

Summarised inspection findings

Gargieston Primary School

East Ayrshire Council

27 June 2023

Key contextual information

Gargieston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre (ECC) is situated in Kilmarnock in East Ayrshire Council. The school roll is 423 children working across 16 classes and the nursery roll is 67 children from age three until school age. The headteacher has been in post for five years. There are two deputy headteachers and two principal teachers. There is a senior lead practitioner in the ECC.

In session 2021/2022, approximately 68% of children lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 9 and 10. A small percentage of children live in SIMD deciles 1 and 2. In session 2021/2022, the school and ECC experienced a high level of staff and child absence as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 and staff work well together within the highly positive culture in Gargieston Primary School. They have very supportive relationships which are underpinned effectively by the school vision and values. Staff have embedded successfully a rights-based approach to learning and teaching. As a result, children are happy and confident in school. They are very well-mannered towards visitors and demonstrate a real sense of pride in their school community.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide very effective leadership. They have developed a collaborative culture where all staff have a shared commitment to improving learners' experiences. Displays of children's work are of a consistent high quality across the school. This culture of high expectations and collaboration motivates almost all children to do well.
- Across the school, almost all children are engaged and interact well during lessons. They work independently or in groups and are confident learners. Children listen attentively to instructions and are eager to take part in tasks and activities. In a minority of classes, lessons are overly teacher led. All teachers should ensure that the pace of lessons is brisk, and children engage in experiences that extend their learning fully. This will create a greater range of opportunities for all children to lead and apply their learning in different contexts. Staff created the 'Gargie gold standard', in collaboration with children and parents, to develop their understanding of the key features of high-quality teaching and learning. Staff use this well with children to evaluate and improve their learning experiences. The headteacher recognises that a next step is to ensure that the 'Gargie gold standard' is applied consistently across the school.

- In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear and helpful explanations and instructions. All teachers share the purpose of learning and set measures of success for children. In a few lessons, teachers co-construct measures of success with children. This helps children to be clear about their progress in learning. All teachers should now ensure measures of success link clearly to the outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Teachers use questioning well to elicit information and check children's understanding. As planned, teachers should now develop a wider range of questioning strategies to deepen children's learning. They should provide children with increased opportunities to lead discussions and extend their thinking. In most lessons, teachers match learning experiences to children's needs well. Children are given the opportunity to choose tasks that are set at different levels of difficulty. In a few lessons, tasks and activities could be more demanding to enable children to experience higher levels of challenge.
- All teachers use digital technology effectively to deliver learning. In a few lessons, children use technology to support their learning. For example, they use word processing programmes to develop their literacy skills. Staff should now offer a greater range of opportunities for children to use digital technology creatively across the curriculum to enrich learning experiences.
- Staff participated in useful professional learning which is supporting them to use the outdoors effectively to enrich children's learning. Across the school, teachers plan regular engaging outdoor learning experiences for children. They use the school grounds and local context well to provide opportunities for children to consolidate and extend their learning. For example, in P2, children enjoy planting vegetables and den building.
- Teachers at early level apply the principles of play pedagogy to learning and teaching. They have created inviting environments which support play well within classrooms. Children demonstrate enjoyment, curiosity and interest in their activities during play experiences. Teachers interact effectively with children, using questioning and commentary to consolidate or extend children's learning. Teachers should continue to ensure that children receive appropriate support to maximise the learning potential of their play. They should continue to engage with national guidance and research on play to support them in this area.
- Teachers capture evidence of children's progress in a range of ways. For example, in snapshot jotters, a digital profile and assessment folders. Children in the upper stages use the evidence in their assessment folders effectively to reflect on their learning. This is helping children to identify their next steps in learning and set appropriate targets. Building on this, teachers should increase opportunities for children to self and peer-assess their work and that of others. This will develop further children's skills in evaluating their learning. Teachers should also increase opportunities for children to apply their learning in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- Teachers use a range of well-planned summative, standardised and diagnostic assessments to measure children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders support staff well to interrogate this assessment data to identify children's next steps in learning and inform their future planning. Teachers use an annual assessment and moderation calendar. This is leading to greater consistency in assessment approaches across stages. Teachers are increasingly using formative assessment approaches to support their judgements about children's progress and achievement. Building on this, teachers should share highly effective practice with each other on formative assessment approaches. This will lead to greater consistency in this area.

