

Summarised inspection findings

St Peter's RC Primary School

Aberdeen City Council

21 February 2023

Key contextual information

St. Peter's RC Primary School is situated in the north-east of Aberdeen, close to the city centre. The school has not been particularly adversely affected by COVID-19 absence during the pandemic period. The roll has recently increased significantly to 200. One significant factor in this is the school's proximity to the University of Aberdeen. The school has welcomed families from African countries, including Nigeria, Zambia and Ghana, in addition to families from Eastern European countries such as Poland and Lithuania. This adds to the diverse international mix of children and families. Consequently, there is also a significant transient element in the school roll. There are 59 children for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The home language of almost one half of children (92) is non-English, with 82 children who have English as their first language. Around one half of the children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 2-4. Thirteen percent of P6-P7 pupils and 76% of P1-P7 pupils are registered for free school meals. Attendance remains 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

- The school's shared values of trust, kindness, respect, tolerance and forgiveness are clearly linked to Gospel Values and underpin the inclusive, caring ethos at St Peter's. Children relate the values well to their learning around the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. All staff develop very positive, caring relationships with children who in turn, demonstrate these qualities in their relationships with peers. This helps to create a calm, purposeful environment where children are valued and supported in their learning and wellbeing. Staff have a very good understanding of the school's unique and diverse context. They are aware of the challenges children face in their learning and work to address any gaps identified as a result of the pandemic.
- Children are friendly, polite and welcoming. They are proud of their school and keen to share their learning. Most children are motivated to learn and enjoy the range of opportunities they have to take learning beyond the classroom. Trips to nearby sites such as the local library, community sports facilities and St Machar Cathedral enhance children's learning experiences. Children have regular opportunities to take their learning outdoors. For example, children demonstrate their understanding of time by drawing analogue clock faces with chalk on the playground, using twigs as the hour and minute hands. Staff also use the school garden to develop children's understanding of nature and growing things. They should consider how the school grounds and local area could support further the development of outdoor learning and related skills.
- Children have increasing opportunities to be involved in the wider life of the school through a range of groups and committees. Senior pupils take on roles with additional responsibility such

as P1 prefects and house captains, whilst children across the school are involved in the eco committee. Senior leaders use How Good is OUR School? to support pupil participation. They are beginning to involve the pupil council and learning council in more meaningful decision making. For example, children contribute ideas to refurbish the disused former janitor's lodge, providing a learning space which will support creativity, play and the development of life skills. These opportunities help children to develop leadership and cooperative skills. The majority of teachers consult children about what they would like to explore as part of the planning for whole-school contexts for learning. They should build on existing practice and opportunities to ensure all children can contribute to decisions about learning and the wider life of the school.

- Most children engage well in their learning, particularly when it is linked to relevant, real-life contexts. They enjoy paired and group learning tasks which support teamworking skills. In almost all lessons, children understand the purpose of their learning and most children can describe what they need to do to be successful. Children have regular opportunities to self and peer-assess. In a few lessons, children talk confidently about their strengths and next steps as learners. Teachers should continue to develop a shared language of learning across the school to help children understand themselves as learners. This will help them to identify what they need to do to improve. Children cannot yet readily discuss the skills they are developing. As planned, senior leaders should implement the local authority skills framework to support the progressive development of skills for learning, life and work.
- In most classes, teachers plan different learning activities to meet the needs of individual children. Where this is most effective, children experience appropriate pace and challenge in their learning and tasks are well matched to their needs. This is not yet consistent across all classes. A significant minority of children across the school would benefit from greater challenge in their learning. Senior leaders work with staff to develop approaches which encourage children to be active participants in their learning. In the best examples, teachers help children to use a range of strategies which support them to develop independent learning skills. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop approaches which support all children to take greater responsibility for their own learning. They should continue to develop consistently high-quality learning and teaching across the school.
- In almost all lessons, teacher's explanations and instructions are clear. In a few classes, teachers use questioning well to extend children's learning or support them to develop higher order thinking skills. There is potential for teachers to develop the effective use of questioning further. All teachers provide feedback on children's learning. Where this is most effective, it helps children understand what they have done well and provides clear next steps. A few teachers encourage children to reflect and act upon teacher feedback in their next pieces of work. They should continue to encourage children to ask increasingly complex questions as part of their learning.
- Most teachers make good use of digital technology to support and enhance children's learning across the curriculum. Staff use devices and programmes well to support children for whom English is an additional language (EAL). In a few classes, children use their digital skills confidently to create links using QR codes or to develop creative images using graphics. Teachers should ensure that children's digital skills are developed progressively across the school.
- Teachers at the early stages work together closely to develop their approach to learning through play. Staff have engaged with national practice guidance and consider this when planning experiences for children. They should continue to explore how their use of the environment and their interactions support children to develop and learn at an appropriate pace. The headteacher should continue to support staff to look outwards as they continue to take their practice forward.

