

Summarised inspection findings

Castlehill Primary School and Nursery Class

East Dunbartonshire Council

17 March 2020

Key contextual information

Castlehill Primary School is situated on the west of Bearsden. It is a non-denominational school with a roll of 152. Children are organised into seven classes. The school provides enhanced provision for children with additional support needs. An additional 25 children access the Enhanced Learning Resource.

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 at Castlehill Primary School benefit from a supportive and nurturing environment for learning. This reflects a whole school commitment to the school's values and the rights of the child. Children know the values and identify examples of these within their experiences at school. They speak knowledgeably about the importance of rights and their relevance in the learning environment.
- The positive relationships that exist between teachers and children, allow children to engage and interact well during their learning. Children feel that their views are valued and acted on. All children benefit from being a member of one of nine well-planned pupil participation 'school groups'. They highlight that these groups have led to improvements. For example, they have had a positive impact on the outdoor learning environment and the promotion of positive mind-sets in numeracy and mathematics. Children highlight the benefit of working with peers across all stages. They work well with each other and understand better each other's points of view.
- Staff work well as a team. Their effective, collaborative professional learning has contributed to continuing improvements in the quality of teaching. In most lessons, children are motivated and engaged through well-planned and interesting learning activities. In most lessons, children respond well to teachers' effective questioning, which encourages higher-order thinking. In most lessons, teachers set tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty for most children to meet their learning needs. Teachers should continue to increase the level of challenge for higher-attaining children. They should support children to take increasing responsibility and foster independence in their learning. Staff should continue to develop their practice in play-based pedagogy across the early stages, to provide consistently high-quality experiences for children.
- Teachers make effective use of formative assessment strategies across the school. In most lessons, children receive verbal feedback from teachers and act well on this. Overall, the quality of teachers' written feedback is not yet of a consistently high quality. In a few classes, children set targets for their learning and reflect on their progress to plan next steps. Teachers should engage children more in discussing and reviewing targets across their learning. Children will learn how they can improve their learning as a result. This will help children to know themselves as learners and be clear about the progress they are making.

- All children in the senior stages develop confidence and responsibility when acting in leadership roles. They show successful leadership skills within their 'family' groups, as buddies and digital leaders. Within classes, there are a few occasions when children influence their learning. Children form questions relating to what they want to learn at the start of topics. They make valid suggestions about activities that would support their learning.
- Most children access tablets and laptop computers on a daily basis. They use these effectively to support their learning across the curriculum. Children apply effectively digital skills in many areas. This includes developing confidence in coding and photography. They use successfully digital platforms to conduct research and present findings.
- Staff at all stages work well together to plan children's learning. Senior leaders prioritise the importance of staff planning together to develop progression within each level. Teachers are well placed to involve children more in the planning process.
- Teachers plan assessment of literacy and numeracy regularly throughout the school year. They make use of a range of standardised assessments and regular observations of children's learning to assess children's progress in learning. Teachers should assess children's ability to apply their learning more often. This should improve the quality of their professional judgement of progress and achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.
- Teachers engage in activities to moderate children's progress in writing, at school and learning community level. Senior leaders should develop further approaches to moderation. This will help teachers develop a shared understanding of expectations of CfE levels across the curriculum. They should continue to develop their use of National Benchmarks to strengthen their professional judgement of achievement of a CfE level.
- Well-established processes are in place for senior leaders and staff to track and monitor children's progress. Staff use tracking information well to plan effectively for children facing barriers to their learning. They identify accurately next steps for learning and put in place well-judged interventions. However, this tracking of children's progress is based solely on literacy and numeracy standardised assessments. Senior leaders and teachers now need to use a wider range of assessment information to determine children's progress in learning across 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. There is headroom for teachers to raise children's attainment across the school.
- The leadership team provided accurate attainment data. In session 2018/19 most children in P1 and P4 achieved expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy. Most children in P7 achieved expected CfE levels in numeracy. Almost all children in P7 achieved the expected CfE levels in literacy.

