

Summarised inspection findings

Drumbowie Primary School

Falkirk Council

21 November 2023

Key contextual information

Drumbowie Primary School is an accessible rural school in the village of Standburn. At the time of the inspection the roll was 19. Children are based in two classes. Primary 2-5 and Primary 6-7. The school receives £7,300 in Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) zones four to six. The school benefits from an extensive outdoor play space and proximity to open woodland.

The headteacher has been in post since February 2021 and is also headteacher at Avonbridge Primary School and Nursery Class. He is supported by two principal teachers. They work across both schools. Children make regular visits to their partner school to learn and play together.

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

- Children embrace the values of their school ‘an inclusive, happy and respectful community with aspirational goals for all’. They demonstrate their values when learning in class and in their relationships across the school. Children understand very well how their school values, the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and the national wellbeing indicators interconnect to ensure their rights and wellbeing are upheld at all times. All children can identify a trusted adult they can speak with during lessons and as they go about school life. All adults promote a strong nurturing ethos in all areas of the school. They care deeply for children and work hard as a team to ensure learning in class supports children’s positive wellbeing.
- Children experience learning which is enjoyable and overall, set at the right level of challenge. They respond enthusiastically to choice in their learning when it enables them to carry out tasks in individual ways. Children are confident in using digital learning to share their work. They learn cooperatively in pairs, discussing their ideas and are very respectful to the views of others. Children, as they progress through the school, are becoming increasingly independent learners. They are responsible and successful when carrying out tasks. They make very good use of the clear information shared by their teachers about the purpose of their tasks. Children who require extra support make effective use of bespoke learning tools provided by staff.
- Children speak openly with trusted adults about their feelings as they learn, where they need help and how their wellbeing impacts on their learning. They use cosy spaces, individualised learning materials and outdoor spaces to support their wellbeing and learning.
- Children make a significant contribution to the life of their school and their partner school. As children progress through the school, they increasingly take on roles which enable them to lead their own learning and that of their peers. Children work with staff to negotiate what they will learn and how. Children’s views determine the context of wider achievement and how they will work alongside their community.

- The headteacher and senior leaders are aspirational for children. They work alongside children and staff every day coaching, mentoring and supporting them. Teachers recognise the benefits and challenges of working in a multi composite small school setting. They embrace the opportunities they have to be creative and tailor their teaching approaches to the learning needs and interests of children. Their engagement with children reflects a deep understanding of children's individual needs and dispositions. Teachers provide engaging learning and teaching which motivates children to work hard. They organise the right balance of teacher-led, group activity and individual learning opportunities to enable children to learn effectively with and from each other. Teachers give thought to how they manage transitions for individual children throughout the day to ensure children remain calm and ready for all aspects of their learning.
- Teachers embed digital technology well throughout learning teaching and assessment. Children are learning about animation. They use their literacy and numeracy skills well to create story boards. Teachers plan activities incorporating matrix bar codes to promote and support individual learning. They make effective use of the internet to enrich their teaching.
- Children benefit from learning outdoors regularly. They use a local nature trail to walk and learn about the natural world. Children lead their learning well as they build dens as part of their play activities. Staff are developing play across their two schools which enables children to benefit from engaging with others of a similar age. They plan activities carefully incorporating the views of children. The role of the adult is well-planned and they make good use of resources available to them. As planned, the headteacher should continue to build on the professional learning of staff to support them in working alongside children to plan appropriate activities.
- Staff provide valuable feedback to children about their learning and progress. Children engage in conversation with staff throughout their learning. Staff provide a clear outline for children about what they are expected to learn. Children use this very well to evaluate their understanding and progress. Children use digital technology effectively to record their progress and send feedback to their teachers at the close of learning sessions. Children are learning to use an online learning journal to record their individual targets and progress toward achieving them.
- Teachers work collegiately to plan learning and teaching. They have formed a close learning community with their partner school to provide a stage partner and share standards. Teachers share resources and expertise to enable an equity of learning opportunities across the two schools. Teachers continue to build their expertise in planning assessment activities at the outset of planning blocks of learning. They are improving the nature of assessment tasks to ensure they gather accurate and reliable data across the curriculum. As appropriate, they include children's ideas.
- Teachers collaborate with colleagues beyond their own learning community as part of a neighbourhood and cluster of schools. Teachers also connect with colleagues across Forth Valley Regional Collaborative. These important professional links support all staff very effectively to build and broaden their expertise in learning and teaching beyond the small school setting. This enables them to have a deeper understanding of professional standards and apply their learning to planning effectively in their multi composite setting. Teachers also use these links to engage in moderation activities. This is ensuring they have an informed and shared understanding of national standards.
- Senior leaders provide professional learning and coaching for teachers in relation to assessment and tracking children's progress. As a team, they keep a very close check on children's progress at frequent intervals formally and informally. Staff are highly-effective at

