

Summarised inspection findings

Tayvallich Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

30 January 2024

Key contextual information

Tayvallich Primary School is located in the village of Tayvallich situated by Loch Sween. The school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The headteacher took up post in August 2022 and has leadership responsibility for both Tayvallich and Glassary Primary Schools. A principal teacher was appointed in December 2022. There has been a complete turnover of teachers in the last year.

There are 19 children on the roll organised across two multi-stage classes. There is also a nursery class. All children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile seven. The school receives a small amount of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

1.3 Leadership of change

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 is creating a supportive culture with an effective focus on developing positive relationships across the school and wider community. She is supported well by the principal teacher. Staff, parents and partners feel valued by the senior leaders and are supported well by them to meet the needs of all children. They recognise and value the positive impact the new senior leadership team has had on the ethos of the school in the last year. Senior leaders have earned trust and respect from the school community in a relatively short period of time.
- The vision, values and aims shared across the ELC and the school, are well-established. Children, staff and parents engage positively with 'ready, respectful, safe', the values which underpin school life. Staff reinforce these values regularly and routinely during assemblies, in classes and in discussions with children. Children have a clear understanding of the expectations of the values. The headteacher plans to carry out a full review of school vision, values and aims as part of a three-yearly cycle. She plans to involve the whole school community and put children's rights at the centre of the review. Wisely, she is taking time to get to know children, families and the local community well before undertaking this review.
- Senior leaders recognise the important role that parents play in supporting their child's learning. An identified improvement priority is to increase and improve further, family engagement in the life of the school. Led by senior leaders, all staff are working successfully to address this. They consult parents regularly through questionnaires, surveys, exit polls and in conversation to gather their views. They provide workshops and literature to help parents learn more about how to support children effectively at home. Parents are exceedingly positive about these increased opportunities to develop their role as partners in their child's education. The headteacher uses regular newsletters effectively to keep parents informed about progress towards addressing identified priorities.

- Senior leaders are keen to involve all 19 children in the process of change. They focus on providing equal opportunities for all children to contribute to making a difference to the life of the school. They use weekly assemblies well to gather children's views and as a context for developing their leadership skills. Staff are beginning to empower children to take forward their own initiatives, such as fundraising for Children in Need. All children worked together to identify changes needed to improve how they use the outdoor space. They are planning how to resource their suggested changes including through recycling and raising funds. Their plans will help all children to develop their independence, creativity and curiosity when outdoors. The headteacher should continue to extend opportunities for children to take greater responsibility for wider aspects of school life.
- Senior leaders' investment in time to build strong relationships has been an effective approach to managing change. They seek feedback regularly and consider carefully the views and ideas from children, staff, parents, and partners. Senior leaders use a range of evidence well to identify accurately key priorities for improvement. Staff are developing a good understanding of the strengths and areas of development for the school, as result.
- Significant changes and absences in staffing across the partnership have impacted on the pace of change. Staff have not yet had the opportunity to engage fully with 'How good is our school? 4th edition' to evaluate the work of the school. The headteacher's commitment to self-evaluation by involving all stakeholders to identify key priorities for school improvement, is clear. She should now support staff to continue developing their knowledge and understanding of national guidance to improve self-evaluation approaches further. The headteacher had significantly less capacity than expected to assure the quality of the school's work, last session. She should now reintroduce approaches planned to check the quality of learning and teaching rigorously. This will strengthen further everyone's understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- All staff have a very good understanding of the school's social, economic, and cultural context. The headteacher has a well-considered plan for the school's PEF. She shares this with the Parent Council and provides updates on progress. Parents are confident that the work to support their children's emotional wellbeing is having a positive impact. The next step is to involve parents in making decisions about how to spend PEF.

