, life and work across the nursery and school which is clearly aligned to DYW and the Career Education Standard. This includes a progressive skills framework which supports learners to talk about the skills they are developing and relate these to the world of work.
- The robust tracking and monitoring of attainment, progress and achievement across the school which includes stretch aims and a focus on equity of opportunity.
- The value placed on professional learning resulting in all staff engaging in practitioner enquiry aligned to meeting learners' needs, the school's improvement priorities or individual staff development as identified through professional review.
- Sustained, enhanced levels and high levels of attainment and the school's approach to raising attainment in writing. High quality writing across the school within a range of genres and for a range of purposes.
- The development of the school's learning pathway in art, the high standard of work produced and the accompanying approach to assessment and tracking of progress in this curriculum area.

## 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.