

Summarised inspection findings

Cardross Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

SEED No: 8301425

06 March 2018

Key contextual information

The school roll was 157 at the time of inspection. The attendance rate is higher than the national average. In 2017, 2.3% (decile 9) of P4-P7 pupils were registered for free school meals, which is well below the national average. 70% of the school roll lives in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zone 7, with less than 4 per cent from deciles 1-4.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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

- The headteacher has co-created an aspirational vision, values, ethos and aims, agreed in partnership with all stakeholders. This is persuasively communicated and modelled regularly to children and the wider school community. The vision and values provide a clear sense of direction and purpose for the school. They are a touchstone against which all new developments, policies or initiatives are tested. The vision is shaped by an informed awareness of current educational thinking and involves recurring reflection and debate among staff and analysis of where the school is at. All staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the local community. Inspectors found consistently strong evidence that the school's vision and values permeate and shape the work and life of the school. Values, expressed in the acronym RICHES (respect, integrity, care, hard work, and equity) are apparent in the quality of the interactions between staff and learners and in the relationships amongst learners.
- The school improvement plan is helping to translate the school's vision, values and aims into priority activities and desired outcomes. Effective and inclusive strategic planning has resulted in staff ownership of improvement priorities. The headteacher effectively manages the pace of change and avoids change fatigue amongst staff by focusing on a small number of well-considered priorities, expressed as measurable and achievable outcomes for learners which focus on achievement and wellbeing. These are implemented as part of the collegiate working time agreement. In moving forward, the headteacher recognises the importance of making more explicit reference to learning and teaching within the SIP to ensure consistently high quality learning and teaching across the school. The adoption of local authority strategic planning has resulted in priorities being clearly linked to NIF drivers and HGIOS?4 quality indicators (QIs). The school is at very early stages of using the Career Education Standards and Work Placement Standards.

- Although there are very few children residing in SIMD 1-3, the headteacher has developed a clear rationale for use of Pupil Equity Funding, based on a clear contextual analysis which identifies the gap in her school.
- There is effective change leadership evident in the school. The headteacher has an unwavering personal commitment to ensuring the best possible outcomes for all her children. As a result, she is able to secure the commitment of her staff when driving forward change. Her open and honest approach results in trusting relationships and a climate where she can critically examine the connections between personal and professional attitudes and beliefs, values and practices to effect improvement and, when appropriate, bring about transformative change in practice. Committing to lifelong enquiry, learning, professional development and leadership as core aspects of professionalism and collaborative practice are the hallmarks of the headteacher. The headteacher is undertaking 'Excellence in Headship'. Separately the headteacher has been supportive of the leaders within the authority.
- Principal teachers support the headteacher effectively. Whilst they have different leadership styles and qualities, they exert influence and help others to envisage new ways of thinking, seeing and working; and show a determination towards achieving the highest standards set for all.
- Staff within school, operating at different levels, are constantly reviewing their practice and making changes, in order to improve what they are doing. They share practice with one another and consistently promote a collective commitment to school improvement. In most instances, initiatives are tested on a small scale basis before being implemented across the school. In moving forward, they would benefit from taking a more focused approach to monitoring and evaluating their practice to demonstrate clearer impact on outcomes for children.
- An effective way of developing leadership at Cardross Primary School has been to make the goal of developing leaders at every level an explicit and accepted part of the culture. All teachers have opportunities to be leaders and value these in helping them to develop their professional leadership skills and learn from each other within and beyond school. They work with, and support the development of, colleagues. The joint work of collaborative professionalism is embedded in the culture and life of the school.
- The views of children and parents are regularly sought, discussed with them and taken account of. They receive feedback, and when their suggestions are not taken on board they are given clear explanations. Commendably, both children and parents have been involved in using the challenge questions from HGIOS? 4 in identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Children are currently working on devising 'wee HGIOS?' as a quality framework.

