

Summarised inspection findings

Currie Primary School

The City of Edinburgh Council

8 November 2022

Key contextual information

Currie Primary School is located in the South West of the City of Edinburgh. The school is part of the Currie High School Cluster. In November 2019, the catchment boundaries were changed and as a result, a number of the children attending the school are now in the Balerno High School catchment area. The school roll is 517 with 20 classes. The school has a very small number of children living in SIMD 1 and 2.

Overall, from January to June 2022 COVID-19 had a significant impact on the school with an increase in staff and children's absence.

The substantive headteacher is on a sabbatical. A temporary acting leadership team was established to lead the school in session 2021/22. This consists of an acting headteacher, two acting deputy headteachers and two acting principal teachers.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- A temporary acting leadership team was established to lead the school in session 2021/22. All were appointed over the last eight months and have clear roles and remits. Parents, children and staff find them approachable.
- The acting headteacher and staff have created a positive ethos where children and staff display mutual respect. Across the school, there is a purposeful, calm ethos of learning. Senior leaders and staff have good arrangements in place to meet the needs of children who require additional help with their learning. As a result, children behave well and are settled and engaged in their learning.
- All stakeholders were involved in the creation of the school's mission statement, vision and values. Staff and children demonstrate the motto 'Do our best to be our best' in day-to-day practice. The school values of respect, responsibility, determination, honesty and happiness are evident in the interactions and quality of relationships across the school. These values have supported the school's recovery following the pandemic. Staff plan to embed further their rights-based learning approach.
- The leadership team promote a collaborative approach to school improvement. As a result, across the school, staff have a positive attitude to school improvement and feel fully involved in change. Staff talk positively about opportunities available to lead on school improvement activity. All teachers are members of one of the school's working parties to develop key improvement work. They are currently working on improving children's attainment in writing. They use their own professional development time to support this work.
- The acting headteacher has worked with staff, parents and children to create a clear improvement plan to help support the pace of change. Senior leaders and staff gather

evidence of how school improvement activities impact on children. They share successfully how they plan to improve the school with parents and children. All staff are included in the evaluation of school improvement activity. Since the pandemic, staff have focussed on improving literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Senior leaders and staff are aware that there have been many competing priorities introduced recently. They should continue to ensure that the strategic direction and pace of change is manageable for all staff.

- Senior leaders and staff have a good understanding of the varying needs of different cohorts of children. Together they use this knowledge well to inform school improvement and interventions to support children. The leadership team have developed a robust way to track and monitor children's attainment across the school. In particular, staff carefully track and monitor the attainment of children who are care experienced and those with additional support needs. Staff make effective use of additional funding from the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to support identified children. Overall, senior leaders should now provide clearer direction to staff on how to demonstrate more effectively that all children are making the best possible progress.
- Staff are re-establishing opportunities for children to develop their leadership skills. The Currie Kids Improvement Planning group and the pupil council help identify areas of the school children think need improved. Children take part in groups such as the Rights Respecting Schools group, Equalities Crew and Anti-Bullying Champions, which once fully established, will support pupil leadership and decision making across the school.
- Senior leaders monitor the work of the school. They have created an improvement calendar which outlines the range of approaches used to evaluate the quality and impact of children's learning experiences. This includes sampling the work of children, visiting classes to observe children's experiences, peer observations and discussions with teachers regarding children's attainment, progress and achievements. As a result the quality of teaching across the school is good. Staff should now focus on ensuring class observations help identify and share good practice and support further improvement.

