

Summarised inspection findings

Clachan Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

25 June 2019

Key contextual information

Clachan Primary School is a small rural school. At the time of the inspection, there were seven children on the school roll who are taught in a multi-level class. The school is in a pilot period of a shared headship arrangement with Achahoish Primary School. The headteacher (HT) spends around half of her time in Clachan Primary School. The school has a principal teacher who is the children's main teacher. In recent months, the school and community have been responding to the deaths of a key member of staff and a figure in the local community. The children are taught part of their physical education curriculum by a visiting specialist teacher. In addition, children receive instrumental tuition.

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

- The overall quality of learning, teaching and assessment is good. The HT is very well-respected by parents and the wider community. They appreciate her commitment to the children and the school. The HT is enthusiastic about her role as HT of both Clachan Primary and Achahoish Primary School. The recently appointed principal teacher and staff support the HT well in offering positive experiences for children.
- Children are articulate, considerate of others and eager to learn. Staff and children enjoy very positive relationships, which are set within a warm and supportive ethos. Children have developed and maintain positive relationships with each other. The children, HT and staff have taken a strong focus on supporting each other following a significant loss within the school community. They have been supported in this by the wider community. Regular community learning events and Fishy Fridays, where members of the community lunch with the children, are encouraging children to share what and how they are learning with a range of adults and younger children. These activities provide a platform which encourages the local community to share their skills, knowledge and expertise with children.
- Pupils are experiencing a greater breadth of ways in which they can express their views and shape their learning. Pupil voice is now much more overt. The school recently engaged children in developing a whole-school vision for mathematics and numeracy. As a result of this discussion between staff and children, there is now a greater emphasis on improving confidence, resilience, communication and fun. Whilst most discussions about numeracy are teacher led, some also provide opportunities for older children to share their learning with younger ones, and apply their learning in the process.
- Children are motivated by a good range of learning experiences. They learn both indoors and outdoors. Staff make skilled use of the grounds which benefits children. For example, children construct dens imaginatively, test the best conditions for growing potatoes and develop their balance and strength in playground equipment.

- The school uses the local community to provide children with exciting and real-life contexts to learn across the curriculum. The local hills and wooded areas are used to provide interesting challenges in children's learning experiences. For example, in technology and mathematics where children constructed a functional chair which had to be tested by the teacher. The local beach is an important context where children explore science, and demonstrate a commitment to protecting and taking care of the environment. In making regular use of the outdoors, children are very much connected to their surroundings. They are regularly and actively involved in risk-assessment which is a valuable life skill as they grow and develop.
- Teachers involve children in thinking about the purpose of learning and how they will know if they are successful. Children are confident in talking about what they are learning. They know their views are valued. They use a variety of ways of capturing evidence of learning, including photographs when learning outdoors. The children led successfully the application for the school's sixth green flag and showcased this through a community eco sharing afternoon.
- Children learn as a whole-class, as individuals and in groups. They concentrate appropriately on tasks within these contexts. Children focus well and often work independent of adult direction. Classroom displays are bright and attractive and capture effectively children's learning. A recent study of Shetland allowed children to learn independently, practise their problem solving skills, and come together to share their findings. The school should continue to develop learning and teaching which provides challenging activities across learning for all children.
- Teachers make regular use of technology to support their planning and teaching. Children confidently use laptop and tablet technology for a variety of activities. These include researching the internet for information, recording work undertaken and consolidating learning using digital programmes. Younger children use programmable toys. Older children enjoy coding.
- Children learn French and Gaelic as part of a 1+2 approach to languages. Children enjoy using their language skills at lunchtime, both in singing and when ordering their lunch. Members of the local community have been supporting Gaelic language activities and a few children are involved in the local Fèis.
- Teachers use a range of assessments including standardised assessments to evidence progress in learning and identifying appropriate interventions to support children's attainment. They are building their expertise in designing planned, periodic assessments. Opportunities for moderation are valued by staff. These should continue to be extended to involve teachers from different schools and sectors.
- Children regularly discuss their learning and next steps with staff. Feedback to children on how to improve their work is often personalised to individuals. The school is considering now how best to evidence the progress of individual children so that it is meaningful for all learners and staff.
- The school has a variety of effective planning approaches in place. Planning for literacy and numeracy is clearly differentiated for each child. This planning informs learning and teaching and helps to provide support, pace and challenge for all learners. Staff now need to consider developing and maintaining manageable approaches to planning across all curricular areas.
- The school monitors children's individual progress with a strong focus on literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Staff should continue to develop further their use and analysis of data to inform effective planning, and tracking and monitoring.