- Teachers participate in well-developed and established moderation processes within the school. Moderation activities are building teachers' confidence and improving accuracy in their professional judgements about children's achievement and progress. As planned, senior leaders should continue to develop opportunities for staff to moderate with colleagues from cluster schools and beyond. This should support them further to develop a shared understanding of national standards.
- Teachers plan learning effectively for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing using local authority progression frameworks. Children in the upper stages can describe the skills for learning, life and work they are developing through learning that links different curricular areas. Teachers plan differentiated learning experiences to meet the needs of children who require additional support with their learning. Pupil support assistants work with children very well. Teachers plan for other curricular areas in a range of ways. Senior leaders and teachers should now develop and agree consistent processes for planning across all curricular areas. This will ensure that children experience greater progression, breadth and depth of learning.
- Teachers record data about children's progress through CfE levels using a local authority tracking system. Senior leaders meet termly with teachers to review this data. They identify children who are not on track or those who are exceeding national expectations. Teachers then plan interventions and work with partners, where required, for children requiring additional support. This is helping identified children to make good progress in their learning. Senior leaders use tracking data carefully to measure the impact of interventions. They also analyse tracking data successfully to inform whole school improvement priorities. For example, the recent priority of increasing levels of attainment in writing. Senior leaders and teachers should continue with plans to assess and track the progress of learners across all curriculum 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. 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

- In session 2021/22, most children across P1, P4 and P7 achieved expected CfE levels in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics.
- Data provided by the school indicates that attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is very good. Overall, almost all children at P1 and most children at P4 and P7 are on track to achieve expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy this session. At all stages of the school, a significant minority of children exceed expected levels of attainment.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress in their individual learning targets in both literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, almost all children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English. At all stages of the school, a significant minority of children make very good progress and exceed expected levels of attainment.
- The school benefits from an inviting central library which children access at times to select personal reading. Children's frequent use of this resource is developing their literacy skills well.

Listening and talking

- At all stages, most children are highly articulate, they listen well and speak with confidence. Children at early level listen carefully to stories recalling information and responding appropriately. They participate in discussions with enthusiasm. Children at first level are respectful of each other's contributions when working in pairs and groups. Children at second level listen to and build upon the ideas and opinions of others, whilst respecting their differences.

Reading

- Children at early level identify the title of a book but require support to explain the role of the illustrator and author. They read familiar texts confidently using their knowledge of initial and blended sounds successfully to decode words. They use picture clues very well to make predictions and identify characters in stories. At first level, children answer literal and inferential questions successfully. They share their opinions about the structure, character and setting of fiction texts. Children would benefit from reading a wider range of texts to develop further their knowledge of different genre. At second level, children answer literal, inferential and evaluative questions confidently. They summarise key information clearly and make predictions about different texts. They can explain their preference for specific types of

texts clearly justifying their reason for this preference. They would benefit from identifying literary techniques used in different reading contexts, to apply their reading skills to their writing.