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 almost all classes, children are engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. They enjoy taking part in learning activities and undertake them to the best of their ability. There are warm and positive relationships between children and adults. Staff create learning environments that are inclusive of a range of different additional support needs and cultures.
- Across the school, the quality of learning and teaching is good. In most classes, staff try to differentiate learning to meet children's needs. In almost all classes, teachers give clear instructions and explanations to children about learning activities. They use questioning appropriately in most lessons to check for understanding. Staff could now use questioning more effectively to help children develop their thinking skills.
- A few children in each class would be able to cope with more challenge in their learning. The leadership team should harness staff enthusiasm and provide clear direction to develop more creative learning and teaching approaches.
- Staff create learning opportunities mainly within the classroom area. They could make more effective use of the outdoor spaces for learning. Teachers provide children with opportunities to learn independently, in pairs and in groups. Most children remain on task and work well with others. They are now ready to take a greater role in leading their own learning.
- Staff across P1 and P2 classes have developed successfully a wide range of learning through play opportunities for all children. They make good use of space indoors and outdoors to develop learning through play. Most children receive developmentally appropriate experiences through play. They sustain their concentration and engage well with these opportunities. Staff plan more formal teaching of groups and learning through play well. They should now regularly evaluate these approaches, in particular at key points in the year. This would help ensure they continue to build on their successes and ensure improved outcomes for learners. In doing this, teachers and support staff should continue to develop a full understanding of the role of the adult in the play environment.
- Teachers make good use of interactive technology to display learning activity information. Children have access to tablet computers in class and can use these confidently for individual learning activities, accessing apps and taking photographs or videos. Older children have personalised tablet computers that they can use to access learning activities and type up extended writing. Helpfully, adults configure tablets to meet children's needs or preferences. The principal teacher coordinates digital literacy effectively across the school.
- Staff provide effective feedback on children's learning in a number of ways. In some cases where older children have completed their work electronically, teachers will leave a recorded

voice note for them to let them know how well they have performed and what their next steps should be.

- Teachers often encourage children to assess each other's work. They comment on what they like about each other's work and what would help it to be even better. Staff should develop this more consistently across the school.
- Across the school, staff retain evidence of children's progress in a variety of ways. Every class has an assessment folio for each child. In a few classes, this includes the latest and best pieces of writing and other work that the child has completed. Staff use this to transfer information at points of transition. The approach is too variable across the school and does not provide robust evidence of children's progress. Senior leaders should now provide clear direction to staff on assessment and retaining evidence of progress. A clearer and more consistent approach will support staff in ensuring and reporting on children's progress.
- Staff 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. Staff have created a bank of online assessment items at all levels and a moderation proforma which are available for all teachers.
- 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 collect a significant amount of data about the current levels of attainment of each child for reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. They identify if children are on track with their learning in these areas.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff provide children with a range of experiences across the curriculum. They use previously created bundles of experiences and outcomes to help provide an overview of the curriculum and support children to progress in their learning across subject areas. There are progression pathways available for literacy and numeracy. These need to be used more consistently across the school to plan learning for groups of children. Staff would be able to use these as a record of progress for cohorts of children as they move through Curriculum for Excellence levels. More work needs done to streamline the approach to planning of learning and teaching to enable it to be a supportive working document for staff.
- Across the school, staff provide children with appropriate opportunities to take part in two hours quality physical education across the week. The inspection took place at the beginning of term and therefore timetables were not fully established. The leadership team need to monitor class timetables to ensure they reflect a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff provide children with effective opportunities to develop their digital literacy skills. A principal teacher is leading improvements in this area effectively.
- Staff work in partnership with other agencies and companies to enhance the curriculum for children. These include the community police officer based at Currie High School, National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCOS), and the local rugby club, Hearts FC, Edinburgh College and Heriot-Watt University

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The parent council continued to meet online throughout the pandemic and is now adopting a hybrid approach of both in-person and online meetings going forward. There is a parent representative for each class in the school. The Parent Teacher Association is also about to restart. Parents previously volunteered to help run the school library and take swimming classes. This has not yet restarted following the pandemic. Most parents are generally happy with the school. A few parents would like more information on children's individual progress.
- Staff previously used an electronic learning journal to communicate to parents the learning taking place in class. Staff and the leadership team have decided to change this method of communicating with parents, as uptake on it was low. In response, staff have begun to use social media to communicate to parents the learning taking place in class. They will also provide parents with a midterm report on progress. The leadership team should work with parents to evaluate the impact of these changes.

