

# Summarised inspection findings

**Straiton Primary School**

South Ayrshire Council

4 December 2018

## Key contextual information

Straiton Primary School is a small rural school serving the village of Straiton and the surrounding area in South Ayrshire. The school was built in 1925 and has a main building with a school hall next to it. At the time of inspection the school roll was 12 pupils in the primary and one child in the early child centre. The school is very much the hub of the local community.

### 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

### Learning and engagement

- The ethos and culture of the school offers children an effective learning environment where all learners feel valued and respected. Relationships between staff and children are very positive. All children engage in their learning and are highly motivated to participate in learning activities. They listen and respond to staff and to each other. All children believe their views are taken into account and acted upon.
- Lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of the different age and stage in the multi-composite classes. There is scope for a few children to experience further challenge in their learning. Staff should consider ways to offer more choice to the learners and to increase their opportunities to lead learning. The school should now implement their plans to develop higher order thinking skills across the school.
- Almost all children are confident and contribute effectively to the life of the school and to the local community. The school is highly regarded in the community. Members of the local community are involved in many school activities and have opportunities to contribute to the curriculum especially in outdoor learning and enterprise activities. The well planned partnerships in the local and wider community are central to the school vision and values. Children participate in a monthly coffee morning for local residents. They planned and created a school garden assisted by parents and a local gardener. This incorporates a play area for children, a wild garden and an area for local residents to sit and relax.

### Quality of teaching

- Staff have a shared vision of raising attainment and achievement for all. They know the children very well and give of their own time to support school activities. Recent improvements in the teaching of numeracy and literacy is beginning to have a positive impact on children's learning. In observed lessons explanations and instructions were clear and appropriate. Staff should now implement their plans to develop higher order thinking skills in all learners to support independent learning skills for all. Staff should continue to develop the use of skilled questioning which was evident across the school. The pace of progress in learning for a

significant number of children should be increased to help raise attainment and support further challenge for more able children.

- Teachers share the purpose of learning with children. As a result, the majority of children are clear about what they need to do to improve. Across the school, there is scope to involve children more in identifying the success criteria for lessons. Children have good opportunities to work individually, collaboratively in pairs and in small groups. They are motivated and enjoy their learning. Children enjoy working outside in the garden and local community. A structured approach to using the outdoors as an environment for learning and skills progression should be developed to further enrich children's learning experiences in a progressive way.

### **Effective use of assessment**

- Teachers use a range of formative and summative assessments to evaluate children's progress in learning. A few children are confident in using self and peer assessment. There is scope for the school to communicate and share its assessment strategies more regularly with parents to help them understand more easily how their child's learning is progressing.
- Staff have participated in moderation activities in school, in the cluster and within the local authority. Teachers are confident in making judgements about children's progress and achievement of a level. As a result of this work, the school's attainment data is robust and correlates well with results of standardised assessments. Skills progression and personal achievements in the four capacities are assessed and recorded. The children's Individual Learning Programme (ILP) offers them the opportunity to assess their own work. Planning and setting targets is mainly teacher directed. Learners would benefit from more opportunities to plan and lead their own learning to encourage higher order and independent learning skills.
- Teachers use local authority progression pathways in literacy and numeracy to ensure children's learning is progressive and coherent. However, they should continue to familiarise themselves with the full range of pathways to assist all children to make appropriate and consistent progress across the curriculum. Teachers use the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and the national benchmarks to plan and assess learning, teaching and assessment in an effective way.

### **Planning, tracking and monitoring**

- The school has a well-established tracking and monitoring system. Tracking and monitoring attainment meetings are an essential part of the school's tracking and monitoring cycle, these take place regularly between senior leaders and teachers. Teachers make good use of the school's data to track children's progress and identify if and where targeted interventions might be used to support children's learning. These interventions are planned appropriately and evaluated regularly. They are used effectively to meet individual children's needs, as well as the needs of groups of children.
- Staff recognise the importance of transition points in children's learning, such as when they move from the early learning centre to P1, and when they move between Straiton Primary School and Carrick Academy. An enhanced transition programme ensures that the children do not experience barriers to learning as a result of coming from a small school. Transition data is used well at these times. Teachers also take care to share data effectively as children progress through the school. All staff know the children very well and work as a team to ensure quality learning experiences for each child. Commendably the headteacher has arranged that identified children have a planned programme of working with another local primary school to provide peer discussion and joint learning experiences. A joint residential experience allow children to established relationships with peers in other schools. Parents and children are

enthusiastic about the benefits of these shared experiences in developing confidence and socialising skills.

