Summarised inspection findings

Greenlaw Primary School and Nursery Class

Scottish Borders Council

12 September 2023

Key contextual information

Greenlaw Primary School is located in Berwickshire, in the village of Greenlaw.

The headteacher has been in post since 2017. She is also the headteacher of Swinton Primary School and Nursery Class. She is supported across the two schools by a principal teacher. Staff recognise the diverse socio-economic circumstances of rural communities.

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

■ Children benefit from nurturing relationships with all staff across the school. This creates a positive and encouraging climate for learning. Most children are motivated in their learning and are eager to ask and answer questions in lessons. Children enjoy exercising choice and applying their skills across a range of different contexts and would benefit from increased opportunities to do so.

■ Teachers have established good relations and routines within their classes. In most lessons, teachers provide tasks and activities which are well matched to children's needs. They provide differentiated learning experiences in literacy and numeracy which offer valuable support for those children who require it. In a few lessons, tasks and activities could be more demanding. This will ensure better outcomes for children who are capable of further challenge.

■ In almost all lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning well with children. This supports children well to understand what they are learning and make links to prior knowledge. In order to increase children's independent learning skills, staff should create more opportunities for children to take a lead in their learning.

■ Teachers use plenary sessions well to reinforce key points and set up the learning focus for the next lesson. In a few classes, children and their teachers create measures together to judge how they will be successful in their learning. Teachers should ensure that learners create measures in their own words more regularly, so they understand fully what success looks like. There is scope for teachers to learn from each other to improve the consistent use of high-quality teaching across the school.

■ Staff are at the very early stages of developing a play-based approach to learning across the early level. Children have limited opportunities to learn through play. Senior leaders should engage with the national guidance Realising the Ambition: Being Me. This will support staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of play pedagogy and the benefits of this approach. This will help staff to plan learning spaces, experiences and interactions and enrich children's learning opportunities.

■ All teachers are highly skilled in using digital technologies to support and enhance children's learning. Staff confidently integrate a range of innovative technologies into classroom routines and lessons, which motivate and engage children well. At times, this is hampered by connectivity issues. Children are very confident using a variety of digital tools independently, such as apps, tablets and programmable toys. The school provides a digital platform to share learning with parents. Teachers should engage further with parents and demonstrate more fully how this digital platform can support them to become more involved in their child's learning.

■ Almost all teachers provide encouraging written and oral feedback on children's individual pieces of work. In the majority of classes, teachers make effective use of constructive self and peer assessment to support children to reflect on their learning and identify where they have improved. Teachers should support children to identify their next steps in learning and create their own learning targets, drawing on best practice within the school.

■ Teachers and senior leaders make effective use of regular assessments of children's reading, writing and numeracy. This includes standardised assessments and, at key milestones, Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA). Senior leaders and teachers use information gathered from assessments well to identify children who require additional support with their learning.

■ Senior leaders with teachers develop helpful curricular pathways which support teachers effectively with their planning. This also ensures processes and paperwork are kept manageable for teachers. Children work with their teachers to shape learning which links different areas of the curriculum with set topics in a rolling three-year programe. Children would benefit from the opportunity to have greater choice in what they learn about, not just how they learn during pre-selected projects.

■ Staff meet regularly to effectively review children's progress and discuss plans for raising attainment. Teachers bring a wide range of evidence of children's progress to inform these discussions. They identify children who have gaps in their learning and plan support through discussion with senior leaders.

■ Teachers are keen to share and learn from each other.They should engage in peer observations more regularly to share effective practice. Teachers have been involved in a few moderation activities within and beyond the school. More frequent opportunities for moderation will help develop further teachers' understanding of children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.

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

- In 2021/22, senior leaders identified that teacher professional judgement required to be more robust. This remains an ongoing focus. They introduced new progression pathways in literacy and numeracy. Inspectors agree that professional judgement of a level in literacy and numeracy is accurate in 2022/23.
- The number of children at each stage varies and is relatively small. Overall statements have been made about attainment and progress to ensure individuals are not identified. Most children achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and numeracy across the school. A few children have the capacity to make better progress and achieve more. Most children who require support with their learning are making good progress towards their learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy from prior levels of attainment. Children apply their literacy skills well in other areas of the curriculum, such as within learning which links different areas of the curriculum.

Listening and talking

- Younger children develop skills in taking turns when listening and talking in groups. Most older children share their ideas in class and group discussions and listen well to the views of others. They discuss their school experiences with confidence. Children across the school would benefit from increased opportunities to apply their talking and listening skills in a greater range of contexts.