- Teachers work together closely to discuss planning, assessment and children's progress across stages and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. They use a range of ongoing and periodic assessments to measure children's progress and achievement. Teachers make increasingly effective use of the National Benchmarks to support assessment and evaluate children's progress. Senior leaders have established assessment weeks within the school calendar to support teachers' use of targeted assessment. This supports teachers' dialogue on expected standards, resulting in them making professional judgements with greater confidence. Teachers make increasing use of high-quality assessments which require children to apply their learning in new and meaningful contexts. Most teachers are beginning to make better use of assessment evidence to inform their planning.
- Teachers track children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They monitor the pace of progress of individuals in their class and raise concerns promptly where they feel children may need support. Staff work closely and effectively with the EAL outreach teacher. They monitor the progress of children with additional support needs closely. Senior leaders and teachers meet termly for discussions about children's progress. Where children face barriers to learning, interventions and resources are quickly identified and implemented. Staff monitor the impact of these interventions on children's progress. Staff should discuss appropriate pace and challenge for all children at these meetings to ensure all learners' needs are met effectively.

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.

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

- Across the school, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in their learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. School data on attainment is reliable, and teachers are confident in making judgements using National Benchmarks to support their evaluations of CfE levels.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English, with a few making very good progress. Staff have recently introduced new approaches to teaching literacy at the early stages. This has significantly raised attainment in reading and writing at the early level. A recent increase in the number of children with EAL has impacted on overall attainment figures. However, most children receiving support make appropriate progress in line with their individual targets and milestones.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, the majority of children make good progress in listening and talking. The pandemic had a significant impact on the attainment of children with EAL in this area of learning. As a result, staff have implemented targeted strategies which are having a positive impact on children's progress in listening and talking. At early level, the majority of children talk readily as they engage in role play. They hear and say single sounds made by letters. A few children need support to ensure they do not talk over each other when they are excited. At first level, most children ask and respond to questions in teacher led discussion. A significant minority require support with listening and responding to each other effectively when working in groups. At second level, most children are articulate and confident when sharing opinions and ideas. They are less confident in asking evaluative or inferential questions.

Reading

- Most children at early and second level, and the majority of children at first level, make good progress in reading. The range of strategies teachers have in place, their deployment of support staff and their use of digital technology support children well to progress and develop their reading skills. At early level, most children enjoy watching and listening to stories. A few children need support to read aloud, and to recognise punctuation in their reading. At first level, most children talk about authors and books they enjoy, although they cannot yet describe the genres they prefer. Most children working within second level recognise techniques used to influence the reader. They describe features of language such as vocabulary and punctuation appropriately. They are less confident in skimming and scanning texts to identify the main ideas or find information.

Writing

- Most children at early and first levels, and the majority of children at second level, make good progress in writing. Across the school, a few children make very good progress and produce high-quality, extended pieces. At early level, most children write words from left to right and leave a space between words. A few require support with recalling the sounds of lowercase letters and spelling common words correctly. Most children at first level write well for a range of purposes, making accurate use of a range of punctuation. A few require support to spell unfamiliar words and would benefit from learning to use different strategies to help them with this. At second level, the majority of children link sentences with conjunctions and write using paragraphs to organise their ideas. They are not yet familiar with acknowledging sources of information when carrying out research to support writing new texts.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. The school uses the Aberdeen City Council numeracy progression framework across stages to ensure progression.