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 quality of climate and relationships is a major strength. Children are benefitting from being part of an inclusive community in which there are positive relationships with staff and their peers. A culture exists where each adult and child is valued. The headteacher involves staff and children in establishing effective approaches to positive relationships, behaviour and promoting a sense of security and trust. The impact is that children feel engaged in learning and decision making.
- Children are well motivated and keen to learn. They discussed their learning openly and enthusiastically with inspectors and talked confidently about their positive experiences in learning. From the Education Scotland pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all children enjoy learning at school and feel they are getting along well with the school work. Children are very well behaved supported by the climate within the school.
- Developed by staff, the outdoor learning environment, in particular 'One Time', offers a highly motivating context for learning. In support of an active, stimulating approach to learning, staff are open to the changing possibilities of using the spaces they have, and using them flexibly and differently, with children learning both indoors and outdoors.
- In the early stages of the school, staff often balance short periods of teaching with longer periods where children learn through play, either in play chosen or initiated by the child or in play activities or experiences planned by staff. Children play for much of the session in small groups, are free to move about and talk during play and have high levels of adult support available for their emotional and learning needs. As a result, the pace of learning is brisk and children demonstrate skills in working independently.
- In most lessons, tasks, activities and resources are well matched to the needs of children. There is scope for teachers to set tasks and activities which are of increasing levels of complexity that support children to develop higher order thinking skills.
- The school recognise that further work is required on developing high quality learning intentions and success criteria. Staff should discuss with learners what they are expected to learn. They should clarify and share learning intentions and success criteria and appropriate experiences for achieving these.

- Improving the quality of teaching and learning should be a greater focus of school self-evaluation and school improvement planning. Staff would benefit from using approaches to self-evaluation that are focused directly on the quality of learning itself.
- Teachers assess progress constantly as part of daily learning and teaching. They do this, for example, by watching and listening to learners carrying out tasks i.e. observational assessment, by looking at what they write and make, by considering how they answer questions, scanning work for pupil development and marking children's work. They ask questions, provide feedback, and employ self and peer assessment. This now needs to be a consistent feature across the school.
- Teachers are making use of the benchmarks which have been identified for each curriculum area to support them in assessing progress and achievement. This is supporting them in their overall professional judgement of when a learner has achieved a curriculum level. They have started the process of creating holistic assessments to support their judgements that demonstrate how well children are achieving within a level. Through the support from the local authority and in-house Quality Assessment and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO), staff are building their confidence in developing their understanding of standards for assessment. Teachers are making good use of the moderation cycle.
- Rigorous monitoring and tracking allows staff to carefully chart progress of children and implement interventions, where necessary, providing support as appropriate.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning Pathways

- The school has articulated its curriculum rationale, which reflects its vision, value, aims and context, through policy documents, displays throughout the school and communication with parents. The development of the four capacities is central to this rationale. The school supports the development and application of skills for learning, life and work, particularly through the delivery of 'My Time' opportunities. There are opportunities to apply these skills through participation in school committees, clubs and local community events.
- Learning pathways are in place for all curricular areas. These pathways support progression within key curricular areas. Teachers plan together, within levels, using curricular maps. This approach to planning is in the early stages and has still to be evaluated. Involving children more fully in the planning process would enable them to have a greater say in their learning.
- Teachers are using progressive learning pathways for health and wellbeing. These make use of local resources and those offered by partners and take account of the context of the school.
- Planning could be streamlined to reduce any unnecessary bureaucracy. Inspectors discussed with teachers the use of long-term plans to outline the structure of the year and the ways in which learning is organised throughout the whole year. Teachers were receptive to keeping medium-term planning short and focused on the main learning activities developed from the Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os). Short-term planning on a daily or weekly basis should be flexible and be regarded as working notes to help organise learning.
- The school makes very good use of its context to enhance the learning experience. Children utilise the outdoor environment frequently, participating in outdoor experiences, which allow them to learn in and about the local environment.
- Digital literacy is developed through a variety of creative approaches, with some classes using shared video footage to support learning at home. The school recognises the value of digital technology in the curriculum and makes effective use of laptops, ipads, interactive whiteboards and relevant software to enhance learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners - Parental Engagement