Reading

- Younger children need more opportunities to experience a wider range of texts and engage in more challenging activities that develop their literacy skills more effectively. Most older children identify the main ideas in text and can confidently make predictions. They recognise the difference between fact and opinion. They answer inferential and evaluative questions and explain reasons for their views. Children enjoy their visits to the mobile library.

Writing

- The majority of younger children form lower case letters correctly and use full stops with increasing confidence. They need further opportunities to write independently. Older children write across a broad range of genres. This includes information reports, news articles, recounts, pieces of imaginative writing and Scots poetry in rhyming couplets. A majority of older children would benefit from more opportunities to write extended texts.

Numeracy and mathematics

■ Most children across the school are on track to achieve national expected levels of attainment. All children would benefit from further practise in applying their numeracy skills to problem-solving and multi-step calculations, as well as more opportunities to apply their skills in numeracy across the curriculum.

Number, money and measure

■ Most children across all stages are confident in the use of basic number processes. Across the school, most children can estimate and measure accurately. The majority of younger children recognise a wide range of numbers, add and subtract with increasing confidence within 10 and count accurately forwards and backwards in sequence. Older children demonstrate mental agility appropriate for their stage. They engage well with technology and numeracy games, increasing their speed of recall. Children carry out calculations with increasing accuracy. They identify place value of numbers accurately and show confidence when rounding. They are increasingly confident in applying their understanding of fractions and decimals. Most older children articulate confidently the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Almost all older children are confident in rounding numbers and correctly describe the most appropriate units used for measurement. Older children need further practice using a range of strategies to solve word and multi-step problems.

Shape, position and movement

■ Across the school, children are confident in naming and discussing the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects appropriate to their age and stage. Younger children enjoy programming digital programmable toys to follow simple directions, left and right. They use the language of position and movement, such as behind, above, forwards and backwards, correctly. Older children name angles correctly and describe the properties of different types of angles. Most older children measure and identify accurately acute, obtuse, straight, right and reflex angles and can explain the difference between these.

Information handling

■ Across the school, children demonstrate a good understanding of information handling. Children benefit from applying their skills in data and analysis in a range of contexts. The majority of younger children use their knowledge of colour, shape and size to match and sort items appropriately. Older children plot coordinates, make accurately labelled graphs independently and can talk about the data they have gathered. Older children use survey data to create frequency tables, construct pie charts and draw conclusions from their work. Children enjoy using digital tools to support their learning in this area. Older children would welcome more opportunities to use technology to display their learning.

Attainment over time

■ Senior leaders have a comprehensive picture of children's attainment data over time. With staff, they plan and implement effective approaches which are raising attainment in literacy and numeracy for all learners.

■ Teachers meet formally with senior leaders three times a year to discuss children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Together, senior leaders, teachers and pupil support staff analyse data. They target appropriate areas for support and challenge at both a whole class and an individual level. Senior leaders monitor the impact of interventions for individual children closely to ensure they are having a positive impact on progress and attainment. This helps children to make good progress from prior levels of attainment. Senior leaders should now gather information on children's progress across all areas of the curriculum.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children enjoy regular opportunities to celebrate personal achievements, for example at assemblies. Children are proud of their achievements and talk confidently about how the staff and members of the local community celebrate their successes both in and outside school. They feel valued by staff and each other. Staff make effective use of social media to ensure that children's achievements are shared with parents and the wider community.

- Older children play important roles such as Junior Road Safety Officers, Heads of House and school ambassadors which develops their confidence and team building skills. They lead clubs to provide support for younger children, such as the dance buddies. This is developing their leadership and cooperative working skills. Younger children would benefit from similar opportunities to be leaders.

- There is a range of clubs and activities during and after school. Staff monitor participation in activities both in and outwith school. They are proactive in addressing barriers to participation. Children develop their performance skills well in expressive arts through participation in local and regional competitions in music and drama. They develop their skills in sport, often working with community and local authority partners. The next step is for senior leaders to develop a progressive skills framework which will help children identify the skills they are developing.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher, senior leaders and staff have a very clear knowledge of the social and economic contexts of their children and families. They are particularly aware of the unique opportunities and challenges children living in a rural community experience. They use this knowledge effectively to work towards ensuring that all children have equity of opportunity and achievement. The Parent Council, in conjunction with school staff, ensures that cost is not a barrier to participation in events outwith the school. They provide funding for transport and outings for all children.

- Senior leaders and teachers create effective plans which address the needs of individual children, including by addressing poverty-related and other attainment gaps. They use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide tailored interventions such as additional support, a breakfast club, support with attendance and sensory support. Staff monitor effectively the steady progress towards closing the attainment gap. Teachers have introduced assistive technology to support a few learners. This is having a positive impact on their progress.

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.