sharing day-to-day progress made by individual children. They readily share advice to enhance children's readiness to learn and engagement. Senior leaders meet formally with staff through Excellence and Equity meetings. The rigorous agenda for these meetings identifies and sets measurable targets for all children to improve their attainment, achievement and wellbeing. Prompt action is taken where children would benefit from interventions or the support of outside professionals. Senior leaders have accurate and reliable data about children's wellbeing and progress. They use this effectively to make strategic decisions about staffing and resources. They have plans in place to ensure this incorporates all areas of the curriculum.

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. Inspectors have identified good practice in child protection and safeguarding procedures.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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

- At the time of the inspection, the school roll comprised of a small number of children in P2–P7. As a result, attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels to protect the anonymity of children.
- Overall, children are on track to achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels. A significant number of children have additional support needs. They make very good progress in achieving their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Children across the school are making very good progress in listening and talking, reading and writing in line with their personal targets. A few children exceed their targets. Staff are proactive in ensuring that children regularly review their targets to ensure they are challenged appropriately in their learning.
- Children share their literacy skills with others in creative and meaningful ways. Children speak confidently to an audience regularly. They read their work aloud and share their writing openly with their peers, families and through displays of work and on information boards. Children achieve success through using digital devices. They record their ideas and information on short video clips.

Listening and talking

- Children listen and talk for a wide range of purposes. Commendably, children lead learning for their class. They convey instructions confidently, share information effectively with carefully considered tone which engages the listener. Children are very good at articulating their thoughts, opinions and understanding. They show high levels of respect for the views of others and challenge each other sensitively in line with their school values. A few children are increasing their expressive vocabulary as a result of bespoke interventions.

Reading

- Children enjoy reading and have access to thoughtful selection of books and digital books which engage their interest. All children read task instructions and information very well through their digital device. Younger children use sounds and blends to read words they are not sure of. They are challenged continuously to progress their reading skills as they work cooperatively with older children. As children progress through the school, they focus on identifying author style and the differences between fact and opinion. They can answer inferential questions about their class novels and relate what they read to their own lives.

Children are working alongside their teachers to develop further a greater reading culture across the school.

Writing

- Children are able to write in a variety of genres. Staff recognise that children need to continue to write at length regularly to enable them to overtake their targets at each stage. At all levels children learn about grammar and punctuation each day which is enabling them to communicate their ideas more effectively. Younger children can join sentences and add descriptive vocabulary. Older children can identify similes and metaphors in text. Across the school children write for a range of relevant and meaningful purposes. Children are learning to use setting and characters well to write imaginatively. As children progress through the school, most spell common words accurately and use a dictionary to enhance their understanding of wider vocabulary. Children who have additional support needs are making very good progress in conveying their ideas in written and digital text with appropriate levels of support.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Children across the school are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics in line with their individual targets. They enjoy their learning particularly when they understand the applications for learning, life and work.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children count forwards and backwards confidently and can find missing numbers in a sequence. They know how to use coins to make identified amounts. As children progress through the school, they can identify fractions of shaded areas within shapes and can solve simple problems using fractions. Children can use coins to form identified amounts and complete accurately calculations with large numbers using place value. They use budgeting with understanding to plan events alongside their peers. Older children can calculate percentages of whole numbers. They can estimate and round numbers to specified criteria. Children need more regular practice in calculating area and volume to help them use these skills in other areas of their learning. Children are able to calculate mentally appropriate to their age and stage. Teachers continue to build children's confidence in mental calculations.

Shape, position and movement

- Children can, as appropriate to their stage, describe the properties of common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Younger children demonstrate their understanding through creative experiences and puzzles. Older children can draw nets and use mathematical language to describe the properties of three-dimensional shapes.

Information handling

- Children use data handling very well when collecting, organising and displaying information about choices and preferences across the school. Their democratic approach to working alongside their peers at their partner school result in children gathering meaningful data to organise experiences and events.

