

Summarised inspection findings

Kirkinner Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

27 August 2019

Key contextual information

Kirkinner Primary School is a small rural school in Dumfries and Galloway, serving the villages of Kirkinner and Whauphill and the surrounding countryside. It operates in partnership with Port William Primary School, which is nine miles away, and the schools share a headteacher. At the time of the inspection the roll was 18. There is no nursery class.

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

- Kirkinner Primary School has a positive ethos and culture which is based on strong relationships across the whole school community. The school vision, values and aims have been revised to reflect the school context and they are evident across the work of the school. The children are well behaved, polite and respectful. Almost all children indicate that they enjoy learning. Children work well independently and in small groups on a range of learning activities. There is scope to use digital technology further to support and enhance learning.
- The children are proud of their school and consider that their views are listened to and acted upon. They are eager to talk to visitors about their involvement in school improvement. All children in the school are involved in providing feedback on various aspects of the school and can discuss changes that have taken place following this. The development of 'Skills Friday' has allowed all pupils to engage in a range of work-related activities within and beyond the school community. This is supported by the participation of staff, parents and local businesses. Related activities include outdoor learning, cooking and a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). There is now scope to develop the 'Skills Friday' programme to promote progression in skills for learning, life and work for all pupils. The school should continue to identify and provide leadership opportunities for pupils across the school.
- There is a range of opportunities for children to contribute to the wider life of the school and community. This is developing their confidence and sense of responsibility. They show respect for each other and can discuss the impact they can have on their school. Initiatives include gaining the school's third Eco Schools green flag, charity work and participation in local festivals.
- Overall, across the school the quality of teaching is good. Children are offered a range of experiences in well-resourced and motivating learning environments. In almost all lessons, formative assessment approaches are shared and children have the opportunity to be involved in the creation of these. Further opportunities should be provided to moderate the quality of these across classes or as part of the wider school partnership.
- Children's experiences are enhanced through a range of activities organised beyond the classroom. Examples include after school activities, participation in local events and festivals,

outdoor learning and a residential experience for senior pupils. Further opportunities are planned for pupils to work together across the partner schools. Examples include regular participation in a netball club for pupils and presenting their Scottish poems through the videoconferencing link.

- Overall, most learning is well matched to the needs of children. Explanations and instructions are clear and allow children to engage in the range of activities offered. Whilst learning is often differentiated, there is a need to develop this further to ensure appropriate pace and challenge for all children.
- Teachers take account of the children's views and their contribution to learning is recognised and valued. Senior pupils are able to discuss a number of strategies and skills they use in their learning. A range of questioning supports children to develop their learning further. Opportunities are provided for children to self and peer assess and they are aware of the importance of providing feedback to help inform next steps in learning.
- Targets in learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are created and discussed through learning conversations involving teachers, children and parents. These targets are recorded in pupil 'fab folders' and are reviewed twice a year. Evidence of children's achievement of targets is collected within the folders. Children in the senior class are currently trialling 'Learning Journey' jotters, involving them more in the target-setting process. The school recognises there is a need to review its approach to target-setting to ensure that children's targets are a more integral part of learning and teaching and are meaningful and relevant to all children.
- Staff use a range of assessment approaches including professional judgements, standardised assessments and teacher-devised assessments. They are reflective in their practice in order to plan next steps in learning for pupils. Further development of effective differentiation, will ensure that targets set for children are better matched to individual needs. The school has recognised the need to develop a clear assessment framework in order to provide guidance and direction for all staff.
- Staff have engaged in moderation activities, both within their school and along with their partnership school. Staff work well with their partner school colleagues and across the cluster. Moderation activities have included a focus on planning, classroom practice and assessment of children's work. This is supporting a shared understanding of standards across the staff group. Assessment and moderation have provided a focus for a range of professional learning opportunities. The headteacher and school staff have identified the development of holistic assessments as an ongoing improvement initiative. This will ensure that children have opportunities to demonstrate and apply their skills and knowledge in a range of contexts. Further engagement with the benchmarks will support the school's work in this area.
- Staff use a range of long term and short term planning approaches, using experiences and outcomes across the curriculum. Children have the opportunity to be involved in planning within aspects of their learning, for example, within interdisciplinary learning contexts. The school has identified a need to develop this further, ensuring that children have a better understanding of what progression looks like in their own learning.
- The school has begun to review planning in maths and numeracy in order to ensure appropriate progression and depth of learning. Staff recognise that to ensure this is achieved, continued consideration should be given to how contexts for learning are used effectively across the curriculum.

- Staff across the school know children well. They are aware of the learning needs of the children in their class. They know the families very well and understand the barriers children may face. Through regular termly tracking meetings, the headteacher and staff discuss the overall progress of individual children in literacy and numeracy. Teachers identify children who are not making appropriate progress and discuss and plan intervention strategies. These are then reviewed to reflect progress made. Staff should continue to develop a shared understanding of appropriate pace across levels in order to raise attainment further.

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

- Data provided by the school indicates that, overall, children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. From inspection activity, HM Inspectors agree that the school's attainment data in identifying the progress of all children across the school towards achieving Curriculum for Excellence levels is accurate. Most children are predicted to attain the appropriate level for their stage in the current academic year.

Progress in literacy

- Overall, children are making good progress in their literacy. All children have targets for literacy, although more could be done to ensure that these are meaningful and are a consistent aspect of work in classes.