- Almost all parents reported in the Education Scotland pre-inspection questionnaire that they are fully satisfied with provision and practice provided at Cardross Primary School. They are very positive about their active involvement in their children's learning and development in both informal and formal contexts e.g. 'soft starts' that act as an effective shared learning experience. Almost all parents express confidence in the support their children receive from staff. Almost all parents say they receive helpful information about how their child is doing from feedback and reports. They also feel that the information reaches them at the right time. They are hugely appreciative of the time spent on 'Personal Planners' that provide them with useful information on their child's progress.
- Parents have participated in a variety of learning workshops offered by the school that have been positively evaluated. For example, the interactive maths workshop has allowed parents to support their children in numeracy. The school should proceed as planned to further develop family learning events with differing curricular focus.
- The Parent Council is very supportive of the school and work effectively with the headteacher in driving forward improvements. Parent Council meetings are regular and well attended. There is an active social networking site as a mechanism for communication.

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

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very 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

- The school's strategic approach to ensuring the wellbeing of children is central to their way of working. Staff are confident in their abilities and skills in identifying and supporting children's wellbeing. Initiatives which support particular aspects of wellbeing are introduced after careful consideration and with clear expectations of outcomes for children. Children have a good awareness of such initiatives and how these are leading to changes in their own attitudes and choices and for some this is also influencing changes out-with school. Children also feel very well supported by the school to take more responsibility for themselves and others.
- Relationships are consistently friendly and trusting, within a strong sense of equality and fairness. Children understand their rights and responsibilities and respond to situations accordingly. Staff's commitment to creating a positive and purposeful climate characterised by mutual respect, trust and confidence is strong. As a result, children have positive working relationships with one another and staff. They have the confidence to talk to their teachers if and when issues arise. The wellbeing of children is supported by these positive relationships.
- Almost all children can talk confidently about the choices they make and how these impact on their health and wellbeing. They can identify potential risks in a range of situations and are able to describe how they would deal with these themselves or by asking for assistance.
- In the development of its health and wellbeing curriculum, the school is sensitive and aware of its own context and the issues it needs to focus on for children. Children make good use of the local area and facilities to apply and extend their learning and understanding of specific aspects of health. For example, Heartstart training by the local rotary club for P6 and P7 classes has led to parents and other adults also accessing lifesaving skills training in the local community.
- The school makes very good use of the skills and resources available from partners in relation to health and wellbeing. There are well established and on-going links with community partners to provide children with opportunities to continue their interests out with school and to build on their involvement in their community.

- Partners are involved in the co-delivery and planning of aspects of the health programme which helps to extend children's understanding of ways of accessing help and support when required.
- The school's involvement and participation in the life of its community helps children to understand their ability to influence change and the importance of social connection and inclusion to their wellbeing.
- Children have a well-developed understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They appreciate the importance of a balanced diet, understand the role of exercise in maintaining physical and mental health and recognise the dangers to health of substance misuse. The school reinforces the importance of the need to be healthy by encouraging children to make healthy food choices at lunch and break times, and by offering a wide range of outdoor activities which have high levels of participation.
- The information provided in support of the requirements under the Health Promotion and Nutrition Act shows that some further work is required to ensure full compliance.
- Approaches to monitoring, recording and tracking achievement across key aspects of learning ensure that appropriate progress is being made by children facing additional challenges. Staff intervene promptly and effectively if the progress of individuals is not maintained. Those children with support plans would benefit from individual targets being monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.
- There are few instances of bullying, both generally and on the grounds of the protected characteristics, as a result of the strong ethos that promotes equality and diversity. Children are able to articulate the school's ethos and explain its core values. Teachers have established a positive basis for dealing with bullying. As a result, almost all children feel that bullying is dealt with effectively when and where it arises. They know where to go for support when things go wrong and have the confidence to report incidents. Staff keep up-to-date with the technologies that pupils use and understand their potential for misuse inside and outside school. As a result, staff have been well equipped in dealing with cyber-bullying. The headteacher recognises that the current anti bullying policy and Equality policy does not suitably reflect latest guidance published by the Scottish Government.
- The school has an inclusive ethos where there is a strong feeling amongst children, parents, staff and visitors that they are valued. There is a clear sense that children are known and treated as individuals by staff. This results in a sense of belonging within a school community and a strong sense of inclusion.
- The school's monitoring and evaluating calendar would benefit from having a focus on equality and diversity to demonstrate the impact on outcomes for children of this work. The school is responsive to emerging issues and needs of the local community.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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

