

Summarised inspection findings

Park Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

25 June 2024

Key contextual information

Park Primary School and Park Primary Family Learning Centre is situated in the centre of the town of Oban. The current roll is 217 in the primary and 20 in the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision. The headteacher has been in post since February 2022. The headteacher is supported by a deputy headteacher and two principal teachers, who are all recently appointed and in acting positions. The school and ELC have experienced staffing challenges in recent years. Attendance is in line with national average. There have been no exclusions in recent years. The school reports that 33% percent of children are recorded as having additional support needs. The Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) allocation to the school is higher than the median allocation to all primary schools in the local authority.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- In recent years the school has experienced significant changes in leadership and staffing. Since taking up post in 2022, the headteacher has worked effectively with staff to minimise the impact on children's learning. Almost all staff find it rewarding to be a member of staff and most feel valued as members of the school community. Senior leaders, in partnership with staff, children and parents, have recently refreshed the school's vision, values and aims. The new vision of "Reach for the Stars" is underpinned by the values 'Shine, Be Kind, Together'. During assemblies and in daily interactions, staff are beginning to use the values effectively to set expectations of behaviour and learning.
- Following a local authority review in 2023, the school improvement plan (SIP) has more clearly defined priorities for improvement. Staff are beginning to review progress more regularly. Moving forward, senior leaders should ensure that all staff are involved in rigorous self-evaluation to inform priorities for improvement. This will help ensure that agreed priorities are evidence-based and well understood by all. The headteacher should maintain a clear strategic focus on the agreed priorities and ensure that time is protected for professional dialogue, collegiate learning and self-evaluation. This will support all stakeholders to develop a collective sense of ownership and shared responsibility for school improvement.
- Most parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions and suggestions. A majority of parents feel that their views are considered when the school is making changes. School improvement priorities are currently shared with parents. Parents would welcome more opportunities to influence change and improvement in the school. They are not currently involved in decisions about how the Pupil Equity Fund is spent. The headteacher plans to build on the successful consultation around the vision and values to involve all stakeholders in self-evaluation activities. This will support the whole school community to be more involved in identifying key areas for improvement in the school.

- The headteacher recognises the need to develop a clear approach to quality assuring learning and teaching in the school. She has made a positive start in using *How Good is our School?* fourth edition to support teachers to reflect on the quality of planning for high-quality learning and teaching. Staff should now work together to develop a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching. This will help teachers to understand better highly effective learning and teaching and support them to continue to improve learning experiences for all children. As planned, the headteacher should support staff to participate in peer lesson observations. This will enable them to identify strengths and areas for improvement with more accuracy and confidence.
- Most staff take on a range of leadership roles across the school. This includes leading aspects of the curriculum, for example, improving writing, supporting the leadership development of children and leading a range of wider achievement activities. The next step is for staff to build upon their leadership roles by influencing and linking more directly to school's improvement priorities. The headteacher should develop a clear strategic approach to ensuring that leadership roles undertaken by staff are clearly aligned to whole school improvement priorities. This should include linking roles and responsibilities directly to improving the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. The planned review of the curriculum should include all members of the school community in exploring where children can make links using local, national and global contexts. The uniqueness of the school's local setting and the school's developing values should be central to the curriculum plan moving forward.
- Pupil leadership groups provide children with meaningful ways to contribute to the wider work of the school. Recent initiatives have included children taking a lead role in the selection and purchase of playground equipment. Children plan Sports Day, have re-designed the school library, and are working towards securing a tenth Eco Schools Green Flag. Older children lead clubs including the art club and the football club. Most children feel comfortable approaching staff with questions and suggestions and say that their views are listened to. Children are proud of their local community and actively seek opportunities to develop partnerships which will benefit their school. Senior leaders should continue to develop leadership opportunities to allow more children to be involved in the work of the school.
- The headteacher has facilitated professional learning on improving writing, curriculum planning for progression, nurture and play pedagogy. Staff have begun to benefit from local authority approaches to supporting the moderation of writing. The Professional Review and Development process supports teachers well to reflect on their professional learning. The headteacher should now ensure that planned professional learning, with appropriate allocation of collegiate time, aligns well with whole school improvement priorities. This will help further develop a shared sense of ownership and responsibility for leading whole school 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