Overall achievement in literacy and English

- Overall, children are making good progress in literacy. A few children across all stages are capable of exceeding expected levels of attainment.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children listen attentively to each other and their teachers. Through 'school groups', almost all children are developing well their ability to listen to and respect each other's opinions. At early level, most children understand the importance of focusing their attention on the speaker, when listening. They are developing well their ability to take turns when listening and talking. Through first and second levels, most children show a progressive knowledge of effective skills in listening and talking. This includes an understanding of verbal and body language when presenting to an audience. As they progress through the school, children should apply these skills to develop debating and presentation skills.

Reading

- At early level, the majority of children have made a positive start to applying their knowledge of sounds, letters and blends to read words. They are gaining confidence in combining words to make and read their own sentences. At first level, most children read aloud with increasing understanding, fluency and expression. They share their thoughts confidently about why structure, setting and character portrayal support their enjoyment of a novel. They describe the function of the contents and index of non-fiction texts in helping them locate information. At second level, most children confidently describe the skills of an author in effectively engaging the reader. This includes how character development and interactions influence plot and structure. They read aloud with expression, fluency and with good audience awareness. Staff should develop children's skills and interests in reading for enjoyment.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children have made a positive start in forming letters. A few make confident progress in linking letters to name words. Most children engage in exploring letter shapes in an active way. They are developing their knowledge of the sounds of lowercase and

upper case letters. At first level, most children use appropriate vocabulary and structure when writing across a range of genre, including letter writing and instructions. At second level, almost all children write for a variety of purposes. They are making good progress in note taking and planning writing. Children confidently use paragraphs and include an increased range of punctuation in their writing. Most children can identify what would make writing more interesting, and apply this knowledge to well-structured imaginative pieces. As they move through first and second levels, all children would benefit from writing more in real-life contexts.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making appropriate progress. A few are capable of exceeding expected levels of attainment.

Number, money, measure

- At early level, most children identify confidently 'how many?' in regular dot patterns on a dice, without counting. Almost all children successfully double numbers to a total of 10 mentally. Most can apply addition and subtraction skills to pay for items up to 10p, using the correct coins. At first level, most children add and subtract accurately multiples of 10 and 100 to and from any whole number up to 1000. Most children understand and use accurately 'equal to', 'not equal to', 'less than', 'greater than', and the related symbols when comparing quantities. A few children are not yet able to show an understanding of simple equivalent fractions or explain the role of the numerator and denominator. At second level, almost all children round whole numbers to the nearest 1000, 10,000 and 100,000 with confidence. Most children multiply successfully decimal fractions to two decimal places by a single digit. A few children need support to calculate the area of squares, rectangles and right-angled triangles in square centimetres.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children recognise and sort two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects according to the criteria straight, round, flat and curved. They understand and use the language of position and direction well. At first level, most children name and discuss successfully the properties of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Most children use aspects of mathematical language well to describe their properties. They use confidently the terms face and side. They are not yet familiar with the term vertex. At second level, most children apply effectively their knowledge of angles to write codes for programmable toys to follow directions.

Information handling

- At early level, most children apply counting skills effectively to ask and answer questions based on data they gather. They interpret a simple bar graph well. At first level, most children discuss confidently the use of pie charts. They lack confidence discussing other types of charts and graphs. At second level, most children recall previous learning on information handling and speak confidently about how they collect, organise and display data in a variety of ways. They have well-developed skills in analysis and interpretation of data.

Attainment over time

- Overall most children make good progress in their learning over time. However, there is scope to improve this further. To help raise attainment further, teachers should focus on providing appropriate challenge for all learners.

Overall quality of children's achievements

- Almost all children are developing a sense of wellbeing and confidence by participating in interesting and engaging clubs and activities. These include opportunities to pursue their health and fitness and think creatively and independently. The Active Schools coordinator

plans to introduce new clubs following recent consultation with children. Several local clubs contribute to the after-school sports programme. This allows children to continue with their interests in the community.

