

Summarised inspection findings

Skelmorlie Primary School

North Ayrshire Council

16 May 2023

Key contextual information

Skelmorlie Primary School is a non-denominational primary school situated in the village of Skelmorlie in North Ayrshire. The headteacher has been in post since January 2021. Prior to her appointment, there had been a number of headteachers in recent years.

The school has an early learning and childcare class which was not part of this inspection. Eighty children currently attend the school across four classes. The number of children at each stage varies and is relatively small. The school roll has fallen in recent years.

A majority children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation areas 5 to 9. The school receives a very small amount of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Attendance is usually above the national average, however, attendance figures dropped below the national average last session.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Children at Skelmorlie Primary School experience a very nurturing and inclusive ethos. All staff foster positive relationships across the school that are supportive and reflect the school's values, and children's rights. All staff know children and families very well. Children interact respectfully with their peers, adults and visitors to the school. They are proud of their school. The headteacher has introduced a new approach to supporting children to manage their emotions. As a result, almost all children talk about how they feel and identify strategies to help them when they are finding things difficult. This is impacting positively on relationships and behaviour.
- The headteacher worked with staff and children to develop and improve learning spaces across the school. Staff have created attractive, engaging and calm learning environments to support the needs of all children. Children work well in the shared open area and engage in a range of activities that promote curiosity and independence. Children enjoy visits to the vibrant and welcoming school library. Almost all children are motivated and enthusiastic in their learning. Children are confident when working independently, in pairs or groups and offer support to one another within the classroom.
- Most children contribute effectively to the life of the school and wider community. For example, they are enthusiastic pupil councillors, Rights Respecting School ambassadors, eco committee members, junior road safety officers and members of the gardening committee. Children talk confidently about the value of the week and how they earn points for their clans through displaying the school values in their behaviour and interactions with staff and peers. Children

articulate well how they develop their communication and leadership skills through membership of groups. As planned, staff should build on these opportunities and track skills for life, learning and work.

- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. All teachers have engaged well in professional learning to explore features of effective learning and teaching. This is having a positive impact on children's experiences across the school. The headteacher provides high quality feedback and guidance to teachers about how to improve further the quality of learning and teaching approaches.
- Almost all teachers share the purpose of lessons and discuss the steps that children need to take to be successful. Across the school children are now ready to be more fully involved in creating measures of success. Almost all teachers use questioning effectively to check understanding and develop children's thinking. Almost all teachers provide written and oral feedback to children about the tasks they have completed. Staff should develop further approaches to feedback with a stronger focus on children's progress and next steps. The headteacher and staff should continue to explore features of effective learning and teaching with a focus on pace and differentiation. This should improve further children's learning experiences across the curriculum and ensure all children are appropriately challenged.
- Teachers are at the very early stages of developing approaches to learning through play. Staff have developed stimulating learning spaces to provide opportunities for children to be creative and use their imagination. As planned, teachers should continue to develop further their shared understanding of play pedagogy across the early level. They should engage with national practice guidance to develop their understanding of the relevance of play. Teachers should ensure all learning at the early stages is motivating, meaningful and supports children to lead their learning and develop greater independence.
- Teachers use effective and innovative approaches to integrate digital technologies in learning across the curriculum. The use of digital technologies is a key strength across the school. All children use a range of digital technology with confidence and enthusiasm. They use matrix barcodes to access a wide range of resources and activities including online games and interactive stories. Children use laptops and tablets successfully to record their learning and carry out research. Across the school, children programme a range of robotic toys. As a result, children's digital literacy skills are strong across the school.
- Teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment strategies to check children's progress. They use standardised assessments effectively to identify children who require additional support with their learning. Teachers and classroom assistants use this information to plan timely interventions and support. This is having a positive impact on children's progress. Teachers should build on this positive approach to ensure all assessment information is used to plan next steps in learning for all children.
- Teachers make effective use of the local authority's progression pathways to plan learning in literacy and numeracy. In other curricular areas, teachers use a range of local authority, commercial and school-based planners to plan learning. In a few lessons, learning does not always match the needs of all children. The headteacher should work with teachers to streamline approaches to planning, ensuring clear progression of skills within a level. This will ensure greater consistency and progress for children moving from stage to stage.

