

Summarised inspection findings

Forehill Primary School and Early Years Centre

South Ayrshire Council

17 March 2020

Key contextual information

Forehill Primary School and Early Years Centre (EYC) is a non-denominational school in South Ayrshire. Currently, the school has a roll of 450 children across 18 classes and an EYC with 69 children. The school celebrated its 50th anniversary last session and was extensively refurbished in 2012.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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 experience very positive relationships across the school with staff and their peers. Staff have created a very supportive learning environment in which children are happy, enthusiastic and engage well in their learning. Approaches to developing a positive mindset support children to understand the importance of perseverance in their learning. The school values are clearly embedded in day-to-day practice. Children identify confidently how these values help create the positive learning culture evident in all classes.
- Children across the school are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They are particularly motivated by the range of interesting learning experiences that allow them to develop skills in practical and relevant contexts. For example, older children enjoy developing skills in financial management, problem solving and communication through running the monthly café. Teachers use these contexts well to support children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers should build on the use of relevant contexts, ensuring creative approaches to learning are more widely used across the school.
- Children take on roles of responsibility through a range of pupil participation groups. They contribute well to the life of the school and develop a wide range of skills including resilience, confidence and independence. Most children can relate these skills to the world of work. Within the context of learning activities, children can articulate confidently the skills they are developing and how these skills will help them as they grow and develop.
- Children are developing a strong understanding of what they are learning. They can identify what they are good at and what they need to do to improve. Children regularly discuss Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes in the context of their own learning. This is supported well using an agreed set of benchmarks linked closely to the National Benchmarks. Children value the feedback provided by teachers. The majority of teachers provide children with feedback that includes explicitly what they are doing well, and what they need to do to improve. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to share examples of strong practice in the use of feedback to improve further consistency across the school. There are examples across the school of children leading their learning, for example, in literature circles and play based learning. Teachers should now provide further opportunities for children to be more actively involved in planning and leading their own learning consistently across the

school. In a few lessons, children would benefit from increased opportunities to participate in tasks that are open-ended and encourage them to solve problems.

- Children routinely peer and self-assess their own and others work. This supports children to identify effectively what they have done well, understand better the expectations of the standard of their work and recognise how to improve.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers value opportunities to work together to share, learn and support each other to improve further the quality of learning and teaching. Teaching approaches are underpinned by very positive and nurturing relationships. Staff have a very good understanding of the individual strengths and needs of children and use this well in their teaching. In most classes, teaching is motivating, interesting and engages children well. Most staff help children to develop higher order thinking skills and promote independent learning through questioning and teaching approaches. In moving forward, teachers would welcome opportunities to visit other schools to improve pedagogy further.
- Digital technology is used well to support learning. Children regularly use tablets and laptops to research information, deliver presentations and to produce and present text. They use visualisers and virtual reality headsets to support creative writing. A few children take leadership roles as digital leaders and support others in their technology learning.
- The eco-group provides meaningful opportunities for children to tend and grow food in the school garden and courtyard. Once harvested, the food is used in the school's café and in cookery lessons. Children take excess produce home to cook and enjoy learning this important life skill alongside parents. Teacher's plan relevant and meaningful outdoor learning to enhance children's experiences in science and technology. They recognise the need to extend opportunities for outdoor learning using a planned, progressive, skills-based approach.
- Senior leaders and teachers have created a clear assessment framework. This provides a consistent and structured approach to planning for assessment across the school. Teachers collect a wide range of formative, summative and standardised assessments to inform and validate professional judgements. They use this data effectively to support professional dialogue with senior leaders, colleagues and parents about children's progress and next steps in learning. Teachers plan rich assessment tasks which draw on learning in several curricular areas. Building on this strong practice, they should now consider the range of planned assessments to ensure approaches are manageable and sustainable.
- Senior leaders and teachers meet regularly to discuss children's progress. They make very effective use of the available data and intelligence to identify children who may require additional support and targeted interventions. Pupil support assistants are deployed well to support learning in classrooms and through targeted support. Senior leaders should continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of this support to ensure it continues to lead to positive outcomes for children.
- Teachers across the school have participated in a range of moderation activities within their school and cluster to support the planning and assessment of literacy and numeracy. A few have participated in inter-authority moderation. This is supporting them well in making robust and reliable professional judgements on progress within, and achievement of, a level. Teachers are keen to be involved in increased opportunities to work with colleagues beyond their own school and local authority. Increased moderation across early level should ensure the very good progress in the Early Years Centre is built upon as children move into P1.

- Teachers have developed approaches to long and short term planning across all curricular areas. As a result, a highly consistent approach to planning across the school has been established. Teachers create annual curriculum maps to ensure children experience breadth and depth of learning. Progressive curriculum pathways are in place across all curricular areas. These support teachers to identify bundles of experiences and outcomes and relevant skills. Teachers use these curriculum pathways effectively to inform short term planning. Teachers and senior leaders should continue to refine approaches to planning, taking account of reducing bureaucracy, to ensure the planning process is proportionate and manageable.
- Children benefit from well-planned interdisciplinary learning. These planned opportunities allow children to apply their learning in a range of contexts. Teachers ask children at the start of each session what they would like to learn and achieve across the year. Children's ideas have the potential to support creativity and innovation across the curriculum. Children record their learning and achievements on 'learning scrolls' across the year. Teachers should continue to provide children with meaningful opportunities to plan and lead their learning.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. Almost all children are achieving appropriate CfE levels at the early level. In P4, almost all are achieving expected levels in reading and listening and talking and most are achieving expected levels in writing and numeracy. By P7, almost all children are achieving expected CfE levels in listening and talking, most are achieving expected levels in reading, writing and numeracy.