## 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.

### 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

#### Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall the data presented by the school demonstrates almost all children are achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in reading, writing, talking and listening and numeracy at early, first and second level. From inspection activity, the inspection team agrees that teacher professional judgements of Curriculum for Excellence levels are becoming more robust as teachers plan for effective assessment and implement intervention strategies in addition to undertaking standardised assessments. These judgements are also supported by moderation activities and cross referencing to the benchmarks. The impact of professional development around moderation and assessment is having a positive impact on raising attainment
- Most children are making progress from their prior levels of attainment. The findings from classroom observations, jotter sampling and focus group discussions confirm these judgements although some gaps in learning are identified within children on track to attain the second level. The school is making use of staged Intervention to plan for appropriate learning experiences to meet the needs of a few children in support of children's progress in literacy and numeracy.

#### Literacy and English

- Overall attainment in literacy is good. Almost all children are making good progress in all areas of literacy and English. The school has identified literacy as an area for improvement in the last two years. Last session, staff identified the need to improve children's technical skills in writing across the cluster in order to raise attainment further. The school should review the programme for writing to ensure coverage of different genre and consistent methodology in teaching to raise attainment further.

#### Listening and talking

- Attainment in listening and talking across the school is good and most children are developing and applying their skills well across their learning. Most children listen attentively to teacher instructions and show respect when listening to their peers. At early level, pupils engage in structured play-based learning communicating well with their peers during tasks. At first level, most children talk clearly when sharing their ideas and thoughts. They respond to questions and instructions and demonstrate understanding related to their learning. At second level almost all children can speak confidently about their roles and responsibilities within the school. They can articulate their views but there is scope for greater development of awareness of audience.

- Overall, a few children require further support to ensure they participate in group discussions. The school is engaging with the National Benchmarks alongside their planning frameworks. There is scope for this work to be embedded to ensure a progressive approach to raising attainment within literacy and talking and listening in particular.

## **Reading**

- Overall, children's attainment in reading is good. Most children across the school enjoy reading. Pupils within first and second level make personal choices of the books they want to read from a selection provided by their teacher. They also choose books from their class library and the mobile library which visits the school. At second level, children would benefit from reading texts from a wider range of authors to raise their awareness of different genre and styles of writing.
- At early level, all children are learning to identify common words, and use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. They are beginning to use story boards to sequence simple texts and stories. At first level children are reading aloud with interest and enjoyment. They are not yet confident in predicting the next outcome in a text or in clarifying through using a variety of strategies for establishing word meaning. Pupils on track to achieve second level, read fluently and show understanding of the text. They are not yet able to articulate their understanding of reading skills such as skimming and scanning or to describe techniques used to influence the reader e.g. using emotive language. The school should implement their planned work supporting children to achieve more depth of understanding by developing further their higher order reading skills.

## **Writing**

- Overall, children's attainment in writing is good. Children working within early level create drawings to describe the events of a story which they dictate for scribing. Current story board creations will be linked to film making. They are making a good start to writing simple sentences. All children working at early level in writing are beginning to write independently, attempting to spell familiar words correctly and use capital letters and full stops.
- At first level, most children write at length and start sentences in a variety of ways to engage the reader. They spell most commonly used words correctly. At second level, almost all children can write confidently at length and link sentences using a range of connectives. The cluster group has identified a specific focus on the development of technical skills in writing. Planned work in this area will be a positive step in improving learners' skills and raising attainment.
- Homework is used to improve spelling, reading and other aspects of literacy.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Plans are in place to ensure assessments and interventions are undertaken to support all children and to raise attainment further. The impact of these interventions is not yet evident across the school. The school recognises that some children have the potential to achieve appropriate levels early. Although it is too early to identify the impact of intervention strategies across the school, there is evidence that improved attainment has begun at early and first level.

## **Number, money and measure**

- Most children at second level can read and write large numbers to 10000 but are not yet accurately reading and writing numbers or showing confidence in place value to 1000000.
- They round to the nearest 10 or 100. Children working within second level recognise simple fractions but are not yet able to identify equivalent fractions. These children share a basic understanding of percentages and the link to fractions but have yet to experience working with decimal fractions and developing understanding of place value.
- There is scope for children working at second level to develop mental agility further to ensure quick recall of table facts and key number facts. Staff should encourage children to show and talk through their thinking to better understand and explain their own learning strategies. They should also explore further ways to determine the reasonableness of a solution and in particular regularly use rounding and estimation skills to calculate and confirm accuracy. Children should be supported to experience multi-step questions and solve problems as well as developing accuracy with algorithms.
- At first level, most children can partition, use grids, make tens and use friendly number strategies are developing the recall of table facts.
- At early level all children are developing skills in counting the number of objects in a group to ten. They recall the number sequence forward and count back from 10.