- Staff have created a positive, inclusive and supportive learning environment for children. Children are proud of their school and discuss what they enjoy about different aspects of school life. In almost all lessons, they respond positively to their teachers' encouragement. As a result, most children are polite and respectful to each other and to adults.
- Across all classes, most children respond well to the clear routines and expectations set out by staff which support well-managed, calm transition between activities. This helps children to learn independently. Support staff work effectively with children who require additional support to help them engage appropriately in learning.
- In almost all classes, children interact positively with each other and engage well in their learning. Children learn well in groups, pairs and individually and in some classes have regular opportunities to think about, reflect and discuss learning. In a few classes, staff have identified the need for children to develop their teamwork skills and are supporting children to achieve this.
- Most children are motivated and engage well in their learning through open-ended tasks which provide opportunities for independent learning. This increases children's engagement in activities such as writing, while developing creativity. Teachers should ensure children experience increased levels of challenge in their learning across all areas of the curriculum.
- Children use well-presented displays to celebrate and support learning. Children are proud of their work on display. They enjoy opportunities to talk about learning. In a few classes, staff have worked with children to develop their own learning targets. This is beginning to help children better understand their progress in learning. Children should now be given greater choice and opportunities to set targets and evaluate their progress. This will allow them to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Almost all teachers share the purpose of learning and steps to success with children in most lessons. In most lessons, they link learning to real-life contexts and children's prior learning. In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to check for children's understanding. Extending children's understanding through the effective use of 'thinking time' and higher order questioning will help children develop further their critical skills.
- Almost all teachers use self and peer assessment and verbal and written feedback to support children to improve their work. Feedback is not yet clearly linked to target setting.

Children would benefit from greater opportunities to reflect on feedback to know what they have learned, how successful they have been and to understand their next steps in learning.