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 create a calm, caring and nurturing ethos. Staff have very positive relationships with each other and children. Children are polite and respectful to each other, adults and school visitors. Almost all children are attentive throughout learning times, are motivated to learn and cooperate well in pairs and groups. They show a positive attitude to learning and engage positively in the experiences teachers plan. They support each other well within the mixed-age classes. Children and staff are proud of their school.
- Teachers provide learning activities that help most children engage with learning set at the right level. Teachers use groupings within the mixed-age classes well to provide learning experiences that meet the needs of most children. They ensure an effective balance of direct teaching, collaborative activities and independent learning. This allows them to allocate time effectively to teach groups of children working at different levels.
- Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Children follow instructions willingly and with purpose. Teachers use effective questioning to check for understanding and recall prior learning. This supports children to engage well in learning. In most lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to promote children's higher order thinking skills. This questioning extends the level of challenge for a few children. Teachers should build on this effective practice more consistently across the school.
- Most children understand the purpose of their learning. Teachers provide children of all ages with measures of success, across all curriculum areas. They should encourage children to reflect on how successful they are while learning and after learning has taken place. This will help children to understand their next steps. Teachers would strengthen children's understanding further by providing them with feedback that relates consistently to identified measures of success. Teachers should also consider how to help children identify for themselves, appropriate measures of success.
- Teachers provide children with choices about how they work in most lessons. Children may choose to work alone, in pairs or small groups. In a few lessons, children choose how to show their success in learning. Children would like teachers to ask them more often what they would like to learn. In most lessons, teachers use digital tools such as interactive smart panels and tablets effectively to consolidate and support children's learning. All children use these tools and digital games confidently. This supports their independence further and motivates them to learn.
- Support staff make good use of their skills and experiences to support children and provide equity of learning opportunities. They work effectively with children who need support with

literacy and numeracy. A few children benefit from well-judged social and emotional support to help them engage further with learning.

- Teachers integrate children's play experiences with learning at the early stages well. They use the indoor and outdoor space creatively to provide rich opportunities for children to extend their learning through play. Staff work together successfully to plan regular opportunities for children from the ELC to learn and play together with younger children. This provides staff with quality time to observe and discuss children's learning and identify next steps. This helps ensure a continuity of experience for children moving from the ELC to P1. Staff also use these opportunities to extend their own professional development in learning and play.
- Teachers use standardised tests and assessments to measure children's progress within literacy and numeracy. They look closely at children's work throughout the year to help inform their professional judgements. They make increasingly effective use of national Benchmarks to support their judgements about children's progress. Teachers continue to increase their confidence in making robust professional judgements about children's achievement of a level through participation in moderation activities. Senior leaders ensure moderation activities include working with colleagues in the partner school and with cluster colleagues. The principal teacher leads professional learning related to this improvement priority and models this well in her practice. She supports teachers across the cluster to develop high-quality assessments which require children to apply learning in new situations. Teachers' assessment evidence is becoming more valid and meaningful, as a result.
- Teachers plan children's learning over the medium and long-term using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. The headteacher should work with teachers to establish a consistent approach to planning learning for all children. Teachers need to be clear that they plan appropriately across the breadth of curriculum and ensure continuity and progression in children's learning.
- Senior leaders track individual children's progress in literacy and numeracy effectively. The principal teacher supports teachers to record children's progress towards achievement of a level three times during a school session. Teachers' judgements about children's progress are becoming increasingly accurate. The headteacher should increase the rigour of this approach by formalising discussions about children's progress with teachers. This should include recording agreed actions to support children to be where they should be in their learning. Senior leaders should check more rigorously the impact of interventions they put in place and identify the difference they make for groups of children facing additional challenges. This will inform planning and support equity of learning further for all children.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use progressive pathways effectively to plan children's learning in literacy and numeracy and aspects of health and wellbeing. This ensures that children experience breadth and depth of learning in literacy and numeracy. These pathways take appropriate account of prior learning and support children to make progress. Teachers provide children with valuable opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum, for example in science and health and wellbeing. They should increase opportunities for children to apply their numeracy skills in wider contexts.
- Teachers use CfE experiences and outcomes well to plan curricular areas through learning which uses links across different subjects. They also use them well to plan learning and teaching for discrete subjects. The headteacher should work with staff to put in place progressive learning pathways across all curriculum areas. They should work together to ensure that all learning builds on children's prior knowledge and skills. There needs to be a clear framework to support any teacher deliver a full curriculum and ensure that children have no gaps in learning.
- Senior leaders should continue to review clear principles for the curriculum at Tayvallich Primary School. It is important to work with parents, partners, children and staff to ensure the review takes account of the views of the whole school community. This will help them reflect on and make the most of the unique location and context of the school. Staff use the rich environment well on occasion. They could enhance the curriculum by making greater use of the local context and outdoor environment. The curriculum would be more relevant to children, as a result.
- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education (PE) per week. Teachers use the outdoor environment regularly throughout the year, as well as the village hall, to support the delivery of PE. Almost all children talk enthusiastically about the opportunities they have to be physically active.
- Children at all stages learn French. Changes in staffing have had an impact on the capacity to teach Gaelic. As a result, children from P5 onwards are not receiving their right to learn an additional language in line with 1 + 2 language policy.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents value highly the increased communication from senior leaders and staff and feel more involved in supporting their children as result. Parents engage purposefully in the work of the school and support many activities children are engaged in. They appreciate greatly the effective, regular communication which includes weekly newsletters and regular use of the school website. Staff also use an online platform regularly to share children's learning.
- Almost all parents say that their child is making good progress. A few parents would like to have more specific information about their children's progress and next steps in learning. Parents acknowledge that staff treat their children fairly and with respect and know them as individuals. Almost all parents feel that all staff are approachable and always willing to listen to their concerns. Parents highlight that this contributes to the warm, family ethos of the school.
- The Parent Council is highly supportive of the work of the school. Parents raise funds, which enhance children's experiences and ensure equity of access for all. Senior leaders consult the Parent Council appropriately about school improvement priorities. Members of the Parent Council feel well-informed and included, as a result.

