

Summarised inspection findings

St Bride's Primary School

The Highland Council

13 June 2023

Key contextual information

St Brides Primary School serves the area of North Ballachulish and the surrounding area. The headteacher has been in post since January 2019, and the principal teacher since 2020. They both have responsibilities for St Bride's and Glencoe Primary Schools and Nursery Classes. The headteacher is also cluster head for another two primary schools on a temporary basis. The roll in St Brides Primary is 24 with an additional 14 in the nursery. Children are split over two classes, P1-3 and P4-7. The school has undergone a period of disruption in staffing over the last year where obtaining supply staff was difficult. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile eight. Attendance is in line with the national average.

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

- In both classes, children are engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. They enjoy taking part in learning activities and work well with each other in multi-stage groupings. Staff have warm and very positive relationships with children based on kindness, trust and mutual respect. There is a calm, happy, purposeful environment for learning in the school. Older children support and encourage younger children well in both classes. Staff across the school provide innovative and creative ways for children to learn. They make very good use of the local environment and local businesses to enhance children's learning. As a result, children enjoy being at school and feel confident exploring and talking about their learning. Children are pleasant, well-behaved and proud of their school.
- Staff make good use of digital technologies to enhance learning in the classes. All children have an individual Chromebook which they use to access all areas of the curriculum. Most children use their digital skills well to work independently. Staff use an online platform well to share children's learning with their parents.
- Across the school, the quality of learning and teaching is good. Staff ensure children understand the purpose of their learning and have opportunities to exercise choice. They give clear instructions and explanations to children about learning activities and provide appropriate support for children who find learning challenging. Teachers make good use of questioning to effectively engage children, promote curiosity and encourage them to think. In both classes, teachers are skilled in creating problem solving contexts that encourage collaborative learning. They provide many opportunities for children to think creatively and produce interesting work. Across both classes all children set individual targets and class targets. As a result, they have a good understanding of their areas of strength and next steps. Children at P7, contribute to the life and work of the school, and form the leadership committee. The head teacher needs to now provide all children with more opportunities to share their views and take responsibility across the school.

- Staff in the P1-3 class have developed successfully a wide range of learning through play opportunities for all children. They make good use of the space indoors and outdoors to develop learning through play. All children receive developmentally appropriate play experiences, sustain their concentration and engage well in their learning. There was a high number of adults to children supporting the play in P1-3. Children are provided with opportunities for personalisation and choice. They are able to access the outdoors and to select materials and resources to enrich and deepen their learning. Staff in the P1-3 class work well with the nursery practitioners to explore recent research on play to continually improve outcomes for learners.
- Teachers provide effective feedback to children's learning in a number of ways. They often encourage children to assess each other's work commenting on what they like and what would help it to be even better. Teachers have been involved in moderation activities for a number of years at a school and cluster level. The current priority in the school and across the cluster has been to moderate the assessment of writing. As a result, attainment in writing is improving.
- All teachers plan learning across the year. They have a termly overview of the curriculum along with more detailed weekly plans which include information about groups and individuals. Staff use a variety of planning formats to ensure they provide a broad curriculum for children that builds well on their previous learning. There is a need to streamline planning of learning to make more use of progression pathways and reduce workload for staff.
- Staff collect a significant amount of information about the current levels of attainment of each child in their class for reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. They identify if children are on track with their learning in these areas and who needs support. The headteacher meets with staff termly to review children's progress. There is a need to record decisions made at these meetings to ensure staff maximise children's progress over time. Teachers plan appropriate support for children who find difficulties with their learning. For a few children, there is a need for staff to develop individualised educational plans. This will help ensure that staff capture small steps in children's progress effectively.
- The headteacher should continue to develop ways to monitoring and tracking the work of the school. He should provide clarity to staff around planning, assessment and tracking of progress. This would help reduce the workload on staff and provide key information to ensure continuity for children if there are staff changes.

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.

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, attainment in literacy and in numeracy is good. Children with additional support needs are making good progress in learning.