- School data for session 2016-17 indicates that most children achieved appropriate curriculum for excellence levels in literacy and English, and almost all achieved appropriate curriculum for excellence levels in numeracy and mathematics for P1, P4 and P7. Teacher professional judgements for June 2017 show that the percentage of children achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels is above the national and local authority average at P1, P4 and P7.
- Attainment data provided by the school is based on teachers' professional judgements. This is supported by standardised assessments, moderation and on-going professional dialogue with promoted staff. Classroom observations, evidence in jotters and discussions with children and staff during the course of inspection supported this evidence.

Literacy

- Almost all children are making very good progress in listening and talking. Across the school, children are articulate and attentive. Most children engage respectfully with one another during class discussions or collaborative activities. Children at all stages are keen to express their views and opinions, as well as listening to the views of others. Children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop listening and talking skills across the four contexts of learning. In P1, children can listen and respond appropriately to adults. In P2, children are learning to take turns and contribute to class discussions. In P3 and P4, children can discuss ideas effectively with shoulder partners, whilst children at the upper stages demonstrate confidence when building on the ideas of others. Older children present to whole school audiences throughout the school year.
- Across the school, most children are making very good progress with reading. In classes, reciprocal approaches are used well to support the development of reading skills. Most children across the school are motivated to read. In P1, children can describe the main character in their book and talk about the story. In P4, children can confidently discuss different texts and show good understanding of main ideas. They read aloud with fluency and expression. At the upper stages, motivation to read is high, with children choosing books from a wide range of texts. Children can talk articulately about different genres and preferred authors. When reading aloud, P7 children demonstrate fluency, understanding and expression. They can explain why they like particular books or authors, making reference to genre, setting and characterisation.

- At all stages, children are making very good progress in writing. They write for a range of purposes. In P1, a few children are writing independently. The school should continue to work on emergent writing skills to ensure that all children are writing independently this session. In P4, children can use descriptive vocabulary effectively to enhance their writing. They can confidently discuss the use of similes and metaphors. In P7, children write effectively for a range of purposes with confidence. Extended writing is of a high standard. Most children can transfer their knowledge of spelling and punctuation across the curriculum.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making very good progress in mathematics and numeracy. They are developing a range of skills, including mental agility, estimation, problem solving and interpreting questions. There is a particularly strong focus on developing children's mathematics and numeracy skills through learning outdoors. There is scope to develop children's algebraic reasoning skills in the upper stages of primary. The school should continue with its plans to develop children's learning of shape, position and movement in the upper stages of primary. Almost all children in P1, P4 and P7 are on track to achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels by the end of the school year.

