Summarised inspection findings

Westpark Primary School

Aberdeen City Council

12 March 2024

Key contextual information

Westpark School is a primary school in Aberdeen with a roll of 256 across nine classes. The nursery is registered to provide places for 40 children at any given time. 71% of children live within Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) zone three. There have been a number of recent staffing changes within the school. The headteacher is supported by a depute headteacher who undertakes the role of acting headteacher one day per week.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	weak

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

■ All staff develop positive relationships with children. Children understand the importance of the school's values, particularly kindness, and how they help contribute to improving the school ethos. This supports children to come to school each day keen and eager to learn. Where learning is presented in contexts of interest to them, most children engage appropriately in their learning. All staff exhibit the school values of belonging and kindness. They are caring towards each child. This supports an environment where children know they are valued.

■ Teachers at early level are developing their understanding of play-based learning. They have introduced spaces that provide improved opportunities for play-based learning. Younger children are beginning to explore, experiment, discover and solve problems in imaginative and playful ways. Staff should continue to engage in professional learning, further exploring the role of the adult in supporting learning though play. This will help staff to support and extend children's learning.

■ Children enjoy opportunities to learn both on their own and with their peers, in pairs or groups. However, most lessons are overly teacher-led. This frequently leads to children becoming distracted and disengaging from their learning. Teachers need to support children better to take greater responsibility for leading their own learning. This should include developing children's understanding of what they are learning and why. Children would benefit from being supported more effectively to develop an understanding of their next steps in learning. Most lessons are not planned at the right level of difficulty to provide all children with appropriate levels of pace and challenge. Children's work is often pitched at too low a level or repeats what they have already learned. Teachers need to develop how they plan learning which builds progressively on what children can already do.

■ Monthly workshops support children to exercise choice in their learning. These workshops allow all children from P1 to P7 to come together in groups and learn in a range of different contexts. Workshops support children to develop their social skills when working with peers of all ages in their groups. Senior leaders should consider how workshops build on children's prior learning.

- In a few lessons, teachers use outdoor spaces well to develop children's skills. Teachers should continue to develop how they use outdoor spaces to support children to learn in a wide range of contexts.

- In most lessons, teachers use digital technologies appropriately to enrich children's learning. Children enjoy opportunities to use laptops to access online resources for information or to support learning in a specific to a particular curricular area, such as numeracy.

- Teachers are developing their skills in sharing the purpose of learning with children. However, children are often not clear about the knowledge and skills they are developing or how they will know they have been successful. This leads to children being unclear about learning. Teachers need to improve the clarity of learning intentions and success criteria so that children are much clearer on what they are learning and why, and how they will know how successful they have been.

- Teachers use questions most frequently to elicit children's answers. Teachers do not yet use open-ended questioning to develop children's higher-order thinking skills. They need to develop the use of more skilled questioning techniques to promote children's curiosity. This has the potential to help children reflect more on their learning. This will also help children become more aware of what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve.

- Teachers are not yet using feedback sufficiently well to support children's progress in their learning. They need to develop consistently high-quality verbal and written feedback across the school to help children know what they have done well and identify their next steps in learning.

- Teachers use a range of assessment approaches, including standardised assessments and published materials, to measure children's progress across the curriculum. These approaches are outlined in an assessment calendar. Senior leaders meet with teachers three times a year to discuss the progress children are making. However, there is a lack of consistency in the use of assessments to support teachers' professional judgements throughout the school. Senior leaders and teachers need to use assessment information more effectively to make accurate judgements of children's progress, and plan appropriate support where this is required.

- Senior leaders and teachers are developing approaches to moderation. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need for staff to take part in further moderation activity with colleagues from other schools. This will support teachers to validate the reliability of their professional judgements of children's progress and better help them to understand progression through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.

- Teachers use school-based, local authority and other commercial resources to support planning for children's learning. In a few lessons, children are involved in identifying areas of interest. They enjoy being consulted about what they would like to learn. Planning needs to take greater account of the different levels of challenge required to meet all children's needs effectively. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to develop and review their approaches to planning to ensure they plan children's learning progressively through the CfE levels. Staff should plan more clearly for different groups of children within each class to ensure all children make greater progress in their learning.

- Pupil support assistants work with teachers to plan support and interventions for identified children. Individual education plans are in place for those children for whom they are appropriate. Staff evaluate the impact of these interventions regularly to monitor children's progress.

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. An area for development has been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	**weak**

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

- Overall across the school, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is weak. The majority of children are capable of making greater progress from their prior levels of attainment.

