

# Summarised inspection findings

**Strachur Primary School**

Argyll and Bute Council

20 June 2023

## Key contextual information

Strachur Primary School is a small, rural school situated in the village of Strachur on the shores of Loch Fyne. The school has a large, rural catchment area with a number of children travelling to school by bus. At the time of the inspection, the school roll of 30 children was being taught across two multi-composite classes. The headteacher has a 0.3 full time equivalent teaching commitment. Across the primary stages, a significant number of children have additional support needs. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) zones 4 to 6. The school receives a small amount of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

### 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

- There is a very welcoming and inclusive ethos at Strachur Primary School. This reflects well the school's recently reviewed values and its commitment to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. Children experience positive relationships with all staff and their peers. Staff know children and families very well. They are aware of local circumstances and use this information effectively to offer support to families and to meet the needs of children. Most children feel well-supported, safe and respected at school. They have a range of opportunities to share their ideas and actively contribute to the life of the school. Children know their views are important and feel they have a voice in decision making. As planned, staff should continue to embed children's rights across all aspects of the school's work.
- Almost all children enjoy learning at school and engage well in the wide range of learning experiences on offer. Staff ensure learning is relevant to the local context and linked to children's interests, involving partners and visitors as appropriate. Across the school, teachers help children to develop their understanding of the world of work within the context of 'Our Business World'. Teachers use this context well to link learning across different subjects. Children have opportunities to personalise their learning within the 'Our Business World' context.
- Children benefit from regular opportunities to take their learning outdoors. For example, children engage in loose parts play and practical measuring activities in the school grounds. Staff make good use of the local area, having re-established visits and partnerships within the community following the removal of all COVID-19 restrictions. This supports and enhances children's learning well. Children use digital technology regularly in class. For example, they are confident in creating short videos, exploring the use of green-screen technology and using online applications to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills. Older children develop their coding skills well through programming robotic toys.
- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. Teachers share the purpose of learning clearly and help children to understand how they can achieve success. They provide

children with feedback which helps them to understand how they can improve. Staff give clear instructions to children. Most lessons are planned at the right level of difficulty for different abilities and ages within the multi-composite classes. At times, the pace of learning could be brisker for some children. A few children would benefit from greater challenge and increased opportunities for depth in their learning. Staff should continue to support children to develop independent learning skills. Children should have increased opportunities to take responsibility for and lead their own learning.

- Staff recognise the benefits of playful pedagogy, especially for younger children. They have created interesting learning spaces both indoors and outdoors which children in P1 access regularly. The headteacher and staff should use national guidance 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me (2020)' to consider how the development of play pedagogy could support transitions across the early level. It would be beneficial for staff to work collaboratively across the early level to develop further effective use of spaces, interactions and experiences.
- Teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment approaches to evaluate children's learning, particularly for literacy and numeracy. They use assessment evidence well to make judgements on children's progress and achievement and to plan future learning. Staff also use assessment information to identify accurately children who may require additional support. They should ensure planned learning offers appropriate levels of challenge for all children. Teachers should continue to develop assessment approaches which provide opportunities for children to apply their learning in real-life contexts. Staff who provide additional support within the school, implement interventions in literacy and numeracy effectively. This results in improved progress for identified children. They maintain comprehensive records which demonstrate the progress individuals are making against their own targets in literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers undertake moderation activities in literacy and numeracy within the school and virtually with colleagues across the local authority. This is supporting them to develop a clearer understanding and shared expectations of children's progress and achievement within Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Teachers recognise the value of working with staff out with their own school. They are keen to engage in person with colleagues across their cluster to develop further their understanding of national standards in achieving a CfE level.
- Staff use a digital platform effectively to share what children are learning with parents. They should ensure the learning being shared evidences children's progress and the skills they are developing. Children should be more involved in identifying their own strengths, targets and next steps and selecting achievements they would like to share. This would support children to talk more confidently about themselves as learners. Staff could also use the digital platform to provide ideas for how parents can support learning at home.
- Teachers use progression pathways and frameworks for all areas of the curriculum to plan over different timescales. This ensures a coherent and progressive approach to teaching across the school. The headteacher meets with class teachers for pupil progress and tracking meetings three times a year. They discuss the progress of individual children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and make evidence-based predictions of children's projected levels of attainment. The headteacher and staff should continue to monitor the pace of progress for all learners. They should ensure discussions include a focus on children who would benefit from greater challenge and depth in their learning, as well as children who require additional support.