Number, money, measure:

- Across the school, children are developing their mental agility skills through a range of learning approaches including number talks, games and digital technology. At P1, almost all children are adding within 5 and most can order numbers to 10. At P4, most children can count in 2s, 5s and 10s and can divide a suitable number by 10 or 100. They round to the nearest 10 or 100 and can find a half or quarter of a value. At P7, children identify factors and can calculate squares and square roots.
- At P1, almost all children can identify which coins to use to pay for items up to 10p. At P4, children can record amounts of money accurately in different ways using the correct notation and have an awareness of how goods can be paid for using a variety of methods. At P7, children determine affordability within a given budget and carry out money calculations accurately.
- At P1 children are aware of the different seasons and can complete simple patterns. At P4, children can record time in 12 or 24-hour time and can order the months of the year. At P7, children can convert hour and minutes to hours and convert between 12 hour and 24-hour time.
- In P2, children use everyday objects to find lengths of items. At P4, children can convert metres to centimetres. At P7, children can identify and convert between common units and correctly identify the correct unit for measuring various lengths.

Shape, position, movement:

- At P1, children identify simple 2D shapes. Children in P4 and P7 can identify 3D objects and their properties as appropriate to their stage. In P7, children have explored line and rotational symmetry and understand different types of angle. There is scope to develop their understanding to include complementary and supplementary angles as planned and develop children's understanding of co-ordinate plotting. Children in the upper stages of primary understand compass directions at an appropriate level to their stage.

Information handling:

- At P1, children can collect and organise objects. At upper primary stages children construct bar graphs and can describe Venn diagrams and pie charts. There is scope to develop children's understanding of different types of graphs and charts and their construction. This could be done through linking their information handling skills to other relevant areas of the curriculum. There is significant scope to develop children's understanding of uncertainty and chance at first and second level.

Attainment over time

- The school is able to demonstrate improvements in attainment over the last two years, reflected in curriculum for excellence levels.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- The school encourages, recognises and celebrates the successes and achievements of children throughout the year. There are also award ceremonies to share those celebrations with parents and the wider community. Children very much enjoy sharing their achievements with others and take responsibility for recording these in their own learning planners which are shared with home.
- The school has an established culture which recognises and values the importance of achieving in different areas of life on the overall wellbeing of children. Children feel more self-confident through taking part in sports festivals and competitions, music and drama performances, outdoor learning and residential trip activities as well as contributing to the life of the school through school groups.

Equity

- Resources and interventions are targeted effectively to support children who are facing additional challenges or barriers to their learning. The school's tracking system monitors closely any individuals or groups of children who may need additional support.

School choice of QI: Transitions

- **Arrangements to support learners and their families**
- **Collaborative planning and delivery**
- **Continuity and progression in learning**

- Staff from Cardross collaborate effectively with their local high school to plan, deliver and review the 'Hooked on Hermitage' transition scheme. The use of personal planners which begin in primary and continue into secondary have the potential to support children to consider the skills they have and what they now want to learn in each subject they will undertake in secondary. The school is keen to further develop their transition with Hermitage Academy to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning.
- The school work effectively with partners including community learning and development to enable children who require additional support to have a successful transition. Enhanced and extended transitions are used to meet the needs of each child moving to secondary and equally into primary. For some children this includes additional support from Parklands Special School. The school work effectively with partner agencies to provide additional bespoke support to children who require social and emotional support.
- The school has adopted the 'Homunculi approach' to developing social and emotional wellbeing for primary 7 as they make their transition to secondary. This creative approach of engaging children using metacognitive and cognitive behavioural therapy based principles have shown in their longitudinal study of a previous cohort an improvement in their wellbeing.
- The school is receptive to advice and suggestions to further build on work undertaken to ensure a smooth transition from early years settings to primary one at Cardross. A clarity of expectations and standards are required to ensure parity for all children when they enrol. The school should continue to work with early years practitioners to agree milestones to ensure continuity and progression in learning.
- Stage to stage transition is effective. Shared planning within Curriculum for Excellence levels assist with transition between classes. Reviewing the time allocation of curricular areas within the week and streamlining planning may support the school in addressing the attainment dip they have identified.
- The school should proceed as planned to use the new SEEMIS Health and Wellbeing Application to write, record and transfer Child's Planning information for transitioning children at P7.

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.

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