Listening and Talking

- At early level, most children are developing their talking and listening skills through motivating play opportunities. At first and second level, most children take turns during class and group discussions. They have regular opportunities to apply their skills in their multi-staged groups where they often work collaboratively on tasks. Most children speak confidently and are able to explain reasons for their answers and encourage younger children to respond. Overall, children would benefit from being more aware of the skills they are developing in listening and talking.

Reading

- At early level, most children are developing their knowledge of sounds and letters through play. They work well with older children who support them to decode challenging words. For example, older children supported P1 children to read the problem-solving task on the escaped elephant. At first level, most pupils read fluently and use expression well when reading. At second level children can recognise and use aspects of language, such as, metaphor, simile and alliteration in reading and writing tasks. Across the school, children make good use of the school library and the mobile library van when it is available. As a result, most children describe enthusiastically their love of books and favourite authors.

Writing

- At early level, most children are able to have a go at writing independently in their play. At first level, most children can punctuate correctly and write for a range of purposes. They use interesting vocabulary appropriate for the context. At second level, most children are punctuating their work well. They vary sentence structure and use vocabulary to engage the reader. Across the school, children write regularly and for a variety of motivating purposes.

Number, money and measure

- 'Maths Passports' are supporting children across the school to develop core skills well and be motivated about numeracy. At early level, most children are confident adding and subtracting numbers to 20 and a few can work with larger numbers. They have a good awareness of the value and use of coins. At first level, most children are confident carrying out a range of calculations mentally and can identify equivalent fractions. At second level, children are confident with place value and can multiply and divide decimal fractions by multiples of ten. They have a good understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. Across the school, children are confident in times tables appropriate to their age and stage.

At first and second level children are less confident in strategies to help them make mental calculations.

Shape, position and movement

- Children across the school are developing a good understanding of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At early level, children are developing a good understanding of symmetry. At first and second level, most children are confident with rotational symmetry and have created an informative display in their class. At second level children are confident describing a range of triangles and their properties. They can accurately identify circumference and diameter of a circle. They need further work on understanding of chance and uncertainty. Children are unsure of how to find the perimeter and area of simple shapes. Across the school, more needs done to develop children's knowledge and understanding in measure.

Information handling

- Across all stages children showed limited understanding of how to collect and sort information in graphs, tables or charts appropriate to their stage. More needs done to develop their skills in collecting, displaying, analysing and interpreting information gathered.

Attainment over time

- Staff in both classes track children's progress effectively. As a result, children are making good progress over time. The head teacher has established a way of tracking children's overall achievement of a level. He should now use this in discussion with staff about children's progress at key points in the year. In doing this, staff will be able to plan and measure the impact of interventions to raise attainment. The head teacher should formally record tracking meetings and decisions on interventions for individuals. This will help ensure that children make appropriate progress in their learning and provide information to /all staff who work at the school.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff recognise and celebrate children's personal and in school achievements in a variety of ways, including at assemblies and through their online platform. Children develop well the four capacities through opportunities to be involved in a range of activities. These include skiing, outdoor swimming, music tuition and cross country running. Staff have developed good relationships with local partners and parents who support children's wider achievement. For example, the local activity centre helps them develop many skills in outdoor pursuits. Since the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, staff have provided children with ways to develop their drama skills and self-confidence. Children achieved this through their Christmas concert and Robert Burns night celebrations. They make very good use of the local environment to develop their understanding of sustainability. Staff record the involvement of different groups of children in achievement activities well. They are aware of who participates and take steps to support children at risk of missing opportunities. Staff are at the early stages of embedding the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) meta-skills progression framework in children's learning experiences.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know children and their families well. They are sensitive to their needs and support them well in challenging times. They work well with a range of partners such as the local church and the health visitors to help meet the needs of children and their families. Staff work hard to reduce the cost of the school day and to minimise costs for outings. They support uniform recycling to support families and their work on sustainability. Staff carefully monitor children's attendance and support families to ensure children can attend as much as possible. As a result, attendance is in line with the national average.

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.