- Children are proud of their school's achievements in gaining Eco-Schools Scotland awards, the gold award for Rights Respecting Schools and the Digital Schools awards. Children have gained valuable life skills and have a sense of ownership of these awards. They value the opportunity to recognise and celebrate their school achievements, as well as those out of school. Staff and children do this at weekly assemblies, through wall displays and social media.
- Senior leaders track participation in clubs, and identify where children are missing out to ensure equity of participation. They should now develop further approaches to tracking achievement to involve children in identifying the skills and attributes they develop.

Equity for all children

- The school recently started monitoring the progress of children who face disadvantage because of financial hardship. The school has appropriate interventions to support individual children. This includes the recent use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) for additional staff to provide targeted support at early level. The majority of the school's allocation of PEF has funded the installation of a class kitchen. The school should identify and monitor how the kitchen will be used to raise children's attainment, including those who are most disadvantaged. The school should ensure that interventions focus on raising attainment.

Context

The Castlehill Enhanced Learning Resource (ELR) is a local authority resource, supporting children from P1 to P7 who have a range of additional support needs. The local GIRFEC Liaison Group assesses and agrees placements at the ELR. The ELR comprises three classrooms. Children accessing the ELR have the opportunity to engage in learning both within small ELR classes and, where appropriate, alongside their peers in mainstream classes. At the time of the inspection, 25 children were on the roll.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- The learning environment within the ELR is highly nurturing, supportive and founded on children's rights. All staff are sensitive to children's needs and treat them with respect. Relationships between staff, children and their peers are positive. This is helping children to settle and be ready to engage in learning.
- Staff encourage and support children to communicate their views and feelings verbally. They encourage and support children to use symbols and pictures where appropriate. Staff use feedback and questioning effectively. They create meaningful opportunities to encourage children to build strategies that allow them to manage themselves and their behaviour. This impacts positively by increasing time children are actively engaged in learning.
- Staff in the ELR take part in regular professional learning and enquiry. They successfully identify, apply and improve learning and teaching strategies to meet children's learning needs. Staff recognise that children's engagement is highest where learning is motivating, active and enjoyable. Staff are reflective and creative. They use a range of digital technology to support and enhance learning experiences. As a result, staff support children effectively and children engage well in learning.
- Staff have a comprehensive range of information and plans relevant to each child. They develop these with key partners. They make appropriate use of a range of assessments and evidence gathered from a wider variety of sources. Children's plans offer tailored individualised support to meet the emotional and learning needs of children. The plans identify clearly children's additional support needs. This creates a clear basis for planning their next steps in relation to wellbeing and learning needs. Staff should now review and synthesise this information to extract the most significant details. Staff will then be able to link next steps to children's planned learning more successfully. In doing so, they will be better placed to track and evidence children's progress.
- Within the ELR, there is an overreliance on the use of standardised assessments to check on children's progress. Staff should use a wider range of assessment strategies as an integral part of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle. Teachers should ensure they build on what children already know and that the assessments are sensitive to the needs of all children

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Children are making appropriate progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics from their prior levels of learning, taking account of their additional support needs.
- In literacy and English at early level, almost all children are learning to take turns. They are developing an awareness of when to talk and when to listen to others. As a result, children's

interactions with their peers are of a high quality. They are improving their concentration skills. At first level, when reading non-fiction texts, most children identify and find key information accurately by using the index to locate information. Children select and sort information appropriately to answer questions about the content.

- In numeracy and mathematics at early level, almost all children order confidently numbers forwards and backwards within 10. Most children are developing fluency in mental strategies and apply these skills successfully when engaging in number games. At first level, most children justify their choices of instruments and talk through their thinking clearly to explain their strategies when recording measurement.
- Staff recognise children's achievements daily in class as part of learning, in photos and during assembly. A few children attend clubs and are members of school committees. Staff provide children with effective opportunities to develop their social interaction and communication skills in a larger social context

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.