

# Summarised inspection findings

**Newmilns Primary School**

East Ayrshire Council

27 August 2019

## Key contextual information

Newmilns Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the small town of Newmilns in East Ayrshire. The school has five classrooms and an assembly hall area used for area. There is an outdoor area comprising of a grass pitch and a hard court area. The school roll at the time of inspection is 96 children. The Early Childhood Centre (ECC) serves the Newmilns community and surrounding area and has a growing roll which should impact positively on the school roll in future years. Currently, there are 41 children attending the ECC.

### 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 enjoy school and benefit from a positive learning environment. The headteacher and staff continue to develop a positive and supportive school ethos based on their vision, values and aims. The school motto of 'believe and achieve, raise the bar and be the best you can be,' illustrates the school and community's ambition for their young learners. The recently awarded Rights Respecting School Bronze award demonstrates the commitment from staff and children to their agreed vision. Most of the children are very engaged and interested in their learning and motivated to participate well. In most classes children are working towards independence and responsibility for their learning. They are supported by a range of approaches from staff to achieve their targets.
- In most lessons, children experience an appropriate level of challenge and are supported by the teaching and support staff to achieve their planned targets. Expectations of children are made clear by all teaching staff. Instruction, guidance and support for most children is also clearly stated. Teachers are developing their questioning skills well which is helping to support children's learning and is also providing opportunities to feedback during lessons. Teaching staff are aware of the need for differentiation in their class activities and should continue to develop this. There is scope for children's learning to move at a faster pace in some lessons and also to provide more opportunities for children to lead on aspects of their learning.
- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. In most lessons, teachers use effective approaches to learning and teaching. Staff themselves have identified the need to develop more opportunities for sharing good practice. Teaching staff are now recognising opportunities to access further professional development in order to improve outcomes for children. The headteacher is supporting staff to access, and have involvement in, professional development opportunities.
- Across the school, most teachers make regular and effective use of interactive whiteboards and both staff and pupils are proficient in their use. Most staff make use of the associated electronic resources to support the learning well in classes. Children at the early primary stages, are familiar with digital technology and demonstrate their learning with ease using available resources. Across the school, children also use laptop computers and other devices competently to enable their learning and to research information with confidence.

- Children across the school have opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community through their involvement in leadership groups such as the Newmilns Team, the Rights Respecting Schools Group and the Eco-committee. Participation in these groups enable children to make valuable contributions to the school and develop important leadership skills. They offer children an opportunity to learn about representation and responsibility. The school should now further develop more experiences for children to contribute to wider school and local issues. In developing children's participation, staff should use national guidance to ensure all children have equal opportunities to contribute to their own learning and wider issues. Staff also need to continue to track and monitor children to ensure equity. Children working at second level are keeping learning logs which they use well to detail their key learning experiences and encourage a reflective approach to their learning.
- Assessment approaches support teachers to plan effectively learning and teaching. Teachers' analysis of assessment data supports them to plan appropriate children's next steps in their learning and targeted interventions. Regular tracking meetings are held during the session between the headteacher and the teaching staff to analyse children's progress in literacy and numeracy. These meetings are identifying children whose progress needs further support. Collected data from the Scottish National Standardised Assessments is also used well to support staff's professional judgement of children's levels of attainment. The headteacher has identified that this increasing awareness of assessment data is contributing to the improving picture in school attainment. Assessment information is used appropriately to report on children's progress to parents and partners and across the school, and with staff, the headteacher now needs to ensure that the consistency of classroom assessment procedures is further developed. This would help support individual target setting and promote staff and children's understanding of and involvement in target setting.
- Planning is currently being supported by the local authority progression frameworks. These frameworks reference the National benchmarks and have recently been adopted by the teaching staff. These planning pathways will support staff to ensure appropriate progression for all children and should continue to be developed further to support learning and teaching across the school. The school also needs to ensure that curricular pathways in other key areas are now developed to support coherence and progression. There is scope for children to be involved in aspects of curriculum planning. Teachers need to develop further learning conversations and feedback to children would support greater participation from children as a result of them knowing more about their strengths and areas to improve.
- Staff are beginning to participate well in moderation activities with their cluster partner schools. This work should continue to be developed to support a shared understanding of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels. Future school improvement plans to develop holistic assessments should also help to support children to apply their skills in unfamiliar contexts and make links to their learning across the curriculum.
- The school uses a range of effective approaches to monitor children's progress. The headteacher and staff track and monitor the progress of the children and this information is shared appropriately. Regular and helpful consultation takes place over the session to discuss children's progress and this is helping to identify next steps in children's learning. The headteacher has also created well planned curricular focus opportunities built into the school calendar to evaluate aspects of the curriculum. All children are tracked and monitored for progress on the local authority pupil tracker which gathers data on literacy and numeracy progress. This collated data is becoming more robust and is shared with staff to identify any gaps in learning and inform next steps that may be taken to address any learning issues.