- All teachers use digital technology successfully to support learning. In a few classes, children engage effectively with digital technology through podcasts, matrix barcodes, commercial apps and greenscreens. In most classes, children use laptops and tablets confidently to record 'wow moments', reinforce learning and undertake research. Staff work with partners and the local authority through the context of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This has provided a greater breadth of challenging and enjoyable learning experiences, which enthuse and motivate children.
- Staff have made a strong start to developing outdoor learning. The school has expansive grounds which staff and children have developed well to engage children in imaginative activities. Teachers are planning opportunities for outdoor learning and in the best examples, children are developing investigation, curiosity, teamwork and problem solving. Teachers should build on this positive start to plan progressive outdoor learning across the school.
- Early years staff have engaged in play pedagogy training and are developing their approaches to play very well in school. They create play spaces that support independent, play-based experiences and encourage children's creativity. Teachers have adapted their approaches to assessing learning through play and the 'focus child', which is helping them support and extend individual children's learning successfully. New approaches to planning support teachers to be more responsive to children's interests and provide a better balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences. As planned, teachers should continue to review the learning approaches to ensure they are literacy and numeracy rich play-based environments. This review should ensure that children are able to build on their skills and knowledge progressively.
- Staff use data well to support their termly discussions about the progress of all children. Teachers and staff know the children well and provide timely and effective supports and interventions as required. Teachers plan differentiated approaches to learning to support children's progress in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher meets regularly with class teachers to track children's attainment based on teachers' assessments and professional judgements. Discussions focus on the progress and attainment of individual children in literacy and numeracy. This includes those who have barriers to their learning and those whose attainment may be impacted by their socio-economic situation. Staff use tracking data to measure the impact of interventions and to inform improvement priorities such as the recent focus on writing as part of plans to improve literacy.
- Staff plan learning effectively for children who require additional support. However, the level of planning needs to be reviewed to ensure it is manageable and proportionate. Teachers are not yet using assessment evidence consistently to plan future learning activities. Teachers should reflect on the nature, timing, and quantity of assessments to further develop children's learning. An important next step is for teachers is to consider how assessment evidence is used to plan challenging learning experiences for all children.
- Teachers collaborate informally to moderate children's work across stages within the school. As planned, the headteacher should now take forward plans to engage in additional moderation activities across the cluster. This will help support teachers' confidence in their professional judgement.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Curriculum pathways and progression frameworks are in place for almost all curricular areas, linked to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. Timetables reflect a strong emphasis across the week in literacy and numeracy with other curricular areas covered through interdisciplinary learning and at times taught discretely. Senior leaders and teachers should now ensure children are experiencing a sufficiently broad curriculum and that opportunities exist for appropriate depth in learning.
- The school has worked in partnership with UHI with a focus on STEM education. All classes have had input from a STEM Ambassador who works alongside the class teacher to deliver STEM in an engaging way. Children use 'Lend a Lab' kits provided by the university. At second level, children have engaged with their parents in a STEM focussed afternoon which was very well received.
- Across the school, children are provided with a few opportunities to develop skills for learning life and work. Children would benefit from improved skills progression and better opportunities to build on prior learning across the curriculum as they move through the stages.
- Teachers have developed a helpful progressive programme for learning for sustainability. The school has been awarded several Eco green flags and the Eco committee lead this. Children are building an understanding of their environmental responsibilities through their ECO activities, for example recycling across the school, reducing litter, composting and growing their own food.
- Almost all children receive two hours of high-quality physical education (PE) every week. This is delivered in part by a PE specialist from the secondary school. Children are offered opportunities to learn fiddle and chanter from external music specialists.
- All children learn French as a modern language. From early level onwards, they experience lessons to develop their vocabulary and their understanding of the French language. French language is evident in the day-to-day life of the school. Gaelic and Scottish culture are taught from P5-P7.
- The school has effective approaches in place to support all children at times of transition. Information is shared between class teachers as children move from class to class. Links are made with Oban High School and children have the opportunity to visit and experience secondary school. Children starting school receive a visit from school staff to all nurseries. Parents are encouraged to visit Park Primary School for activities with their children. Children who require extended transition are provided with appropriate support for their individual needs.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents value the care and support children receive from all staff in school. Almost all parents feel comfortable approaching the school. A minority of parents identify communication as an area of improvement and do not believe information reaches them at the right time.
- The Parent Council supports the school well with fundraising activities and school events, such as the summer fair and subsidising outings. A few members of the Parent Council would like closer discussion and more joint planning opportunities to maximise their involvement for the benefit of the school community.

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

- Children's wellbeing lies at the heart of the work of the school. Most children and their parents feel that staff treat children fairly and with respect. Children are polite, kind, well mannered and supportive of each other. Almost all children feel safe and respected. Almost all children say that the school helps them to understand and respect other people. Older children are beginning to develop their awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the importance of children's rights.
- Staff and children share and promote clear expectations around behaviour. This widely shared understanding supports a calm welcoming environment where children feel happy, valued and included. There are very few incidents of disruptive behaviour. Those that do occur can have a negative impact on peers and a few parents have raised concerns about their children's safety when these incidents have occurred. The school's positive relationships policy does not yet fully encompass a rights-based approach. Teachers across the school should now consider how children's rights can be more explicitly linked to daily classroom and school activities, grounded in the vision and values of the school.
- Children understand the wellbeing indicators. They explore aspects of wellbeing through learning programmes consisting of 'bundles' of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. These are linked to topics such as healthy eating and internet safety. Children use the wellbeing indicators well to assess their own health and wellbeing at several points across the school year. Staff use data from these assessments effectively to deal with any concerns identified on an individual basis. Staff should continue to embed the language and relevance of the wellbeing indicators with children, including in their lives beyond school.
- The school is using a range of systems to record and track how well children are supported and progressing, using the wellbeing indicators. More streamlined planning and tracking would lessen duplication of information and workload for staff.
- Staff across the school have a clear knowledge and understanding of statutory duties. They demonstrate a strong and caring commitment to getting it right for every child. Effective procedures are in place to identify, assess and plan for children who require additional support with their learning. Across the school, almost all staff employ appropriate strategies to support children. This includes using identified strategies in an accessible format, including digital, to support learning. Teaching and support staff have undertaken a considerable level of professional learning, for example in trauma-informed practice and nurture. This underpins an inclusive and supportive environment for all children.
- There is currently no opportunity for religious observance in the school.