Literacy

- At the early level, children are decoding consonant-vowel-consonant words and can identify rhymes. They are able to copy and write words in their jotters and sequence words appropriately. They are beginning to write independently in sentences and are improving their letter formation. Some are able to describe a picture in writing. Children would benefit from undertaking more contextual writing which does not rely upon worksheets. Children at early level generally cooperate well and can work effectively individually, in pairs or small groups. They are learning to take turns and are keen to develop their skills.
- At first level, children are beginning to read confidently and can decode more complicated words. They can read with expression and understand many of the conventions of text and its punctuation. They understand the basic concept of fiction and non-fiction and have the beginnings of understanding about different genres of writing, including adventure, comedy and horror. With prompting, children can identify a favourite author. They can identify the difference between fact and opinion. They would benefit from an even greater focus on reading in class and at home. Children's writing has recently included stories, persuasive writing and letters. They would benefit from writing in a wider range of styles. They respect each other's opinions and are good at allowing each other to speak without interruption.
- At second level, children are reading confidently and with expression. They can mostly tackle reading unfamiliar passages of writing well. They have a very good understanding of writing genres and the difference between fiction and non-fiction. They have experience of a wide range of different types of writing which has recently included personal writing, drama scripts, informative writing and letters. Children have a very good understanding of parts of speech including simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, alliteration and onomatopoeia.

Progress in numeracy

- Overall, most children are making good progress in maths and numeracy. All children have targets for numeracy although more could be done to ensure these are meaningful and are a consistent aspect of work in classes.

Numeracy and mathematics

Number, money and measure

- At the early level, most children identify 'how many' in regular dot patterns and can count on and back in ones to add and subtract. They can identify, recognise and order numbers from zero to 20. They are beginning to apply addition skills to find a total using coins within 10p. Most can compare and describe measurements using everyday language and use non-standard units to measure length. At the first level, children can round whole numbers to the nearest ten and 100, and are able to count forwards and backwards in twos, fives and tens. They are beginning to demonstrate an understanding of strategies that can be used to solve calculations. They are less confident when calculating change within £10. At the second level, children could round whole numbers to the nearest 1,000 and 10,000. They can use multiplication and division facts and can multiply decimal fractions by ten and 100. They are able to identify familiar contexts in which negative numbers are used and can order numbers less than zero. Most were able to calculate simple fractions of a quantity to solve problems. Children could talk about a range of strategies they can use to solve problems in real life contexts. Further opportunities should be created to develop a wider range of contexts for learning in maths and numeracy across the school in order for children to apply their learning.

Shape, position and movement

- At the early level, children can recognise and describe common 2D shapes and their properties. At the first level, children can name and identify a range of simple 2D shapes and 3D objects, using mathematical language to describe their properties. They are able to identify right angles within their environment and in common 2D shapes. At the second level, children are able to use mathematical language to describe a range of angles, including acute, obtuse, straight and reflex, identified within shapes in the environment.

Information handling

- At the early level, children can collect and organise objects for a specific purpose, using simple tally marks to record results and can interpret simple graphs and charts. They can apply counting skills to answer questions and use their knowledge of colour and shape to match and sort items. At the first level, children show an awareness of a variety of methods to display data and can identify key features required to interpret this accurately including a title, labelling and an appropriate scale. At the second level, children can devise ways of collecting, organising and displaying data and are aware of some of the most suitable ways to do this depending on the task. Through a focus on presentation of work, this should improve the accuracy of data being displayed.

Attainment over time

- Overall, the school's attainment over time is good. Children have continued to improve their attainment as they move through the school. Due to small numbers in year groups, individual pupil issues have an unduly large effect on percentages and it is difficult to draw many firm conclusions from the performance from cohorts of pupils as they move through the school. It is, however, clear that performance in writing is less strong than in reading, listening and talking, or numeracy. The school is aware of this and is introducing interventions to improve the situation. It is also raising the profile and importance of reading within the school.

Learners' achievements

- The school's motto is 'Big or small, we can do it all'. Children are encouraged to inform the school of achievements which have taken place outside the school. Children's achievements are celebrated at assemblies and in other ways including on the achievements display at the front of the school. The school issues certificates when children have made significant achievements in class. These are displayed at the front of the school and then kept in children's 'Fab Folders' of their achievements.
- Despite its relatively small roll, the school is active in a range of local festivals and competitions including the Wigtown Flower Festival and has won many prizes. Staff and children have also been fundraising for charities such as Children in Need through baking activities.
- The whole school has been involved in the planning and work which led to successfully attaining an Eco-Schools Green Flag Award in August 2018. Their work included a community beach clean and taking steps to reduce local litter. The action plan continues until June 2020.
- The school runs and facilitates a number of out-of-hours clubs for children. This includes a homework club, a tennis club run by active schools staff, and a youth group, which is coordinated by parents. A netball club is shared with Port William Primary School, which works in partnership with Kirkinner Primary School and shares the same headteacher. The school monitors attendance at these clubs and is planning to examine in a more detailed way the skills which children are developing.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff have a good understanding of the wide range of factors that may present challenges for individual children or their families. They know children well. The school has identified that it does not have a poverty-related attainment gap as there is no identifiable link between deprivation and levels of attainment.
- The focus of the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) plan in 2017-18 was to work with targeted children to improve their wellbeing, spelling, comprehension, and their numeracy and mathematics. The available money was used to release a teacher from class to work with targeted children. This has had a positive impact in the performance of these children. In its PEF plan for the current session, the school has altered its approach and is looking more globally at improvements in numeracy and maths, as well as adopting a particular pedagogical approach. This has included targeted staff training. Whilst it is too soon to see the impact, it is expected that this will benefit all children, including those who come from less advantaged backgrounds. The school's allocation of PEF for 2019-20 will be £6,000.

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.