## 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

satisfactory

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

- The overall quality of children's attainment in literacy and English language and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory.
- Data provided by the school from session 2017/18 shows that a majority of children are making appropriate progress in reading, writing and numeracy at early level. Most children are making appropriate progress in listening and talking at early level. The majority of children are making appropriate progress in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy at first level. Less than half of children are making appropriate progress in reading, writing and numeracy at second level. The majority of children are making appropriate progress in listening and talking at second level. Further work on ensuring reliable and robust data is required when reporting on listening and talking at all Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- The headteacher provided attainment predictions for June 2019. Overall, these predictions are realistic. Most children are making appropriate progress in literacy and numeracy at early level. A minority of children are making appropriate progress in numeracy and writing at first level with a majority of children making appropriate progress in reading and listening and talking. Most children are making appropriate progress in reading and talking and listening and a majority in writing at second level. The school's predicted figure for numeracy at second level is ambitious, indicating a majority of children making appropriate progress at this level. Currently, a minority of children are attaining numeracy at second level and we discussed with senior leaders the need to closely monitor actual and predicted levels of attainment in numeracy at second level.

#### Attainment over time

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy is tracked to support staff in making judgements on achievement of levels. Attainment over time shows a general improving trend but remains variable, particularly for aspects of literacy and numeracy at second level. There are a number of targeted interventions in place to support children's learning, for example approaches to nurture, growth mindset, and training all teaching staff to deliver the Active Literacy Programme. These are having a positive impact on children's attainment, wellbeing, confidence and readiness for learning. The headteacher speaks very positively about the impact that the Quality Assurance and Moderation Officer (QAMSO) has had on supporting moderation in Newmilns Primary School. An improvement priority for session 2019-20 is to introduce the local authority curriculum progression framework to begin to support the monitoring and tracking of attainment across all curricular areas. There is scope to further develop approaches to moderation to support improved attainment and continue to raise expectations for all children. Ongoing moderation and professional discussion of the National Benchmarks will support staff in developing further their understanding of Curriculum for Excellence levels.

## Literacy

- Overall attainment in literacy is satisfactory. The majority of children are making progress to achieve the appropriate level but there is inconsistency across the school in the levels of attainment.

## Listening and Talking

- Across the school, the majority of children are articulate, polite and courteous. At early and first level the majority of children listen attentively to instructions and are able to take their turn when speaking in class. A few children do not yet listen respectfully to the teacher or each other. A few children at this level need to develop further their talking and listening skills. At second level, children are more confident and speak with clarity on a number of school related matters. They give way to one another in discussion and demonstrate the ability to extend and counter with their peers in dialogue. At second level, children work well in pairs and in groups. Children in P7 are working well on their interview technique, questioning and answering each other, applying listening and talking skills in a real life context.

## Reading

- At early level, children are gaining confidence in reading aloud and building fluency. Children use different strategies to decode words which are new to them. The majority of children at first level are reading at an appropriate level for their stage. A few are hesitant and lacking in expression when reading aloud. The majority of children at first level are aware of one or two authors and a few children said that they do not enjoy reading. At first level a majority of children are reading a range of non-fiction texts in connection with their class topic. At second level most children read with fluency and expression. They are aware of genre in texts and can name a number of authors and their works with confidence. Children at second level can offer reasons for liking a particular text or author.