- Children benefit from a positive lunchtime experience. Catering and support staff encourage children to eat well and in a healthy way while they engage in a positive social experience. The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.
- Senior leaders and support for learning staff have considerably improved the approaches used to identify, record and monitor the progress of children requiring additional support. Senior leaders and support staff work regularly with children and their families to identify and address barriers to learning and wellbeing. They use a staged-intervention model of support to identify appropriate interventions to meet young people's needs. Almost all children who require support with their learning are achieving and progressing well. Senior leaders should continue to meet with children, teachers, parents and partners regularly to monitor and increase the engagement in learning of children who require additional support.
- Senior leaders and staff have developed strong partnerships with other professionals in education, health and the community to ensure early and effective interventions to support learners. Reviews of children's progress are held in a timely manner to ensure information is shared. As a result, children's wellbeing needs are met well.
- Effective procedures are in place to monitor attendance. The headteacher monitors closely children's attendance and any repeated instances of lateness. Staff work closely with families and local authority partners to address barriers children may experience. There are detailed support plans to facilitate attendance, tailored to their individual needs. Children's attendance levels are consistently above or in line with the local average. Seventy-nine percent of children attend school over 91% of the time. A further 14% attend school between 85-90% of the time. Seven percent of children have attendance of less than 85%. No children have been excluded in recent years.
- A few children feel the school does not deal well with bullying. Staff should review their arrangements for recording, monitoring and responding to incidents of bullying to ensure they align with national guidance. This will help to ensure all children feel respected and valued.
- Teachers develop children's understanding of equality and diversity effectively through religious and moral education and interdisciplinary learning. Staff read books with classes to ensure children have opportunities to hear about different cultures and communities. Children read books about the experiences of refugees and the impact of apartheid. There are important initiatives such as the girls football team and STEM, which promote women in sport and in science and engineering careers. Children can articulate clearly why it is important to treat everyone equally and are highly committed to the belief that everyone should be included. Children would benefit from more chances to learn about issues related to equality across the curriculum in a progressive way. This will help children develop still further their appreciation of the importance of equality and fairness in society.

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

- The overall quality of children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Almost all children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress.
- Predicted data for June 2024 provided by the school indicates that most children in P1 and P7 and almost all in P4 are on track to achieve the appropriate CfE level in listening and talking. The majority of children in P1, and most in P4 and P7, are on track to achieve the appropriate CfE level in writing. Most children in P1, P4 and P7 are on track to achieve the appropriate CfE level in reading and numeracy. Inspectors are confident in staff professional judgement in literacy and numeracy.

Literacy

- Overall, most children make good progress in reading, writing, listening and talking.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children are articulate and speak with confidence to adults and their peers. At early level, almost all children listen well to everyday instructions and prompts. They respond appropriately and share their ideas well, particularly in play. Most children working at first level are less able to build on the contributions of others and would benefit from more opportunities to develop these skills in a group setting. Most children working at second level share their ideas and opinions confidently by asking and answering a range of questions. At second level, children would welcome more opportunities to develop their presentation skills by addressing an audience more regularly.

Reading

- Almost all children across the school enjoy reading and borrow books regularly to read at home. They have access to a wide range of books in the school library and individual class libraries.
- Most children at early level are beginning to blend letters and sounds well. A few children would benefit from improving their reading skills at a faster pace. At first level, most children talk confidently about their favourite authors and genres and explain their choices. Most children read with expression and discuss texts with confidence. Almost all children working at second level read fluently, expressively and with understanding.