Writing

- At early level, children use a capital letter and a full stop to write sentences independently. They would benefit from more regular opportunities to write for a range of purposes. Children at first level plan and create texts using adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions effectively. They punctuate most sentences accurately and spell most common words correctly. Children require further experience of writing for different purposes to develop their knowledge of genre. Children at second level successfully create a range of short and extended texts for different purposes. They use punctuation and grammar accurately in most sentences. Children at second level need more practice in using a wider range of emotive and figurative language in their writing to engage, persuade or influence the reader.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, almost all children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. At all stages, a significant minority make very good progress and exceed expected levels of attainment. At early, first and second level, most children are highly secure in their understanding of number processes. At each stage, approaches to teaching numeracy skills support children very well. As a result, a significant minority of children are very competent in solving calculations and number problems beyond expected levels.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children identify missing numbers in a sequence up to 30 and beyond. They are beginning to recognise coins up to £2 and enjoy using these in a range of play contexts. Children tell the time to o'clock and half past accurately. At first level, most children round numbers to the nearest 10,000 and beyond successfully. They use their knowledge of division to find fractions of amounts. They tell the time accurately on digital and analogue clocks. At second level, most children solve number problems accurately describing the strategies they use. They convert fractions to decimals and percentages confidently. Children explain the difference between debit and credit cards successfully and understand the concept of budgeting. Children understand the application of mathematics in the world of work. At first and second level, children would benefit from more regular opportunities to revisit units of length, weight and capacity.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children identify two-dimensional shapes and sort these according to their properties. Children complete simple symmetrical pictures, although they would benefit from more experience of this concept. At first level, most children describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects using terms such as side, face, edge and vertex. They are less confident in identifying right angles in a triangle. At second level, most children identify and draw accurately acute, obtuse and straight angles. Children identify the circumference and diameter of a circle but are less confident in identifying the radius.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children use simple charts to sort and record information for a specific purpose. For example, children sort items into living and non-living things. At first level, most children use tally charts to create graphs. They can ask and answer questions to interpret information from graphs. Children are starting to use digital technology to create graphs. At

second level, most children can accurately gather, organise, display and interpret data in a variety of graphs and charts.

Attainment over time

- The school's attainment data for the last five years shows a trend of high attainment compared to the national average. Attainment data for session 2021-2022 shows the impact of COVID-19 on children's attainment, especially in writing. Following the successful implementation of targeted support in writing, children's attainment is increasing and identified gaps in their learning are closing.
- Staff track children's attainment carefully to monitor and review children's progress in learning. Senior leaders and teachers consider closely children's progress over time during termly tracking meetings. These discussions effectively inform decisions about how best to support children's learning including those who require additional support or challenge in their learning.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children's achievements within and outwith school are celebrated very effectively on attractive displays, at assemblies and on social media platforms. Children contribute successfully to the life and work of the school through meaningful participation in a wide range of clubs, activities and committees. These clubs develop their leadership skills very well.
- Children enjoy taking part in the 'Collecting Opinions to Grow our School' (COGS) groups where they work as effective contributors to share their views. Staff have embedded children's rights into the school culture successfully. Children are rightfully very proud of the school's Gold UNICEF UK Rights Respecting School status. They are developing a very good understanding of themselves as global citizens.
- Staff track children's wider achievements to identify and support children at risk of missing out. For example, the Active Schools Co-ordinator uses the tracking information to decide the activities and clubs that children prefer. Children contribute well to their community through a range of experiences including leading local heritage walks and litter picks. These experiences help children to be responsible citizens within the community. Staff should now track progression of the skills children are developing through their wider achievements and leadership roles.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context of the school. This helps them to provide caring, nurturing, and targeted support for individual children and their families. Staff are also aware of the cost of the school day. They have taken action to ensure family circumstances are not a barrier to children's access, participation, and inclusion. For example, the school operates a Christmas swap shop, uniform recycling and provides financial assistance for a residential outward-bound trip. The Parent Council and wider parent body organise fundraising activities to provide a range of equipment and resources. This ensures that all children are able to participate fully in school life.

- Senior leaders utilise Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) effectively. This ensures that those children affected most by poverty make progress in their learning and benefit from experiences that the school provides. The headteacher consults with staff and parents to agree on how to use this funding. PEF is used to purchase resources and provide additional teaching and support staff who implement targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This work is already having a significant impact in accelerating children's progress. Senior leaders monitor and review interventions regularly, resulting in successful progress towards closing children's identified gaps in learning.

Other relevant evidence

- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

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.