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

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

- All staff have a strong focus on supporting and improving children's wellbeing. All staff establish and sustain caring and nurturing relationships with children. They treat children fairly and with respect which supports all children to feel included. Most children are confident they have someone in school they can speak to if they are upset or worried about something. Teachers provide children with a 'soft start' to each day. This helped to address children's anxiety when they returned to school after periods of home-learning. A few children continue to benefit from this gentle approach to the start of the school day. They are calmer and more settled emotionally as a result.
- Children show awareness of their own and others' wellbeing and show compassion for each other. Appropriate to their age and stage, they have an awareness of aspects of wellbeing and discuss how these relate to their lives. For example, most children identify the importance of making healthy food choices and of being physically active. Through their developing understanding of children's rights, they identify the importance of resting and playing to support healthy living. Staff should support children to build further their understanding of the language of wellbeing and the related skills they are developing.
- The headteacher and staff use assessments of children's wellbeing well to identify and plan the most appropriate support and experiences for children. They use their knowledge of individual children's needs effectively to put appropriate support in place. Children benefit from additional targeted support and are making good progress towards their individual targets. The headteacher and staff should continue to develop their approach to planning and monitoring the impact of additional support on improving outcomes for children. The headteacher ensures that each year they consider who may require a coordinated support plan. She coordinates partners' support and engages with other agencies successfully to ensure that they meet children's needs.
- The headteacher and staff work successfully in partnership with parents to support children. The whole staff team has earned parents' trust and respect. Parents are comfortable sharing any concerns about their children with school staff and are confident that staff will address any issues sensitively and promptly. The headteacher involves parents fully in decisions about the most appropriate support for their child. She provides suitable ways to involve them in planning and reviewing the impact of support. Parents feel valued partners in their child's education, as a result.
- All staff have a clear understanding of their statutory duties and responsibilities to improve outcomes for children. They engage in annual updates to the mandatory child protection training. The headteacher provides all adults with key and important information for working with children who have specific needs. This leads to staff being confident in their responsibilities and duties to keep children safe and protected from harm.

- The headteacher monitors regularly children's attendance at school to identify any patterns. She takes prompt action and supports well any families experiencing challenges with timekeeping and attendance. As a result, school attendance figures are above the national average.
- All staff consider each child as an individual with their own needs and rights. Children are beginning to develop their understanding of children's rights well. They talk about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in simple terms. They identify confidently a number of rights, such as the right to be safe and to have an education. Older children discuss the importance of children having rights. As planned, staff should continue to make relevant links to the UNCRC across learning, at assemblies and when working with parents and partners. This will help support children's growing knowledge and understanding of their important place in the world.
- Staff have a sound understanding of the school's socio-economic context. The headteacher uses PEF effectively to provide additional staffing to support children's social and emotional wellbeing. As a result, children's engagement in learning has improved. This is supporting children effectively to overcome barriers to learning and improve attainment.
- Children share confidently their learning in health and wellbeing. They talk knowledgeably about food and its nutritional value and how this knowledge helps them to make healthy eating choices. Teachers follow a progressive learning pathway for PE. Teachers use the national resource for relationships, sexual health and parenthood education on a regular, well-planned basis. This provides continuity and progression in this area. Staff should support children to understand their wellbeing across all aspects of the health and wellbeing curriculum.
- Children develop their understanding of equality and diversity through the school's health and wellbeing and religious and moral education programmes. All children have opportunities to learn about Christianity and other world religions. This helps them develop their understanding and appreciation of different religious and cultural events. Most children recognise that they are learning to understand and respect other people. This leads to them showing empathy towards others. They would benefit from an increased focus on learning about equality, diversity and eliminating discrimination.