## 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

- The headteacher provided attainment data based on teacher professional judgement, which is becoming increasingly reliable. Staff should continue to develop confidence in their judgements. Inspection activity confirmed that the data provided was mostly accurate, with the exception of writing which was a stronger picture than the data suggested. As the number of children at each stage in the school is relatively small, the following statements discuss overall progress to ensure individuals are not identified.
- Most children achieve expected national standards in listening and talking, and writing by the end of P1, P4 and P7. The majority achieve expected levels in reading and numeracy. Current data and predictions for this session, indicate that most children are on track to achieve expected national standards in listening and talking, reading and numeracy. The majority are on track to achieve expected standards in writing. Children with additional support needs are making good progress towards their individual targets.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy is good. Most children are making good progress in literacy from their prior levels of attainment. A few children are capable of making even better progress.

#### Listening and talking

- Overall, most children are making good progress in listening and talking. They listen well to instructions and explanations from staff and to each other when working in pairs or small groups. Younger children develop confidence from sharing their news with peers, whilst older children prepare talks and presentations. Most children express their ideas readily and a majority can respond to others, building on previous comments appropriately for their age and stage. Children have a good understanding of the skills required for effective listening and talking, such as eye contact and body language. A few children across the school require reminders not to interrupt others and to take turns when speaking in large groups.

#### Reading

- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in reading. Children develop reading skills progressively across the school. Younger children are keen to talk about books they have enjoyed and to retell stories. Older children can skim and scan a text. They answer increasingly challenging questions based on the texts read. Most children enjoy the school's approach to encouraging reading which provides an element of personal challenge. Children now need to explore a wider range of texts, including digital texts and non-fiction. This should deepen their understanding of the features of different types of text and author style.

## Writing

- Overall, most children are making good progress in writing. They write for a range of purposes and explore different genres including personal writing, persuasive writing, poetry and stories. Younger children form letters correctly and most use punctuation well to mark sentences and paragraphs. Older children develop their use of vocabulary, considering interesting ways to begin sentences and describe the characters they create. All children should continue to write for a range of purposes. They should have increased opportunities to share their writing with a wider audience. For example, children could write stories to share with others across the school or create blogs and reviews which could be shared digitally with parents and the wider community.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making appropriate progress in numeracy, with a few making very good progress from prior levels of attainment.

## Number, money and measure

- Across early and first level, children learn to write and order numbers appropriate to their age and stage. They develop mental agility in carrying out simple calculations which they build on with increasing confidence. Children revisit number facts and number bonds regularly, developing different strategies and approaches through daily problem-solving tasks. They enjoy exploring number patterns. A few children are less confident when comparing or ordering simple fractions. Across second level, children explore the importance of numeracy and mathematics in the world. They demonstrate a developing understanding of fractions, multiples and percentages. Most children are confident when estimating, then measuring, using centimetres and metres. A few children require support to convert times from 12 hour to 24 hour notation.

## Shape, position and movement

- Younger children can recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They identify these in their environment and use them to make pictures and models. Older children can describe some of the features of regular three-dimensional objects using mathematical language. They are less confident in describing angles using appropriate terminology, such as acute, obtuse and reflex.

## Information handling

- Across the school, children have opportunities to collect, organise and display information. Younger children create simple tables, bar charts and diagrams and can find information from these to answer basic questions. Older children create surveys and can interpret information from graphs and charts. All children would benefit from using technology more frequently to develop their information handling skills as they progress through the school.

## Attainment over time

- The headteacher is aware that, year on year, attainment figures are variable due to changes in the school roll and the very small numbers of children at each stage. Staff maintain a detailed overview of the progress of individual children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff use this information well to identify and address any gaps or potential barriers to learning. As a result, children make good progress. The headteacher should consider how this approach could be developed further to capture children's progress across all areas of the curriculum.

## Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements in class, at assembly and more widely through the school's social media channels. Children have a range of opportunities to achieve through the curriculum and their involvement in the life of the school. As a result, they are developing important skills including leadership, decision-making and collaboration. As planned, staff should develop systems to track children's achievement and capture the skills they are developing. This will help to ensure that no child is at risk of missing out and that children's skills are developed progressively. It will also support children to identify their strengths, attributes and the contributions they make as respectful, responsible, global citizens.

## Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and all staff know children and families very well. They offer a fully inclusive learning environment, ensuring that any barriers to learning are reduced or overcome. The headteacher uses PEF to provide resources which support children's progress in literacy and numeracy, both universally and on a targeted basis. Staff can demonstrate the positive impact of literacy and numeracy interventions on children's progress. The headteacher also uses PEF to offer experiences which are aimed at improving children's health and social and emotional wellbeing. The headteacher is aware of the need to evidence the impact of these funded interventions on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. She should monitor carefully the progress of children receiving targeted support for this purpose.
- The headteacher ensures that financial constraints do not prevent any child from participating in the opportunities available. The headteacher uses additional funding that she has secured to ensure swimming lessons and outdoor learning opportunities are fully funded for all children. The Parent Council part-fund a residential transition event for older children through their successful fundraising efforts.

## 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.