- The headteacher and teachers are aware of the school's role in raising the attainment of all learners. This includes children who encounter barriers to their learning and children who require additional support.

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

- There is one multi-stage composite class in the school. As the number of children in year groups varies and is often very small, overall statements have been made about children's progress to ensure anonymity. Data presented by the school indicates that the majority of children are achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy, with a few children exceeding expected levels.

Literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy is good. Almost all children are making good progress in literacy from their prior levels of attainment.

Listening and talking

- Attainment in listening and talking is good. Children are developing and applying skills in listening and talking across all areas of the curriculum, including through the context of outdoor learning. They have opportunities to work in pairs and in groups, and almost all demonstrate effective listening skills in a range of contexts. A few children require further practice in turn-taking. Children converse confidently with parents and local community members at weekly shared lunchtimes and other regular events. All children can express their views clearly. Throughout the year, the children present to a range of different audiences for a variety of purposes, for example Fèis an Tairbeirt. As a result of these opportunities, children at all levels can speak confidently and articulately.

Reading

- Overall, children's progress in reading is good with a few children exceeding nationally expected levels. Across the school, all children enjoy reading. They make personal choices about what they like to read and are taking part in the First Minister's Reading Challenge. The school provides a literacy-rich environment with a wide range of texts including Scots dialect and Gaelic. Children are keen to share their enthusiasm for reading and they have created a village telephone box library for the use of community members. Younger children are making a good start to reading by developing their phonic skills and beginning to explore blends. At first level, children use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read unfamiliar words and can read a familiar piece of text aloud with growing fluency. Children can demonstrate their understanding well. Older children can read with fluency and expression. They can find and select evidence from texts to support their understanding. All children will benefit from continued work on creating and answering different levels of questions.

Writing

- Overall, children's attainment in writing is good with a few children exceeding nationally expected levels. Children at all stages are given regular opportunities to create a wide range of texts and write for meaningful purposes across the curriculum, such as note-making and report writing. Younger children are becoming more confident with their pencil control and can form letters correctly. They enjoy exploring drawings, letters and writing words. Across first and second levels, most children can produce extended pieces of writing that demonstrate their skills in using effective punctuation, structure and vocabulary. More regular recorded self- and peer-assessment and personal targets would help children be clearer about their next steps in writing and show progression in learning. Staff use the outdoor environment and local community effectively as a stimulus for writing. For example, the children's personal 'Gruffalo' stories, simile poetry and persuasive letter writing. The school plans to develop further quality feedback to learners through one to one conversations.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. The majority of children are making appropriate progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children can read, write and order numbers appropriate to their age and stage. The implementation of new mental maths interventions has increased mental agility across the school. Most children can justify the use of a particular strategy and make connections well. The school can demonstrate that these new programmes have improved children's confidence and attitude to maths. Older children can read and record time in both 12-hour and 24-hour notation, and convert between the two. They can calculate durations of time and use real-life timetables and calendars accurately. Across second level, children demonstrate a developing knowledge of fractions, percentages and decimals and the teacher plans further work in this area. All staff ensure children have regular opportunities to demonstrate and apply their numeracy learning across a range of curricular areas and contexts. The school should continue to explore ways to make best use of digital technologies to enhance children's learning.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children can name, identify and classify a range of simple 2D shapes and use them to make pictures, designs and models. Staff use exciting and stimulating contexts for learning about shape. For example exploring rally car safety structures, building poly tunnels for the garden, den building in the woodland and taking part in nature observations. All children are developing their knowledge of position, angles and direction by applying their skills for real-life purposes such as, orienteering outdoors, Nordic walking and charting a ferry crossing. Throughout these experiences, older children and adults support younger children to access learning appropriate to their age and stage.