Writing

- Teachers at early and first level have undertaken professional learning to improving writing at every stage across the school. As a result, more children are now making good progress against national standards and expectations.
- At early level, most children form most lowercase letters legibly and leave a space between words. Children working at early level now need more opportunities to write independently and more regularly for a range of purposes. At first level, most children write independently using interesting vocabulary to engage the reader. Most children working at second level write confidently across a range of genres. They use a range of paragraphs, sentence length and language appropriate to the context. A few children who require support to develop skills in organising ideas and thoughts in their writing are making good progress achieving targets. Across the school, children need more opportunities to write regularly. Teachers should support children to improve the quality of punctuation, handwriting and presentation.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school, most children make good progress from their prior levels of attainment in and numeracy.

Number money and measure

- At early level, most children are developing skills in ordering and counting to 20 and beyond. They confidently engage in addition and are developing their skills in subtraction. At first and second levels, most children demonstrate mental agility appropriate for their stage. They identify simple fractions and calculate a half and quarter of a whole number. They convert pounds to pence but find calculating change from £20.00 more challenging. At second level, most children partition decimals, divide decimal fractions, show their understanding of equivalent fractions and find a fraction of a whole number. Children at first and second level should review and consolidate their understanding of subtraction and the strategies to support this.

Shape position and movement

- At early level, most children name several two-dimensional shapes (2D) and are developing their knowledge of three-dimensional (3D) objects through play. At first level, most identify a range of 2D shapes and 3D objects. They should now deepen their knowledge of compass directions. At second level, most children confidently describe a range of angles including obtuse, straight and reflex angles. They identify a wide range of 2D shapes and 3D objects and their properties. Children should develop further their knowledge of complementary angles and supplementary angles.

Information handling

- At early level, most children match and sort familiar and unfamiliar objects. At first level, children use a bar graph and tally marks to gather data. At second level, most children confidently use graphs and pie charts to present and interpret information. Most children would benefit from opportunities to interpret and use data in real life contexts.

Attainment over time

- Over the last three years, school data demonstrates a varied but generally improving picture in children's progress over time. Current data shows improvement in writing and numeracy at all stages. Senior leaders track children's progress over time and plan interventions for those who require additional support with learning. These interventions are planned by senior leaders and staff and are bespoke to individual children. There is evidence of the

positive impact of interventions on attainment, including for children with barriers to their learning. Senior leaders should continue to develop their approaches to moderation to support engagement with, and depth of understanding of, national Benchmarks.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Staff celebrate children's achievements both in and out of school. Achievements are celebrated through assemblies, newsletters, school displays and the 'Hi 5' book. Senior leaders have begun to track children's participation in activities both in and out of school. This is supporting staff to identify gaps in children's opportunities for achievement. Senior leaders and staff work effectively with partners and parents to provide opportunities for children to engage in a range of extra-curricular opportunities including physical activity and sport.
- Children at all stages are developing a range of leadership skills, including teamwork, confidence, negotiation and decision-making through the varied activities and clubs on offer in the school. All children talk very positively about their involvement in these groups. Children should now be given the opportunity to reflect upon what they achieve as a result of these experiences.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know children very well. They have a strong understanding of the socio-economic background of children and their families and the impact of barriers to learning. Senior leaders ensure financial constraints do not prevent children from participating in opportunities for wider achievement. This supports all children to be included. Staff provide families with pre-loved uniform, support for residential trips and access to Theatre school Scotland. The school works closely with partners to reduce barriers to learning. The school community should continue to explore further ways to reduce the 'cost of the school day'.
- Senior leaders ensure the school's PEF allocation is used appropriately to support the raising attainment strategy for literacy and numeracy and to support health and wellbeing. Funding is used for additional support needs staffing, purchase of digital equipment and programmes to support learning in literacy and numeracy and horse-riding therapy for identified children. The school is not yet able to demonstrate systematically the impact of PEF in improving outcomes for children who are economically disadvantaged. Senior leaders should now ensure all interventions are monitored to gather robust evidence about the impact for children who face socio-economic barriers.

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.