Number, money and measure

- Most children across all stages are confident in the use of basic number processes. Children enjoy participating in a range of mental agility activities and taking their learning outdoors to develop their number skills and processes. A few children at first level lack confidence in problem solving and mental maths. Most children at first and second levels are provided with opportunities to apply their numeracy and mathematical skills to real-life contexts, such as making calculations for rent and discounts on food. Most children in P7 are confident in the use of decimals, fractions and percentages.
- The school provides effective digital platforms to support children's learning at home. Children can practise their skills in a range of formats to develop their knowledge and understanding in key concepts, such as fractions, decimal fractions and equations. Children can talk about how they are developing their numeracy skills and can talk about their strengths.

Shape, position and movement

- Staff provide a range of contexts for children to apply and develop their numeracy skills across stages and curriculum areas. For example, children at second level explored shape, position and movement in art and in physical education. Staff use digital platforms effectively to support children at early and first levels in developing their knowledge of angles, position and movement.

Information handling

- Children across the school have a variety of opportunities to display and interpret information in a range of ways. At early level, children use tally marks to display information of different types. At first level, children display and interpret data using bar graphs. At second level, children are confident in identifying ways to display data for different purposes, using appropriate charts, tables or graphs. Almost all children have appropriate opportunities to display and interpret information across different areas of their learning.

Attainment over time

- Teachers accurately identified factors arising from children's experiences during the pandemic that impacted negatively on their progress in learning. These were particularly in relation to children's acquisition of English language, social skills and children's ability for emotional self-regulation. The lack of English language skills also impacted negatively on the capacity of a minority of children to learn in other areas of the curriculum, including numeracy

and mathematics. As a result, teachers identified evidence of limited progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for a significant minority of children.

- Staff have been effective in addressing the gaps identified in children's learning. They have introduced new resources and approaches to learning and teaching in literacy and numeracy. These are supporting children to make good progress in their learning in these areas in the current session. Children are also supported well by staff to make regular use of the wellbeing indicators to evaluate their progress in improving their health and wellbeing.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Staff are developing an increasing range of opportunities to support a stronger pupil voice and children's leadership and achievement. Staff have planned a series of activities to address needs they identified children as having as a result of their experiences during the pandemic. These issues included lack of confidence and body image. Children enjoy regular opportunities to invite parents into school to demonstrate their learning and to perform.
- The school makes good use of partnerships to improve learners' skills through wider achievements. These include the Russell Anderson Development School (RADS) and local authority EAL service and family learning team. Although many activities are open to all, staff also target opportunities carefully for children who would benefit most. As a result, most children are developing their self-confidence and social skills well. Children are developing a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and engage enthusiastically in activities to improve their school and local community.
- Senior leaders track and monitor children's participation in wider achievement activities. They use this information, along with other tracking information, to identify appropriate experiences to meet the needs of all children. For each individual child, they identify skills that require development and explore appropriate opportunities for accreditation. Senior leaders recognise that the development of a progressive skills framework will support a more effective strategic approach to planning and evaluating the wider achievements of all children.

Equity for all learners

- Across the school, teachers are making good use of data to inform their practice to reduce potential barriers to learning. Teachers and senior leaders work with partners to monitor the impact of interventions to ensure equity. This information is used to inform children's progress in learning and plan next steps. As a result of these interventions, children in P1 and P7 in particular demonstrate improved progress in literacy and numeracy over the last year. Staff should continue to focus on how they can ensure continued improvement in learning in literacy and numeracy for children across all stages.
- There is evidence that the work in partnership with RADS is having a positive impact on increasing the confidence and self-esteem of targeted children. In turn, this is helping to support an inclusive and ambitious school culture. Staff should continue to monitor the progress in the learning of targeted children in order to evaluate the wider impact of such interventions on attainment and achievement.
- The transient nature of a significant part of the school roll continues to present challenges to staff in monitoring and tracking children's progress in learning. However, staff have effective systems in place to ensure that the learning needs of all children are quickly identified and addressed. Along with the positive school culture, these systems have helped to achieve the target of having no children excluded from school in the past session.

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.