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Staff provide children with a wellbeing curriculum which provides good opportunities for them to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to support their mental, social and physical health. They have recently introduced a new programme which is supporting children to understand and recognise their emotions. This is helping children to express how they are feeling and use strategies to support their wellbeing.
- The school has access to partner agencies and services to help meet the needs of children who require additional support. These include speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, Police and educational psychology. There are a number of children in the school with English as an additional language. A support officer from the authority has responsibility for ensuring that staff can make appropriate provision for their needs.
- Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of statutory duties. As a result all children have their learning and emotional and social needs well met. Staff have been successful in narrowing the achievement gap between groups of learners.
- Staff provide targeted interventions to identified cohorts of learners to raise attainment. These include children who require additional support for learning and those who are care experienced. Staff track their progress carefully to ensure the interventions are having a positive impact. They track the progress in wellbeing of a few identified children using useful assessment profiles. These demonstrate those children are making good progress in addressing their wellbeing needs. This term staff plan to review how they measure the progress all children are making in improving their wellbeing.
- Almost all children are included and engaged in the life of the school through a wide variety of pupil leadership groups. Children are able to describe the wider range of pupils groups and the roles they undertake. Across the school, they take responsibility for aspects of school life. As a result, most children are confident in making decisions and demonstrate leadership skills when working as part of groups.
- Staff and partners have been unable to deliver after school activities and groups due to the pandemic. These are gradually resuming. Before COVID, staff monitored children's participation levels and engagement to ensure no one missed out. They should continue with plans to re-engage partners to support the wellbeing of children.
- Staff are working hard at creating a nurturing school and have very good relationships with children. They meet their social and emotional needs very well. Staff have made a good start to developing children's rights. This is providing children with a voice across the school and opportunities to develop leadership skills. Staff should now ensure children have an increased

voice in decisions that affect them. For example, children should have an increased voice in child's planning meetings.

- Additional support for learning staff and staff in the 'hub' work effectively alongside class teachers and partners to identify children who require additional support with their learning. They support children effectively through targeted interventions. As a result, children who require additional support for their learning are achieving and progressing well. Staff use individual learning plans and profiles to set targets and track children's progress. The school should continue to monitor interventions that take place outwith the classroom. In doing this they should ensure that children are supported alongside their peers, as far as possible.
- Across the school, staff show a clear commitment to providing an inclusive learning environment where all children feel valued. They have a clear focus on ensuring all children are able to achieve. The school is accessible for all and includes gender-free toilets. Staff provide clear signs across the school supporting children to be confident in accessing their learning environment. Children benefit from well-planned activities to raise awareness of diversity and identifying discrimination. They are confident in demonstrating an understanding of other faiths. They show confidence in challenging racism. The leadership team use assemblies well to celebrate and raise awareness of other cultures and faiths.
- Most parents feel that the schools supports children to feel safe. Most children are happy in school and are aware of what to do if they feel they are being bullied. Almost all children feel they have a trusted adult in the school that they could approach if they were worried. The school has a good focus on developing children's understanding of what makes them safe. Staff develop well children's understanding of healthy eating and healthy life styles.
- The school receives support from a specialist transitions teacher. This teacher is shared and deployed across the cluster to reduce children's anxiety on transition.

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

- Most children are achieving the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels (CfE) in literacy and numeracy. They are making good progress from prior levels of attainment. Senior leaders and teachers track effectively children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. They do this regularly, using a wide range of data. As a result, staff have a good overall picture of children's attainment. This allows them to take appropriate action to support children not on track to achieve.
- In 2021/22, most children in P1 achieved early CfE level in literacy with, almost all achieving this in numeracy. Most children in P4 and P7 achieved first and second level in literacy and numeracy respectively. Over time, senior leaders have been supporting staff to understand national expectations using the National Benchmarks. Staff are now making increasingly accurate professional judgements. Staff have recently been involved in the moderation of writing which is helping raise attainment in writing.
- Overall, children are making good progress in literacy.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children are developing their talking and listening skills through purposeful play opportunities. At first level, most children take turns during class and group discussions. At second level, almost all children are successfully developing and applying their skills in listening and talking across all areas of the curriculum. The majority of children speak confidently and articulately, and are able to explain reasons for their responses. They listen and respond well to others in group and class discussions.