- Assessment data provided by the school is based on teachers' professional judgements. There is currently a lack of consistency in the use of assessments to support teachers' professional judgement of children's progress and attainment throughout the school. As a result, data is not yet reliable or accurate. Senior leaders need to establish a range of accurate data on how well children are progressing in their learning. They should build teachers' confidence in their use of a range of assessments, data, and moderation activities to ensure professional judgements are increasingly robust. This will improve the reliability of data based on professional judgements and contribute to plans to raise attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, a minority of children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English. The majority of children are capable of making better progress across all aspects in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across all stages, a majority of children listen well during classroom activities. A minority of children across the school become disengaged when listening as a whole class and need support to engage in learning tasks. At early level, a minority of children listen to and follow instructions to complete a simple task independently or in small groups. At first and second levels, a minority of children talk about their experiences with adults and each other. They build on the opinions and views of others during group work. Across all levels, a few children lack confidence in contributing their ideas in whole class or small group discussions.

Reading

- The majority of children working towards early level recognise the majority of initial sounds. They now need to develop their confidence in using initial sounds to decode new words. A few children are capable of acquiring new sounds and words at a quicker pace. The majority of children working towards first level read familiar texts with increasing fluency and expression. They confidently summarise the main ideas from a text. They are less confident in answering inferential and evaluative questions about familiar texts. At second level, a minority of children talk confidently about favourite authors and give simple explanations about the types of books they enjoy. They are less confident at identifying techniques authors use to engage readers, for example, word choice and emotive language. At both first and second level, a minority of children would benefit from reading more challenging texts.

Writing

■ Children at early level are developing their knowledge of lowercase and uppercase letters. The majority can form letters legibly when copying from a text. Most children need regular teaching to develop their independent writing skills, including being encouraged to have a go at writing new words. At first and second levels, children write for a limited range of purposes and do not write at length regularly. The majority of children who are working towards first level write independently, punctuating most sentences accurately. The majority of children at second level write to persuade, evaluate and express opinions. For example, writing a persuasive report about the best Christmas television advert. Across the school, children would benefit from teachers placing an increased focus on presentation and handwriting.

Numeracy and mathematics

■ Overall, a minority of children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. The majority of children are capable of making better progress across all aspects in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

■ The majority of children at early level count backwards from 20 accurately. They need more opportunities to use numbers and to record their learning. Children need to develop better their understanding of time the seasons. A minority of children at first level sequence and order numbers within 1000. They round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They are less confident with fractions and would benefit from consolidation in recording a fraction and understanding mathematical terminology of fractions. Children use analogue clocks to represent time. They need further experience of reading time from digital clocks. The majority of children at second level round numbers to the nearest 1000 and complete mental addition within 1000. They are able to represent equivalent fractions. They need to develop further mental calculations of money, including percentages. Across all stages, children need to experience further breadth and progression of number, money and measure and their processes.

Shape, position and movement

■ The majority of children at early level recognise and describe common two-dimensional (2D) shapes. They use and demonstrate positional language in actions and with concrete materials. A minority of children at first level name and describe properties of 2D shapes. Children need to develop further their knowledge of angles. A minority of children working within second level name and describe the properties of 3D objects. Across all stages children now need further opportunities to consolidate their learning in shape, position and movement.

Information handling

■ Across all stages all children need increased opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge of information handling. Children need greater experience of how data can be recorded, including using digital technologies.

Attainment over time

■ Senior leaders and staff's analysis of data does not yet identify trends in attainment over time for different groups of children. For example, staff are not able to monitor and report on the progress of children with English as an additional language, care experienced children and those who experience barriers to learning. As a priority, all staff need to use assessment information more effectively to accelerate children's progress.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

■ Children are encouraged to share their achievements in class and at weekly assemblies. They participate well in the wide range of after school clubs available to them. Children are developing their confidence to take on new challenges through their participation in out of school and lunchtime clubs. Senior leaders track children's participation in clubs to ensure all children can access activities of interest to them. Tracking needs to be developed further to help children understand they skills they are learning through these experiences.

■ A minority of children have leadership opportunities, including as house captains. Children are keen to continue to support the school to improve. Staff should consider how children can take on more leadership opportunities to enable them to be included more fully in school improvement.

Equity for all learners

■ Staff are developing their understanding of the socio-economic background of the local school community. They now need to use this to ensure learning meets individual children's needs more effectively. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding appropriately to provide targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the school. Senior leaders are beginning to gather data about the poverty-related attainment gap across the school. They now need to use and analyse this data more rigorously. This will support them to identify how effectively targeted interventions are helping children most affected by poverty to attain as best they can. At the current time, there is little evidence of accelerating progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

■ Overall attendance is currently 2% below the national average. Senior leaders monitor attendance regularly and follow local authority attendance procedures. They work with partners to provide support for children when attendance levels fall. This helps almost all children to maintain high levels of attendance over the course of each school year.

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.