## Writing

- Writing across the school is having a focus this session and attainment in writing is an improving picture. Children at early level are building their sound vocabulary with each other, blending sounds and creating words to add to their vocabulary. Children at first level can write about their topic work and design persuasive posters. At second level, children write letters, imaginative essays and reports on a number of topics. They record their work in writing jotters and their contexts for writing are well supported through resources and planners from the teachers. Children's presentation of their recorded work can be variable across the school. There is scope for further development of consistency of presentation across the school. There are good examples of written work from a minority of the children.

## Attainment in numeracy

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy is satisfactory. Data from 2017-18 shows that the majority of children are making appropriate progress at early level in numeracy and mathematics. The majority of children are making satisfactory progress at first level and a minority are making appropriate progress at second level.

## Number, money, measure

- At early level, most children can identify number processes, such as, the number before, the number after and missing numbers in a sequence within 20. A few children can use language to describe quarters. At first level, the majority of children add tens and units and a few can add hundreds, tens and units. Children need to make more progress in working with addition and subtraction calculations, especially involving money. This will help them when solving addition and subtraction word problems. A minority of children can record times using am and pm and can identify 24 hour notation. At second level, a majority of children can round



numbers to the nearest 1,000 and 10,000. Their skills in multiplication and division of whole numbers by ten, 100 and 1000 are less well-developed.

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

- At early level, most children identify, describe and create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. At early level, the majority of children can name, identify and classify a range of simple 2D shapes and 3D objects and recognises these shapes in different orientations and sizes. At second level, the majority of children can use their knowledge of the link between the eight compass points and angles to describe, follow and record directions. Their progress in drawing and measuring angles to the required degree of accuracy requires further development.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, the majority of children use knowledge of colour and shape to match and sort items in a variety of different ways. At first and second levels, children need to progress further in their information handling skills by working on whole school projects or activities. For example, the eco group could provide data for children to analyse and present their findings and then display results around the school.

### **Overall quality of children's achievements**

- Children have a wide range of opportunities for achievement in school. This includes a variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs which are supported and led by members of school staff. Children take on leaderships roles by involvement in Eco group, Pupil Council, Global Citizenship and a Health and Wellbeing group. Involvement in these groups is also enabling children to become socially and personally aware of issues affecting the school community. Children's achievements are recognised through a range of awards, including; Purple Pen Hall of Fame which recognises special pieces of written work and Brick awards recognising effort and quality of work in class and outside of school. Staff celebrate children's achievements at regular school assemblies with class awards and star awards for individual children.
- A range of active schools and extra-curricular clubs are on offer and well attended. The school has also been awarded a silver award from Sports Scotland. The Active Schools Coordinator tracks children's participation and this also provides senior leaders with the opportunity to monitor participation and offer alternative activities as appropriate. There is scope to further enhance this tracking approach to include identifying the skills children are achieving for learning life and work obtained through participation in these activities.
- Learning logs are used effectively to record children's achievements both in and out of school, and are shared with parents. Currently, the written learning logs are being transferred to each child's GLOW account providing an electronic approach to recording achievements. The school is well placed, as part of their review of tracking, to consistently gather, track and monitor children's achievement providing an overview of wider achievement across the school. This should include developing approaches to ensure children can talk about the skills they are acquiring through participation in these activities.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Staff and the headteacher have articulated an understanding of the socio-economic background of all children. The school's Pupil Equity Fund has allowed for a range of effective, targeted support in literacy and Health and Wellbeing. Staff report a positive impact upon confidence, progress and resilience. There is emerging evidence that these interventions are having a positive impact on wellbeing and attainment. Further professional discussion and research would ensure that interventions are appropriate, targeted, and have a clear rationale.

- The school has achieved bronze status for Dyslexia Friendly Schools and also achieved a Rights Respecting School (RRS) Bronze Award demonstrating a commitment to respect inclusion and equity. Children spoke confidently about their role in achieving the RRS award and how this experience is helping to improve relationships between children and with staff in the classroom.
- The headteacher has consulted widely and effectively with parents to develop a family learning policy to encourage families to work together on learning across all curriculum areas. This is allowing children to involve and share learning with parents and also provides parents with the opportunity to experience classroom tasks and approaches to teaching and learning. Staff are very pleased with the level of parental engagement at this early stage and believe that this has the potential to positively impact upon confidence, HWB and attainment. We agree with senior leaders that although this initiative is in the early stages of development, it has the potential to improve children's attainment and HWB.



## 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.