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 number of children at each stage is relatively small and varies each session. Overall statements about attainment and progress rather than for specific year groups or levels, are made to ensure that no child is identified.
- School achievement of a level data for session 2022/23 shows that almost all children achieved appropriate CfE levels in listening and talking. Most children achieved appropriate CfE levels in reading. School data shows that less than half achieved appropriate CfE levels in writing and numeracy and mathematics. Inspection activity confirmed that reading and listening and talking attainment data is accurate. However, children's achievement in writing and numeracy is stronger than the data indicates. Staff predict with increasing accuracy, that most children will achieve expected levels in literacy and numeracy by the end of P1, P4 and P7. A few children are capable of working beyond expected levels.
- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. Children with barriers to learning are making good progress against their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children are making good progress in literacy from their prior levels of attainment. A few children are capable of making better progress.

Listening and talking

- Almost all children listen well and talk about their thoughts and opinions clearly, appropriate to their age and stage. Younger children express ideas and show their understanding well by answering questions. Older children contribute ideas confidently when working in groups. They explain clearly the difference between fact and opinion. Almost all children interact positively with staff, their peers and visitors. Younger children will benefit from further practice of turn-taking. All children would improve their thinking skills by developing further their understanding of higher order questions.

Reading

- As they progress through school, most children explain articulately preferences for particular texts and authors. Most children enjoy school reading books but would like greater choice in school library books. They talk confidently about the features of a book that help them make reading choices, as appropriate to their age and stage. Most children throughout the school, use context clues in text well to support their understanding at the level they work at. Most children read fluently and with understanding appropriate to their age and stage. A few children could use more expression in their voice when reading aloud, to engage the listener more effectively.

Writing

- Most children write regularly for a variety of purposes and audiences across genres, for example, writing science reports, instructions, and scripts. As appropriate to their age and stage, children are developing their writing skills to include punctuation, connectives and interesting vocabulary. Most children across the school need to transfer their learning in handwriting lessons effectively to writing at all other times.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Teachers identified common gaps in children's learning post-pandemic and continue to adapt learning plans effectively to help address these.

Number, money and measure

- Most children are developing their understanding well of number and number processes appropriate to their age and stage. Younger children add and subtract mentally to 10 confidently. They use mathematical symbols appropriately and solve simple missing number problems accurately. Older children identify well the equivalent form of common fractions and percentages and use them successfully to calculate percentages of a quantity. All children would benefit from more regular practice applying their numeracy skills in real-life, relevant and meaningful contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Most of the older children name and discuss confidently features of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects appropriate to their stage of learning. Young children find this more challenging. They are also not yet able to identify one line of symmetry. Older children demonstrate a good understanding of angles using mathematical language such as acute, obtuse, straight and reflex correctly to describe and classify angles within shapes around them. They do not yet understand complementary and supplementary angles.

Information handling

- Children across the school present data accurately in a variety of ways appropriate to their age and stage. Almost all children interpret information displayed well. Older children should extend their skills by using digital technology such as electronic spreadsheets to organise and display information.

Attainment over time

- Almost all children's progress in learning in literacy and numeracy has been gradually improving since the pandemic. This session, staff evidence accurately improvements in individual children's progress. Staff use the local authority tracking system with growing confidence to record children's progress in literacy and numeracy effectively. The headteacher continues to develop approaches to evidence children's progress overtime more effectively.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements regularly in class, at assemblies and on online platforms, including the school website. Children achieve through the curriculum and contributing to the wider life of the school, for example, planning successfully for Children in Need. These opportunities help them develop life skills such as cooperation, communication and decision-making. Children are proud of their achievements and almost all feel that the school is helping them to become more confident.
- The headteacher and staff have a thorough knowledge of activities that all children are involved in beyond the school. Children talk confidently about learning water safety skills, teamwork and about conservation through their involvement in sailing, gymnastics, the wildlife

club. The headteacher should develop the detailed individual approaches to monitoring children's wider achievements, to have a school overview. She should use this to capture the skills children are developing to help children identify their strengths and attributes.

Equity for all learners

- All staff know children and families well and have a firm understanding of challenges they may face, including through socio-economic disadvantage. They understand the effects of COVID-19 and increasing financial burdens on families. The headteacher ensures that all children are included, and that cost is not a barrier to participation. Parent Council fundraising supports the cost of transport for activities out with the local community, for example.
- The headteacher uses PEF well to support children facing additional challenges. Staff use universal interventions to support all children's social and emotional wellbeing. Children are engaging more in learning as a result. Staff use one-to-one support for a few children in reading and writing. These approaches are accelerating the progress of children and helping to close the attainment gap. The headteacher should improve approaches to monitoring the impact of PEF on how well this funding impacts on children's outcomes.

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.