Reading

- At early level, most children are developing their knowledge of sounds and letters through play. At first level, most pupils read fluently and use expression. Children talk willingly about their favourite authors and can justify their choices. At second level, most pupils are enthusiastic about reading. They recognise and use aspects of figurative language, for example, metaphor, simile and alliteration in reading and writing tasks. Older children are capable of reading text that is more challenging. They would benefit from reading novels in school and taking books home from the school library to extend their reading opportunities to provide further challenge.

Writing

- Staff have correctly identified the need to improve children's writing across the school. They are taking steps to review their approaches to teaching writing. At early level, most children are able to retell stories through actions, play and mark making. At first level, most children are able to punctuate correctly use conjunctions and write legibly. 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. Staff have identified the need to improve children's motivation to write. They plan to improve children's ability to write at length.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money, measure

- 'Currie Counts' is supporting children across the school to develop core numeracy skills. At early level, most children are confidently working with numbers up to 20 and a few can work with larger numbers. They complete missing number patterns and have a good awareness of the value and use of coins. At first level, most children are confident carrying out a range of calculations and confidently identify equivalent fractions. They would benefit from further work on calculating change from £10 and converting centimetres to metres. At second level, children are developing an understanding of decimal place value. Children now need to develop further their understanding of factors and number patterns.

Shape, position, movement

- Children across the school are developing a good understanding of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At early level, children are developing an awareness of symmetry. At first and second level, most children are confident with compass directions and symmetry. They are confident with types of angle, though those at second level would benefit from a greater understanding of complementary and supplementary angles.

Information handling

- At early level, children sort items into groups. At first and second level, most children are developing a good understanding of bar graphs and tally charts. Children who had achieved first level were confident in the use of Venn and Carroll diagrams. Children working at second level need to develop a greater understanding of statistical diagrams, including Venn and Carroll diagrams. Children at first and second level have a good understanding of ideas of uncertainty and chance.

Attainment over time

- The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is affecting a few children's attainment. This, along with teachers' greater understanding of national standards, means there are slight declines in the overall CfE level data. The exception is at early level numeracy, where there are increasing attainment levels.
- Senior leaders and teachers meet regularly throughout the year. They use a range of evidence to review children's attainment including standardised assessment results. They track children's attainment well, including separate tracking for identified groups of children such as those targeted by PEF or who are care experienced. Most children who require additional support are making good progress in their learning. Senior leaders should consider how they know the value their improvement actions are adding to children's attainment as they move through the school.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- The school community recognise and celebrate children's personal achievements in a variety of ways, including at assemblies and through social media. Through opportunities to be involved in a range of activities, all children developing skills and attributes outlined in the four capacities. These include sports leadership, the Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS) and in P7, the Currie Citizenship award.
- Staff track the involvement of different groups of children in achievement activities well. This includes children targeted by PEF and who are care experienced. They are aware of who are not participating 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. A few children can talk confidently about how they are developing these skills in their learning.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have effective systems in place to track and monitor the attainment and achievement of all children, including those who are care experienced and supported by PEF. They have used the allocated funds to provide universal support to wellbeing using an emotional support programme. PEF also funds additional staffing for nurture. Staff use a recognised profiling system to monitor children supported by PEF. These profiles demonstrate improvements in wellbeing for these children. A minority of children targeted by PEF are on track in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders should consider how they could more fully evidence accelerated improvements in attainment for targeted groups.

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.