- The headteacher meets with teachers once per term to review a variety of assessment evidence and discuss children's progress. The headteacher records detailed notes of these tracking meetings identifying clearly children's progress to date and their next steps in learning. This is supporting children well to make progress in their learning.
- Teachers are re-engaging in moderation activities following the pandemic. They have worked together to revisit the learning, teaching and assessment cycle. This is supporting teachers well to make accurate professional judgements about children's levels of attainment within literacy and numeracy. The headteacher has planned opportunities for all staff to work with colleagues across the cluster next term. This will support further teachers' understanding of progress and attainment across all curricular areas.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children make good progress in their learning. Due to small numbers at each stage and a fluctuating school roll, there is variability in attainment across each year group. School achievement of a level data shows a varying picture across year groups and over time. Most children receiving support through the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) are making good progress from prior levels of attainment. Most children with additional support needs are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment.
- At early level, almost all children are on track to achieve expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy and mathematics. At first level, most children are on track to achieve expected CfE levels in reading and writing. Almost all children at first level are on track to achieve expected levels in listening and talking. A majority of children at first level are on track to achieve expected levels in numeracy and mathematics. At second level, most children are on track to achieve expected levels in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy and mathematics.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children are making good progress in reading, writing and listening and talking. Across the school attainment in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children are confident and articulate. Almost all children listen well and engage in conversation with adults and peers during learning and social activities. At early level, most children take turns during class discussions. At first and second level, children build respectfully on the opinions and views of others during paired tasks and group work. As children progress through the school, they participate confidently in presentations and performances.

Reading

- At early level, almost all children recognise single sounds confidently. They use their knowledge of phonics to read new words. At first level, most children read fluently. Most children at first level summarise their class novels well referencing clearly key points from the story. Most children at first level make good use of contextual clues to help them understand new vocabulary. Most children at second level answer increasingly challenging questions about their class novel. Most children across the school talk confidently about their favourite authors and their preferred genre to read. Children should continue to explore a wide range of texts to strengthen further their knowledge of author styles and features of specific genres.

Writing

- At early level, almost all children write one or two sentences independently. They use capital letters and full stops accurately. Children write for an increasing range of purposes through play. At first level, most children write well across a range of genres. They use an increasing range of vocabulary to engage the reader and organise their writing using paragraphs. At second level, a majority of children continue to write well. They are not yet confident in using complex sentences within their writing. A few children use a wider range of punctuation to capture and maintain the reader's interest. Children at second level should write more regularly and across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Across the school attainment in numeracy and maths is good.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children add confidently within 20 and subtract within 10. Most children double single digit numbers and order numbers to 20. At first level, a majority of children solve addition and subtraction problems using three-digit whole numbers. Children on track to achieve second level round fractions to one decimal place. They identify confidently equivalent forms of common fractions. Across the school a few children are not yet confident in identifying and using a range of mental maths strategies.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children identify and create pictures using simple two-dimensional shapes. Almost all children use the language of position and direction, including above, below, left, right, forwards and backwards, to solve simple problems in movement games. At first level most children identify the area of a shape by counting squares. At second level, most children use the language of acute, obtuse, straight and reflex to describe and classify a range of angles. At first and second level, most children identify the properties of three-dimensional objects.

Information handling

- At early level almost all children ask simple questions to collect data for a specific purpose. At first level most children select and use the most appropriate way to gather and sort data for a given purpose, for example, a pupil survey about learning. At second level most children calculate range, mode, median and mean then organise and display this data. Children are not yet confident at applying their information handling skills across the curriculum.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher gathers a wide range of information on children's attainment and progress. She tracks the progress of individual children well. Whole school data can fluctuate due to small numbers at each stage and the number of children moving to and leaving the school. The headteacher is beginning to track cohorts of children as they move through the school. She has rightly identified the need for all staff to develop their understanding of attainment data. She should build on this positive start to ensure all children make progress as they move through the school.
- The headteacher ensures that data is used effectively to plan interventions to close gaps for individual learners and small groups. This is ensuring progress and attainment is improving for

children receiving targeted support. As a result, most children make good progress over time. There is now a clear focus on accelerated progress. This should ensure all children achieve their potential.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children's achievements are valued and celebrated at whole school assemblies and through 'Pupil of the Week' awards. Children are proud of their achievements and enjoy hearing about the achievements of their peers. All children are developing leadership skills through their participation in a range of school committees. They organise events and improvement activities. For example, the eco committee planned a coastal litter pick, and the pupil council created a pupil friendly school improvement display. Children recognise that through their participation they are learning a range of skills and contributing positively to the life of the school. The headteacher is working with children to establish a community café. Children have developed a range of skills through the planning process for their community café. They have prepared raised beds for planting, worked within a budget and designed the café space within the school. This is supporting children well to contribute effectively to the lives of others in their community.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a strong understanding of the range of barriers to learning children may face. The headteacher, teachers and pupil support staff work effectively together to identify specific gaps in children's learning. The headteacher tracks effectively the progress and attainment of children supported through PEF. She uses PEF funding to provide additional support staff at the early stages. Classroom assistants and support for learning teachers provide valuable support for identified children in a flexible way. They offer a range of one-to-one and small group supports. Children receive effective support through team teaching alongside their peers which enhances further their learning. As a result of this approach, the school is making good progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

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.