Information handling

- Children across the levels have engaged in different ways to interpret and display data in real-life contexts and for meaningful purposes. For example, through joint Clachan beach cleans with Tarbert Academy and The GRAB Trust (Group for Recycling in Argyll and Bute), children can sort litter into categories and enter data into the Marine Conservation Society digital survey. Children work together to create pie charts and tables to display relevant information. Older children can interpret data and draw conclusions to make comparisons over time. In another context, younger children used peg boards to organise and display information to solve a problem in the real-life context of a staff member's wedding.

Attainment over time

- The school can provide historical data showing the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels over a three year period. The school is well placed to ensure that information gathered is used for planning at whole school level and individual level.
- The school uses Curriculum for Excellence data, with holistic and standardised assessment information, to inform professional judgements about children's progress. Staff are continuing to develop reliable and accurate overviews showing individual's progress in literacy and numeracy. These overviews enable teachers to track the pace of learning, plan their teaching and identify appropriate interventions to support children's progress further. Inspection activities which included observing children learning in the classroom and outdoors, sampling children's work, reviewing results of holistic assessments, and talking with children support teachers' professional judgements..
- Children are making good progress across the breadth of the curriculum. Progression pathways are used to plan teaching and assessment in literacy, numeracy and modern languages. The school now needs to consider the use of progression pathways and national benchmarks in the other curricular areas to support teacher planning and assessment.
- Teachers' participation in moderation activities at local authority level, and with a nearby school, is developing a shared understanding of standards. Teachers report that they are becoming more confident in making reliable professional judgements. As planned, the school should continue to engage in moderation activities with other schools and across other curriculum areas.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Across Clachan Primary, children are benefiting from participation in a wide achievement opportunities. Achievements are displayed around the school in attractive displays and children are presented regularly with certificates to celebrate their achievements. Children develop their teamwork skills through daily school life, for example outdoor learning and whole-school responsibilities such as recycling. They access a variety of clubs and experiences with other local schools which help support successful transition processes. Experiences such as development of the school garden, beekeeping and 'Clachan Connections' offer leadership opportunities and help build children's citizenship skills. Resilience, confidence and an understanding of sustainability are very well developed through outdoor learning in woodland and beach contexts. The school was a recent winner of the Active Participation in the Community Award from Argyll College, UHI (University of the Highlands and Islands). This recognised the school's community commitment through a Christmas baking project in which children provided individually wrapped and personally delivered cakes for every retired member of the community. The wider achievement opportunities provided by the school are impacting positively on children's confidence. Children speak highly of the benefits of these experiences and are able to talk about the skills they are developing.

Equity for all learners

- The HT and all staff know children and their families very well and have a good awareness of the socio-economic and cultural context in which they live. Through a local funding trust, the Parent Council apply for small rural school focused funding which allows older children to experience a city residential trip and related learning activities. For any children experiencing barriers to learning, there are appropriate interventions and clear targets in place to support their attainment. Children's progress in learning is recorded and any support strategies are reviewed regularly. The school can demonstrate the positive impact of interventions delivered by pupil support assistants to support children's learning. .

Practice worth sharing more widely

- The effective way the school and community work closely together to the positive benefit of all. Fishy Fridays allow strong intergenerational links to be established and maintained. These also help to reduce food waste and are making an important contribution to the school's drive for sustainability. Annual distribution to older members of the community of home-baked Christmas cakes reduces isolation and promotes discussion between the generations. The school runs a community library in a local dis-used phone box serving an area which has no other local access for borrowing books.

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.