### **Shape position and movement**

- At early level children are exploring the properties of 2D and 3D objects and simple number and shape patterns through structured play experiences. Children working at first level identify 2D and 3D objects. At second level most children are aware that they need to learn about angles and explore further learning about shape.

### **Information handling**

- Overall staff plan for information handling experiences to be promoted through inter disciplinary learning(IDL). At early and first level, children are currently gathering materials outdoors and creating charts, pictograms and bar charts with natural materials. They can create Venn diagrams to display living and non-living things.
- Most children working within first and second level collect, organise and display data in a variety of ways e.g. pie chart, bar graph and excel worksheet. As identified by staff, most children require further experiences in this area to develop their confidence.

With the development of IDL, staff plan opportunities for children to apply learning in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. They record children's skills progression through the four capacities.

### **Attainment over time**

- The school uses standardised assessments, benchmark assessments and SNSA to support professional judgement. Data informs the recently introduced attainment meetings. Impact of the dialogue from attainment meetings is not yet evident. Staff welcome these meetings and the opportunities they give to discuss children's progress.
- The HT and staff team recognise that, in developing a consistent approach towards methodology, agreeing on shared standards and by engaging in moderation activities within

the school and with other schools in the cluster (including the secondary school), they will improve attainment over time. Further moderation with colleagues from other schools and across sectors will help teachers to continue to make robust and reliable judgements on children's progress and attainment across the curriculum. Tracking systems are in place but effective interventions are at an early stage. Transitions are well managed by the staff and the seamless transition due to the changes in the merging of the Early Years room has allowed children starting in P1 a continuous experience. Very sound transition arrangements are in place for children moving to the secondary school.

- The school recognises that some children require further challenge in their learning and have plans to introduce challenge when planning children's work. This will support learners to realise their potential and raise attainment.

### **Overall quality of learner's achievement**

- Overall learners are successful in their learning, confident within their own setting and with known adults. They willingly accept responsibility to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. The school has worked with a range of partners including Police Liaison, Active Schools, local landowners and parents/community members who have contributed to developing children's understanding of the skills required for the World of Work. Through the Learning Groups, children are developing an awareness of issues affecting children's rights. The children participate in village events and enjoy a reciprocal relationship with members of the village. In particular they give pleasure to older residents who have enjoy Christmas Carol concerts, Harvest Festival and School Shows where children perform to a large audience. Links with the local church have been developed over a long time.
- All staff work well together to achieve the priorities of raising attainment and achievement for all learners. Wider achievements are celebrated at assemblies and on wall displays such as Straiton Super Stars display. Older children have opportunities to develop leadership skills through the role of House Captain. All children have the opportunity to undertake leadership roles through participation in the Learning Council, the Garden Group and the Rights Respecting School Group. Older children participate in the Community Cuppa on Fridays within the village. The Learning Council identifies a focus for charitable donations e.g. Guide Dogs for the Blind and RNLI and use this as a learning opportunity. All children learn poems to present at a Burns Federation Poetry competition judged by local members of the community. The children are proud of their newly opened garden which they initiated as a project. They planned, designed and developed with the help of the local community and a head gardener from a local castle. The school holds a record of children's personal achievements outwith school and they are exploring ways to ensure no child misses out on opportunities to develop various skills. P5-P7 children attend a residential trip with children from other schools. All children take part in this opportunity and engage in outdoor learning, team building and adventure activities.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff have a clear shared understanding of the socio-economic background of all children. Staff can articulate the various ways in which the school plans to raise attainment. This includes developing children's ability to talk about learning using appropriate language. There is scope for children to become more aware of their thinking skills and problem solving strategies. The use of Growth Mindset and Mindfulness along with the promotion of yoga is used to establish the importance of emotional and mental wellbeing. Once established, it is aimed to improve children's capacity to learn and in turn improve attainment for all learners.

- The HT and teaching staff evaluate plans and can articulate particular successes which are beginning to impact on attainment and achievement for pupils. They plan interventions well using their shared understanding of poverty related attainment gaps for children. In addition, they speak confidently about the various strategies which they are employing to raise attainment. Early years practitioners and primary staff work closely together to plan and assess learning across both establishments.
- The school's current creative strategy to explore how children attending the partner school might extend the range of experiences for a few children is seen as a positive development at this early stage. While the staff team is making positive progress in removing barriers to learning the impact over time to ensure high aspiration in learners is not yet sufficiently visible. The school should ensure that their progressive programmes are effective. Ensure that intervention strategies and new approaches support and challenge learners leading to improved attainment for all.

## Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.

Education Scotland  
Denholm House  
Almondvale Business Park  
Almondvale Way  
Livingston EH54 6GA

T +44 (0)131 244 4330  
E enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

<https://education.gov.scot/>

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