Literacy and English

- Overall attainment in literacy is very good. Literacy skills are often being developed through wider achievements and at times, other curricular areas. This allows children to revisit and deepen their learning.

Listening and taking

- Attainment in listening and talking is a strength across the school. Almost all children make very good progress in listening and talking. They take turns when talking in groups, listen attentively to adults and other children in a variety of situations. They participate well in group discussions. Almost all children speak confidently and articulately. They are eager to share their thoughts and experiences with adults and peers.
- At early level, children demonstrate very good talking and listening skills when retelling and creating stories using a range of props. They respond well to questions and follow simple instructions easily. At first level, children use the tools for listening and talking very well. They make good eye contact with their audience and are respectful when other children or adults speak. At second level, children are confident at sharing their views and build successfully on the ideas of others. They present challenge to the opinions of others in a polite and constructive manner. Children respect a view that may be different from their own and articulate their understanding very well.

Reading

- Across the school, children are actively encouraged to read for pleasure and choose to read in their leisure time. As a result, they are becoming familiar with different texts and authors. Children are rightly proud of the school's dyslexia friendly status.
- At early level, children are beginning to recognise common words. They are confident in using their growing phonetic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. They use picture clues well to find the meaning of simple texts. They recognise environmental print and enjoy practising their developing reading skills independently on the computer. At first level, most children are reading a range of texts fluently and with increasing expression. They are becoming confident

in identifying and understanding different features of text. At second level, most children are able to identify preferences and talk confidently about different genres.

Writing

- Children write for a variety of purposes and enjoy talking about their work with adults and one another. At early level, children respond well to the use of technology to support and enhance the contexts for writing. They are beginning to form letters and write simple sentences, a few with correct punctuation. At first level, children describe confidently approaches to planning more extended pieces of writing. They use a variety of openers and connectives to engage the reader. In P7, most children are on track to achieve second level and a few are working beyond. They write for a wide range of purposes and describe well the different features of texts. They use persuasive writing increasingly well. They identify different types of questions used to help prepare a fair and balanced argument.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is very good. Approaches to raising attainment in numeracy and mathematics are resulting in almost all children making very good progress from their prior levels of attainment. A few children at most stages are exceeding national expectations.

Number money and measure

- Across the school, almost all children have a strong understanding of mathematical language and concepts. They use a range of strategies and can talk confidently about these. At early level, almost all children are progressing very well with numeracy skills. They explore numbers to 100 through play. They write and order numbers, and recognise the time using 'o'clock' using analogue and digital clocks. Children transfer this skill confidently across the curriculum. At first level, almost all children have a very good understanding of addition and subtraction. They work confidently with equivalent fractions. They apply their knowledge of times tables well in mental calculations. At second level, most children solve word problems with confidence using a range of strategies. They are not yet confident at applying their learning in real-life contexts. They have a sound understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children name two-dimensional shapes with confidence. At first level, most children have mathematical language to describe angles and properties of shapes. A few children calculate area confidently. At second level, most children calculate perimeter and area accurately.

Information handling

- Across the school, children undertake surveys and display and interpret information in a range of ways. At first level, almost all children organise and display information in bar graphs.

Attainment overtime

- Trends overtime suggest that early gains are maintained in reading but less well in writing and numeracy. A considerable number of children requiring additional support with their learning are making good progress.

Overall quality of children's wider achievements

- The quality of children's wider achievements is a strength across the school. Participation rates are high, and an effective tracking system is in place to identify those at risk of missing out. Children across the school are developing a wide range of skills as a result of well-planned experiences within and beyond the classroom. They are developing an interest in a range of areas through the experiences provided most notably in expressive arts and sport. Children's

musical skills are developed very well through the curriculum and experiences beyond the classroom. Successful social enterprise and charity work is supporting children to understand their place as global citizens and the positive impact they can have on their community and beyond.

- Most children develop leadership skills through roles in pupil participation groups. Children articulate well how these roles support them to realise the school vision 'Together we learn. Together we achieve' and are very proud of the roles they have. Children across the school gain accreditation through participation in a range of programmes. Children share their achievements through social media, local press, school newsletters and displays. Commendably, older children are supported well to lead clubs or activities for younger children in the school.

Equity for all learners

- Teachers have a clear understanding of the range of factors, including socio-economic, that can impact on children's learning. They are proactive to ensure potential barriers to learning and participation are addressed. The approach to planning for Pupil Equity Funding is robust and underpinned well by appropriate data to identify where there are gaps in attainment for specific groups. The views of parents have been used to help shape the current programme on offer. Senior leaders have used information and data well to identify specific gaps in literacy and numeracy. From the current data it is evident that children who face additional barriers to their learning have improved in numeracy and talking and listening. The school has also successfully targeted and improved attendance and reduced late coming. Senior leaders recognise that approaches to strengthen aspects of reading and writing should now be a focus for a few children.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring children's wider achievements. Children across the school and early years centre have access to a wide range of wider achievement experiences within and outwith the classroom and playroom. There is particularly strong practice in children's wider achievement in music and sport.

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.