Attainment over time

- All staff support children very well to make measurable and at times accelerated progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The very small numbers of children at each stage and at times varying numbers of children across the school year make it challenging to identify patterns and trends. Teachers are meticulous at tracking children's progress. They are able to measure gains children make as they progress through the school. The headteacher's very successful approach to developing a learning community across the

partner schools enables teachers to share standards and moderate together. This is raising expectations of what children can achieve.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are very proud of their own achievements and those of their peers. They are strong leaders and recognise the relevance of their skills in learning about life and work. Children have achieved a bronze award for their work on children's rights and are ready for the next stage. They lead assemblies where they recognise and celebrate the skills and attributes of others. Children play an active role in promoting and supporting positive mental wellbeing. Older children lead wellbeing lessons in class. All children, as appropriate to their age and stage, identify clearly the skills they are developing through their learning and achievement across the curriculum. These skills are negotiated and planned with their teachers.
- The pupil council meets regularly and plays an active part in school improvement. They planned the end of year school trip to Conifox and made decisions about new playground equipment. They have made plans to maintain and improve aspects of their playground including their outdoor pagoda. Children express and gather their views regularly through the school year. They relate these to their school values and most recently they are developing plans to improve further 'Project Play'.
- Children work collaboratively with children from their partner school. Together they organised and performed a high-quality production of Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat. All children had a key role in acting and production.
- Most older children lead lunchtime clubs, for example, digital technology and art. They worked closely with Active Schools to achieve a certified young leaders award. This ensures they have the skills to lead clubs confidently. Children help with fundraising and supported a recent bake sale.
- Children share their achievements outside of school and these are celebrated through their 'Proud Cloud'. Teachers support children well in identifying the skills children gain from these experiences and encourage them to use them in school.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher has very high aspirations for all children. The approaches to addressing the cost of the school day means that no children miss out on experiences. Senior leaders use extra funds through grants and awards to ensure equity of participation.
- Senior leaders and staff are effective in ensuring children receive the right interventions to enable them to make the progress they are capable of alongside their peers. They work in close partnership with outside professionals to engage their expertise and advice. Parents are very satisfied that the school is doing its best to support their children.
- The headteacher makes effective decisions about the use of PEF. He consults with staff and uses data resulting from detailed tracking and monitoring to allocate funds. The headteacher has clear data to show that PEF funds alongside other interventions are improving and for some accelerating the progress of children. This includes children most in need and those with barriers to learning.
- Senior leaders monitor very closely the attendance of all children. Effective processes are in place to ensure children who are absent from school are provided with appropriate support.

Other relevant evidence

- The school is in receipt of a small amount of PEF. This is discussed with parents through the Parent Council. Information about how it is used is contained within Standards and Quality reports and the current improvement plan. These are available to parents. During the inspection, parents expressed a confidence in their senior leaders to use PEF to improve outcomes for identified children. They expressed the need and desire to respect and protect the identity of the small number of children who are in receipt of funding. They recognise that the school is improving outcomes for all children.
- Children are fully aware that the focus of their school is to promote equity. Children can define equity and are confident their school ensures children receive all the support they need to be successful.
- All children take part in two hours of quality physical education (PE) each week. One session is provided by a specialist from Braes High School. The other by their class teacher. Where possible children do PE outdoors. In addition, children use a local nature trail to do their 'daily mile'.
- Children have small, attractive libraries within their classrooms. There is also a whole school library and children visit their local library. Children have access to digital books. They say the process of acquiring new books they request is straightforward.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

Practice worth sharing more widely.

- The school recognised the benefits to children of using digital learning through the pandemic. As children returned to school, they agreed to ensure digital learning skills were an embedded feature of day-to-day learning. Senior leaders built the capacity of staff to use digital approaches effectively. Appropriate professional learning was provided regarding pedagogy and effective use of devices. Younger children share a tablet with one other and older children have a tablet of their own. These can be taken home to support learning in class. Children also have access to desktop computers and projection equipment. Teachers have become skilled at using matrix bar codes to promote independent learning, ensure differentiation and provide digital reading materials. Children enjoy using their digital devices. They like having activities which are tailored to their needs. Children recognise that digital approaches can help them stay on task and focus on what they are expected to learn. They are highly engaged when working on their tasks. Children feel they have a good balance of digital and non-digital learning. Teachers work alongside children to ensure they are making progress. They ask children to provide feedback through their digital device at the close of learning episodes. Teachers have introduced digital learning profiles to enable children to track their progress toward their individual targets.
- Staff are rigorous in the promotion of wellbeing. They have engaged in professional learning which enables them to identify very promptly when children need support. Staff model a family ethos where everyone cares. They are highly attuned and attentive to factors which they know will impact negatively on children's wellbeing. Children are supported exceptionally well from their arrival at breakfast club until the close of the school day. Staff communicate very effectively during the school day. They readily adapt their plans to enable children to have the best chance of success. The ethos in each classroom means that children and adults can benefit from cosy spaces and the nurture of each other. Teachers share children's wellbeing with parents very regularly. They ensure a visible presence in the playground each day to facilitate a sharing of information. As a result, parents feel they work in true partnership with the school and are able to build on children's wellbeing and learning at home.

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.